



Plain Brown Rapper

THE SAA NEWSLETTER

Carrying the message of hope to the SAA fellowship.

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SAA P SAA B SAA R
carrying the message

Welcome!

Thanks for the opportunity to serve

Dear Subscribers and Fellow Members of SAA,

It has been great to be of service to the SAA fellowship as Editor of the PBR since July of 1995, but it is now time for me to resign this position. I am grateful for the gentle and loving support I received from Jerry B., Jon K., and Scott B. during this time.

Below are a few comments I shared with the literature committee and the SAA Board and I wish to pass them on to you as well:

I was four months into my recovery and unemployed when I was approached for the position of Editor. Within two weeks I had a new job and about two months later my recovery started to suffer and it became difficult to meet my commitment to the PBR with regularity. While I have no regrets about accepting the position, in retrospect I wish I had had more long-term sobriety (at least 6

months, if not a year), and had been in SAA at least a year. Why? Again, in retrospect, I see that no matter how well I may have appeared to be doing in recovery, my first year of recovery was simply too much of an adjustment to what is a totally new way of living. I have discovered that one of my character defects is taking on too much (there's some co-dependence mixed in there, no doubt). Unfortunately, as a servant of the fellowship, I really believe the Editor of the PBR needs to be able to serve the fellowship more reliably. Some members of SAA, notably those in prison, really count on the PBR as a lifeline.

Again, thanks for the opportunity to serve you.

Sincerely,
Steve B.

The *Plain Brown Rapper* (PBR) is published monthly by the International Service Organization of Sex Addicts Anonymous.

The opinions expressed in any article are those of the author and not necessarily those of SAA as a whole. Take what you like and leave the rest.

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Send all submissions for publication to the Editor, c/o ISO of SAA.

Taking a Group Inventory

From *GROUP GUIDE: Handbook for S.A.A. Groups*

Groups have found it helpful to take an inventory from time to time to provide a thoughtful review of how the group is doing.

Information from an inventory helps the group make decisions about changes based on the group conscience.

We have provided a suggested group inventory. It can be copied and distributed to the members a few weeks ahead of a scheduled inventory meeting. Most groups do this from one to four times a year. Experience has shown that careful planning and guidance must be practiced or the inventory can run too long or not be complete enough and members will be reluctant to do it in the future. Sometimes the inventory is not finished in the one meeting and your group may need to set aside another time for its completion.

A way to personalize this inventory to fit your group needs would be to appoint a small committee to direct the inventory based on input from all the members. After input is given, the form would be filled out by the committee then reproduced and distributed to the members so that they can list issues they might want to focus on. At the meeting prior to the inventory, the completed form would be returned to the committee for their review. They then use the information to guide the group inventory.

It is very helpful to write a brief summary highlighting changes the group made based on the inventory. This summary could then be kept for future review.

Pages 4-5 contain the outline for a suggested group inventory.

Recovery Toolbox

S.A.A. Group Inventory

Mention briefly one or more concrete examples as you reflect on the strengths and weaknesses in these areas of our group's life.

1. Staying rooted in the Twelve Steps

Are the steps being discussed in the group?

Does the group give adequate time for First Step Presentations?

Are we emphasizing practicing the steps?

2. Knowledge, adherence, and fidelity to the Twelve Traditions.

Are principles being kept above personalities in our group?

Are we providing adequate financial support for our group and our fellowship?

Are we always mindful of anonymity?

3. Newcomers

Are 12 Step calls being answered in a timely fashion?

Is attention being given to the needs of the newcomer?

Are we taking temporary sponsorship seriously?

4. Each group has but one primary purpose - to carry the message to the sex addict who still suffers (Tradition Five).

How is outreach being addressed by our group?

5. Tools of the program: How are these tools being used by the group?

Sponsorship

Literature

Service

Phone list

Medallions

Other

6. Meetings: (Write in suggestions for improvement.)

Topic or step presentations

Membership attendance

Format

7. Anything else about our group you would like to affirm or point to for improvement? Some possible areas:

Group's sobriety

Fellowship outside meetings

Others

This inventory form may be copied as needed by S.A.A. Groups

Features

My name is John R.

by John R.

My name is John R. and I am a sex-addict, alcoholic, convict and a born-again Christian. I am also a father, a grandfather, and twice divorced. My sexual addictions began during my childhood school days in the late 1940's with my earliest memories of sexual behavior centering around the older boys in my neighborhood being sexual with their younger sisters and forcing several of us younger boys to watch. During these activities I felt a strange, somewhat pleasurable, indescribable (at least in the vocabulary of a seven year old) sensation and it wasn't long before I started acting out with some of these girls too. From the beginning I began my sexual addictions not as one who was abused, but as one who did the abusing.

