

# The Plain Brown Rapper

THE SAA NEWSLETTER

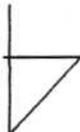
Volume 9, Issue 8

Carrying the message of hope  
to the Sex Addict who still suffers

December/January, '97-8

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**MAY THE JOYS OF THE  
SEASON BE WITH YOU  
ALWAYS. PEACE!**

**SPECIAL NEW FRIENDS FROM  
GROUPS ON DIFFERENT SIDES OF  
THE GLOBE... PAGES 3 AND 4**



**DOES THIS  
EMPTY  
CHAIR WAIT  
FOR YOU ?  
A STARK  
REMINDER !  
PAGE 6**

## PEACE

Now is a time of year we are told, that humankind should enjoy the benefits of life together, that we are drawn to a new spirituality, and that joy is at hand. Perhaps we in SAA are in a better position to enjoy this new spirit-filled life than others who have eyes yet to be opened. We know, therefore we are ! Blessings, all !

## **PRISON OUTREACH.....ARNOLD D. REPORTS, "IT'S HAT CHANGING TIME".**

At our Michigan Inter-Group meeting that took place on Sat (9-13-97), we had people retire and we had new people appointed. I would like to take this time to thank Larry D. for his services rendered as State Facilitator in Prison Outreach. Larry D. has been giving this part of the program away for over three years. When the new Prison Outreach Structure was set up at the N.S.O. Convention in 1995, we had to give Larry D a different title at that time, which was State Facilitator. The job was the same as he had been doing for some time. Larry has received much from this program and Larry has given much to this program. As the Great Lakes Regional Coordinator for Prison Outreach, I thank you for all you have done and I know many others out there thank you also.

At that same Michigan Inter-Group meeting, we appointed a new person to the position of State Facilitator for Prison Outreach. I would like to welcome Ken B. officially to this part of our program. Unofficially, Ken B has been helping in this part of our program for some time. Ken B. will be taking care of the correspondence with CSC inmates for the whole state of Michigan. I know with the help of many volunteers and myself, Ken B. will help many inmates connect with volunteers to learn about our Recovery Program. Ken will also help many inmates find Recovery Group to attend upon their release from prison which will help to keep them from returning to prison. With the help of Mark N., our I.S.O. Board Representative for Prison Outreach, as well as other volunteers, there may even be a possibility to start more in house Recovery Prison Meetings. Thanks to the cooperation from the many Correctional Facilities in Michigan, we have more in house Recovery Meetings than any other state in the union. We have prisons in Michi-

gan, waiting for us to find volunteers to go inside and chair Recovery Meetings.

In closing, I would ask that everyone working an S.A.A. Recovery Program, consider being a Prison Outreach Volunteer. Ken B. is going to need help answering all the letters that come in. We have to give the program away in order to receive it, and what a more wonderful way to give it away than working the Prison Outreach Program. Thank you all for being there.

Arnold D. Great Lakes Regional Coordinator for Prison Outreach.

[ED NOTE: My apologies to Arnold D. He submitted this report for last issue. I regret I mislaid the report and it did not get in til now].

### **FROM THE INSIDE.... WITH A PLEA FOR YOUR SUPPORT**

Dear "PBR" Editor,

First I wish to congratulate you for a continuing job very well done. I was concerned at first, for purely selfish reasons, about the issues being doubled up. Receiving the "PBR" is something I always look forward to with great anticipation and I miss the monthly arrival. In reality I have lost nothing by waiting, it is still great when it arrives.

I am concerned though. It appears because of the paucity [see pg 9, vol 9, issue 7] of member donations [that] outreach services may suffer. Perhaps the members do not fully appreciate the need to provide this service. Perhaps they believe and expect the various State Departments of Correction to provide all this is needed. If they do believe this, they have been

lucky not to have been a guest in today's prisons.

May I address the members?: Here is my plea: Approaching is the end of my fourth year of incarceration and I will begin the fifth and last. During this time I have seen education, medical care, and recovery programs, reduced and eradicated. The states are only providing programs funded by the Federal Government or [those which are] politically expedient.

In my state, inmates receive no income at all. We are unable to provide support for our families and must depend on what they may be able to afford. Without your help, without the money donated, without the Outreach Services, many of us would never find hope of recovery. I, and many more of us that are locked up, need your help while we cannot provide for ourselves. Those of you who have been where I am know what I'm saying. Share with your home groups so they can also understand. You may be trying to forget what it was to be locked down without hope, without help but it is important that you always remember where you got that helping hand.

The Outreach Program, the help from the staff at the ISO, and my sponsor all gave me hope. I had almost given up. I could get no help here, nobody cared. I work and from the very first response I was helped, pushed, prodded and kicked back up onto my feet. Without this program I would still be wallowing in despair.

Please do not follow the lead of our politicians; do not turn your backs on we outcasts of society. Do not let the program fail for all of our sakes. You have been doing a great job and have your lives back on track, help us so later we may help others.

Thank you all for being there when I needed you. Some day I may be able to help in some way to help another fellow being find his or her way. It all began with the Outreach Program.

Gratefully, Mike R.  
+++++

**CONTINUED.....**

- >FROM PAGE 2**
- >FROM LAST MONTH**
- >FROM LAST YEAR**
- >FROM ALWAYS**

**MIKES' PLEA. AND OURS, AND THAT OF ISO; TO MAKE A SPECIAL GIFT TO THE EVER CONTINUING NEED FOR RECOVERY.**



## **LOOKING FOR PEN PALS**

[ED NOTE: See recommendations on establishing a "pen pal" relationship with others in SAA which follows on page 4. For our safety and anonymity....]

Got this note from Jerry B at the ISO office. "Here's a request from a member in Vero Beach, FL. There are only two members in his group, and he is looking for SAA pen pals, preferably men, to write and share hope, strength, and experience. He has been in the program for seven years. Those wanting to correspond with him can write:"

Matt M.  
c/o ISO  
PO Box 70949  
Houston, TX 77270

+++++

AND FROM TWO GROUPS ON  
OPPOSITE SIDES OF THE  
GLOBE....

"To the editors of the PBR...If possible to be published..." writes Gabriel P. of Stuttgart, Germany.

My name is Gabriel and I'm an Irishman who has been living in Stuttgart for the last 11 years. I was on holiday in California for a week last August and attended my first SAA meeting. The human warmth, joy and living recovery in that meeting has inspired me to get sober and start living the program daily myself. ["Hi guys!"]

At the moment I'm in the process of trying to set up an SAA meeting here in Stuttgart and it's not so easy for me. I would appreciate

*(Continued on page 4)*

The problem will never go away without help. It's like our **ADDICTION**. No way could we have begun the climb out of the depths without the help of the **SAA FELLOWSHIP**, at whatever level.

Each year you are asked, as individuals, as groups, as intergroups, to make this **HOLIDAY TIME** the **SPECIAL GIFT** time, remembering that the cost of **SAA UNITY** comes not only with the personal sacrifices of time and energy of 12 step service, it costs in terms of actual dollars to support all **OUT-REACH** services of our **Foundation**.

Last month the **ANNUAL FUND APPEAL** came from the **Trusted Servants of the ISO**. The response has not been overwhelming at this writing.

There is time for us to analyze our own costs of addiction measured against the sav-

ings we are accruing in our recovery.

Here is a letter recently received **Bob R.**, along with a donation. His letter speaks to all of us:

**"Expressing Gratitude for Recovery!!**

I send as generous a donation, as I can, to the **ISO of SAA Office**, each **October**. This **October** means eight years of recovery for me. My donation is an expression of what recovery has meant to me. **Recovery saved my life, my marriage, my family and my career**. I owe who I am today to my recovery.

Thought you'd like to know, and perhaps you too, might like to remember your anniversary with a donation to the **ISO of SAA"**. **B.R.**

If you missed sending a donation on your anniversary, isn't it an opportunity to **"KETCHUP"** now??

**Mail it...Now. Blessings!**

(Continued from page 3)

**LETTER FROM GROUPS,  
PEN PALS.  
RECOMMENDATIONS,  
...Continued...**

it if someone out there who has set up a meeting themselves would pass on some tips and maybe relate their experiences.