I was an only child in a home where my father was a carpenter and my mother a homemaker. There was no drinking in our home as my parents "drink of choice" was a cup of coffee. My parents spoiled me by trying to give me the material things they did not have when they were growing up. We enjoyed fishing, picnics, and picking wild blueberries together. My father and I attended the local hockey games every Thursday night during the

winter months. Summer vacations were usually spent visiting relatives or spending time with my paternal grandparents on their dairy farm.

On the surface our home looked just fine, but in reality there were certain subjects which were to be avoided. Sexual topics were taboo, as were any discussions about feelings, wants, or desires. We did not have an open line of communications among us. There was no physical abuse, but if I suffered a minor injury while skiing or playing ice hockey I was expected not to whine about it. Pain was something to be endured, as I was taught no "real man" cries. I cannot remember my parents hugging me and telling me they loved me as I was given toys instead of emotional affection.

The years immediately following World War II were trying times for us as we switched over to a peacetime economy. It seemed like it was more important to get the material things that had been unavailable during the war years instead of focusing on family issues. My parents would criticize me saying I could always do better instead of praising me for my accomplishments. It seemed like I was expected to figure things out for myself rather

Features

than receive instructions. I did not attend church services with my parents but I was dropped off at Sunday School a few times and attended a two week Bible camp once. My weekly entertainment centered around getting twelve cents to go to the Saturday afternoon movie matinee and watch my favorite cowboy and cartoon heroes as there was no television available in our area.

From these early beginnings I started to develop the ability to stuff my feelings, not communicate with my parents, look towards material possessions as a fix for the lack of emotional nurturing, to have a difficult time accepting instructions or constructive criticism, to feel uncomfortable and inadequate in close relationships and intimate situations, and to engage in forbidden sexual activities. I also started to cultivate an extremely vivid imagination through daydreaming and wishful thinking. Building balsa wood flying model airplanes started out as a fun-filled hobby, but soon became a means to isolate and withdraw from others when facing unpleasant situations. Such was the lifestyle that I found myself in during my childhood years.

My father's sudden passing away just prior to starting high school made it necessary to move in with my maternal grandfather. My mother now became the breadwinner by using her busi-

ness college degree. I met a fellow freshman who became my best friend, and has remained so ever since. During my high school days, I discovered alcohol and really enjoyed its effects. Several of my friends' families owned cabins that we could use to hold beer parties. Although these were held infrequently, I developed a craving for getting drunk. My sexual addictions had been temporarily replaced by an addiction to alcohol.

I started to develop the ability to stuff my feelings, not communicate with my parents, look towards material possessions as a fix for the lack of emotional nurturing ... to feel uncomfortable and inadequate in close relationships ... and to engage in forbidden sexual activities.

After high school and a brief attempt at majoring in architecture in college, I joined the Navy to see the world. During my first two years in the service, I was trained as an electronic technician and got married. I was a minor and that kept me sober until I shipped out overseas. For the next two years, in every foreign port I visited, I would get drunk and be unfaithful to my wife with the prostitutes in the bars that catered to sailors. Returning to the states, my wife and I were reunited and we jointly decided that I would

(continued on page 9)

Feature

Postscript: My Secret Life Isn't Secret Anymore

Around August 1994, the *PBR* printed an abridged version of my story and it seems they titled it "My Secret Life Isn't a Secret Anymore." It appeared many months after it was submitted and by then, I'd almost forgotten what I'd written. Reading it again was like being outside of myself watching. I felt intensely ashamed.

They say sex addiction is a shame-based disease, that shame is part of the addiction cycle and that shame traps us in our addiction. While all of this is true, I don't believe I would have acted out to this degree unless unhindered by shame. Bradshaw speaks of over-amping with shame to the point of becoming shameless in his book *Healing the*

Shame That Binds You. However, it was another book, *Letting Go of Shame* by Ronald and Patricia Polter-Efron, that helped me see my acting out was really attributable to a shame deficiency.

Before I started smoking marijuana as a teenager, I was a shame-based kid who believed enough sex with the right girlfriend would make me "OK." Being stoned all the time helped alleviate some of the shame, but it also facilitated a sexual addiction through shame deficiency. This insight reminds me of the importance of abstaining from marijuana as part of my program of recovery from sex addiction. For this, I receive additional support from Narcotics Anonymous.

Harvey A.

OUR

└ **experience**

gives us

strength

and together, we build

hope

share your recovery
write for the *PBR*

(continued from page 7)

make the military a career. I quit visiting prostitutes, although I still drank very heavily. We were soon blessed with a son and a daughter. I started to treat my family the same way I was raised: no open lines of communications, sexual subjects were taboo, and giving them material things in place of showing real affection. The only difference between my upbringing and the way I raised my family was that I drank a lot, usually in bars and night clubs, which did very little for my home life making me a husband and father in name only. I also became a workaholic to avoid facing my family's concerns directly. My military paychecks would pay the bills, keep a roof over our head and put food on the table. Our physical needs were being met, but my family's emotional and religious needs were not, very similar to the way I was raised.