I'd also be grateful to have contact with other SAA people in Germany [and also with the English SAA's...London?] I have heard that Berlin and Frankfurt had groups-or maybe still have [?]. Anyway I'll leave my address + phone number with the editors of the PBR. [AND THE ISO OFFICE]

It's now after 9AM of Thursday the 16th of October [97] and I decide now, just for today, that I don't want to act out and feel shame, guilt and anger. Just for today I have the freedom to allow my dignity and self-respect to grow... And I can go to a 12 step meeting this evening.

Warm greetings, Gabriel.

[ED NOTE: Jerry B. at ISO has sent a group guide and fellowship directory. Since Gabriel's address is NOT a box number, the PBR will ask you who write to send your initial letter to the ISO office for forwarding, with your address enclosed so Gabriel may answer direct. We're sure he'd appreciate any other information you might wish to include about starting a group, and your experiences.

And from another side of the world!! [This letter was mailed to the Black Hills Area SAA Group but is printed here since many of you might well wish to share with this new group]

Dear Friends,

My name is "Ali" and I am a recovering sex addict. Ours is a new group [5 months old]. We are

3-4 members at present and having two meetings every week, Sunday and Wednesdays.

We have got our group registered by ISO recently. We get the PBR regularly.

I was going through the PBR [Oct/Nov issue] and read about your "Group Conscience Information Sheet". If possible please send this information to our group, so we can grow in more strength and hope.

Thank you all! God Bless you all!! Yours in fellowship, Ali [volunteer].

Address: Boon SAA.

P.O. Box 1337

Malakpet

Hyderabad-500 036

India

**SUGGESTIONS...**

**FOR THOSE IN SEARCH OF PEN PALS OR LONG DISTANCE SPONSORS, PLEASE NOTE:**

Most such inquiries are made through the ISO office, and sometimes directed to the PBR. They are then forwarded to the PBR. So that anonymity and safety are assured to all, the only addresses that will be printed in the PBR are those that have a BOX NUMBER, and only then with the written permission of the person making inquiry. In the absence of an address, responses to such requests should be made to the ISO office giving the name of the person to whom the message should be delivered. The mail will then be forwarded. The same is true for those responding who do not choose to have home addresses listed [with the same exceptions as listed above concerning box numbers]. This return mail will also be sent to ISO so it may be forwarded.

It would be hoped that those corresponding would ultimately be secure enough to make addresses exchanges, but we suggest that all concerned be aware of the consequences of making the address of your home known to strangers. It is the same with prison correspondence. Your safety and

anonymity are of utmost importance.

Remember, if you wish to give your address to anyone, YOU must do it DIRECTLY TO WHOMEVER YOU CORRESPOND.

This does place extra work on the ISO staff but as long as it serves YOUR recovery, we will always try to accommodate the need.

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FROM THE PBR .....

ON POETIC LICENSE. AND ON PRINTING ITEMS SUBMITTED FOR PUBLICATION.

The PBR does not have an "Oversight Committee" on POETRY. Nor does it have available any "experts" on what constitutes [good or bad] POETRY. So it is for those who submit items to the PBR as POETRY to perhaps LABEL them as such. For those items NOT LABELED, your editor, in determining what should be printed as POETRY, tries to reproduce these items much as submitted, with the hope that whatever the writer has tried to convey, has been passed on correctly. Therefore, you may notice some punctuation, spellings, etc, may seem incongruous with narrative style. It is reproduced as sent in, whether or not intended. We do NOT correct what MAY SEEM to us to be in error, since to do so may rob the poet of an intended, underlying meaning. We feel since the poet is taking time to write the message for some intended purpose to the majority of PBR readers, he/she has taken the time to correct his/her mistakes before sending the submission. From there on, the PBR will do its best to transmit the message.

Be assured that if there was a great abundance of ANY given type of material, that only the better submissions would be printed. For us the job is to do the best we can in determining WHICH of these is, in fact, "better". The PBR would like feed-back on ALL items it prints; we want to carry the "message of hope". And we hope that all items submitted have that message imbedded somewhere within.##

**FROM THE POETS IN THE FELLOWSHIP; THEIR STORIES, EXPERIENCE, STRENGTH, HOPE. WITH THE EMOTION OF ADDICTION, RECOVERY.....**

Dear editor:

I would like to send the following poem for possible printing in the PBR:

"Burning Desires"

This desire, that burns within me  
Eating away my very soul.  
Corruption in my being,  
I feel so bitter and foul.