About halfway through my military career, while drunk I acted out with a minor, was reported and subsequently discharged. I received a General Discharge under Honorable Conditions only because of my medals and decorations in Vietnam. I now found myself unemployed in my early thirties with a family and no place to live. Returning to my home of record we moved in with my mother into the same house I had left when I joined the Navy. In a few months

I found work and bought a home.

After two more years of drinking heavily I hit my bottom and called on A.A. for help. During the time between my release from the service and calling on A.A., I practiced avoidance behavior with regards to my sexual addictions. I wasn't acting out, but I wasn't working on the problem either. I stuffed and concealed my thoughts and hoped that nobody would find out why I had really left the service.

My first marriage ended in a divorce after twenty seven years when I left my wife and sued for a dissolution of marriage. Our children had grown up and were out in the world on their own. Our son was in the U.S. Army stationed overseas and our daughter was in college and married to a fine young man. At the time of this divorce I had about fourteen years in A.A., but I had made up my mind to live alone. This decision did not last too long, as I married my second wife the next year.

During the twenty years in A.A. prior to coming into prison I can truthfully say that I did not practice all of A.A.'s principles in all of my affairs. I cleaned out most of my personal pile of garbage and dealt with the wreckage of my past only to the point where I could comfortably stay sober. I avoided acting out for almost twenty years, but because I had stuffed my feelings for such a

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long time, I became complacent.

Since I was not dealing with the issues of my sexual addictions, I acted out with a minor girl, was reported, arrested, and pled "nolo contentre" to one count of criminal sexual conduct, third degree. My second wife divorced me while awaiting sentencing in the county jail. I am currently serving a 5 to 15 year sentence in a medium security prison.

My immediate concern when I was confronted for my crime was to make sure my victim got into therapy. Shortly after I was lodged in jail, I took an honest look at my situation and decided that I needed to turn my life over to the care of God, in all respects. I got on my knees in my cell for the first time in my life and asked Jesus to come into my life and do with me as He saw fit. Many

prayers have been answered since that time. I have remained active in Alcoholics Anonymous and I still call the same A.A. sponsor I've had for over twenty two years. One of the books I read from our prison general library directed me to S.A.A. and I have a wonderful S.A.A. pen sponsor who I write to regularly and we are in the process of working on the twelve steps. I am also actively participating in the prison group therapy program for sex offenders and attending Christian group counseling with our Chaplain. My walk with the Lord has been strengthened with the Kairos Ministry program for inmates. Someday I know I'll be paroled, but for the time being, I could not be in a better place. All my needs are being met, I finally got out of denial with my sexual addictions, and I am in total recovery.

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I have learned through therapy and our Chaplain's group counseling that the effects of my actions on others go deep and last a long time. The choices that I made were all mine to make, and oftentimes I made a poor decision. I had never denied being responsible for my actions, but I had never looked at the consequences on others, or in the long run, upon myself. I did not feel empathy towards anyone nor was I very compassionate either. As a productive and accepted member in his community, my S.A.A. sponsor is teaching me that life really does go on in recovery.

Looking back at my life, I have left a trail of wreckage strewn from Southeast Asia to the Mediterranean Sea. Two divorces, one due to my alcoholism, the

other to my sexual addictions, have cost me everything I worked all my life for. I had always been able to be employed with an above average salary, but at the time when I had planned to start taking life easy I ended up in prison. Several years ago, my mother succumbed to cancer only five months after my son was killed in the armed forces overseas. I have lost contact with my daughter and her family and have been rejected by nearly everyone who knew me. My friend from my freshman high school days, my A.A. sponsor, one cousin, another A.A. friend, and my S.A.A. sponsor are the only ones who are part of my life today. I am grateful and consider myself blessed to have these people in my life.

When I started to write this I asked my Higher Power "If I have a message to help me deliver it, and if I don't, to help me find it." Thank you all for being an essential part of my recovery.

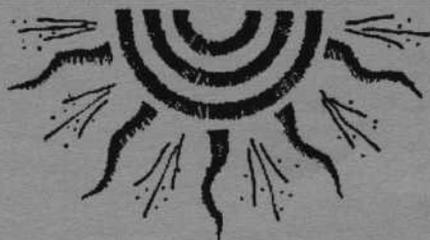
John R.



Living ⁱⁿ the
Light

'97

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The *PBR* includes news of the worldwide fellowship of Sex Addicts Anonymous, stories of recovery, the experience of the fellowship in working the 12 Steps, outreach, service work, and more. The *PBR* is our journal and a vehicle for communication. In its pages, through the shared experience, strength, and hope of our fellowship, we aim to provide gifts for your recovery and serenity. \$12/year (\$18/year outside the U.S.)

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