To purge myself of these feelings,  
To cleanse my way of thought,  
A lifetime's journey,  
Where God must be sought.

The answer to everything is  
plain to see.  
Perhaps it's the question  
that eludes me.

This road I travel is hard to follow,  
For I have no map to guide me.

Steeper and steeper the climb,  
Spiraling down again, and  
coming around.  
I feel as though I'm back  
where I started.  
Yet I continue to follow this road.

I want to stop and rest.  
No time have I for that.  
I feel that I'm already so far behind.  
So on I continue.

Fail as I may, time and time again,  
I know that someday,  
I may find the way beyond,  
And reach the other side.

My indecision is killing me,  
Blocking the light that helps me see  
God bring back the light.  
God grant me sight.

Let me see where I must go.  
Help me to be who you  
want me to be.  
Fix my broken mold.  
Fill me with your warm love.

I thank you for my wife.  
For I know she is from your

grace

Thank you for her love,  
That gets me through each day.  
Thank you for my friends,  
Who struggle along beside me.  
Alone we are weak, and powerless.  
Together, with you, we are  
invincible.

Never alone will I be again,  
As now I have many friends and  
you.  
I have my wife.  
I now see the meaning of life.

To love and serve which  
are both the same,  
For with loving service,  
And commitment to life,  
I will crawl out from my pit  
of shame.

Clark K. Recovering Sex  
Addict.

Thank you for reading.

+++++

RESIGN

Afraid of the Holy Ghost.

I cower in the day, spending my  
time in the hard work of not healing  
myself.  
People have some responsibilities.  
They can accept God's grace, or  
not.  
God puts it out there for them just  
as it was for me.

I can give up the grandiosity of be-  
lieving that I am the Savior.  
And just enjoy God's gift.

Right here, right now, I make a de-  
cision to do that.

Glenn S.

**CONVENTION ALREADY ????  
SOONER THAN YOU THINK.  
HAMPTON, VA. MAY 22-25**

+++++  
RECOVERY

Why, Lord, did you go overboard?  
Had you been just so so  
In giving truth to the truth  
So oft repeated in the scriptures  
That our God is slow to anger  
And his mercy overflows,  
Who would have complained?

Not I, for sure  
My sins had been so many and so  
grave...  
A lifetime of transgressions, Lord.  
From as young as I have memory I  
was a slave to lust  
And hurt so many people putting  
self ahead of them,  
Hurting your children, Lord,  
Even your little children.  
And that went on until about two  
year ago.

Then your compassion knew no  
bounds. You say  
This lost and dying sheep and held  
not back.  
But took him to a place secure  
where you yourself would care for  
him.  
Away his lust, his centerdness, his  
pride'  
Away his childishness, his fears,  
his loneliness,  
Away all masks and let him be at  
last what he was meant to be.

But why so much"  
God's name as merciful would not  
be less  
Had you but said, "Your sins are  
naught; I have forgiven all."  
I would have wept for joy at that;  
that would have been enough  
But no, you could not stop.  
You had to keep repairing all the  
Brokenness in me.  
In me, my Lord? For me?  
For me, Lord, why did you go over-  
board?

Frank G. 4-13-97

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## DOES THE EMPTY CHAIR....

### THE EMPTY CHAIR

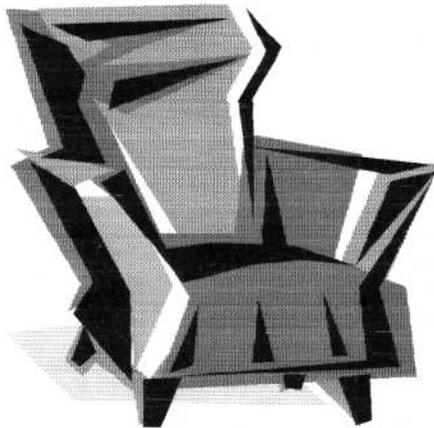
This year we began doing something at our Sunday Night Meeting that really moves me. Actually, it hits me squarely between the eyes. We started it shortly after Billy and John left for prison. They had come to SAA while awaiting the outcome of their court cases. Both had served time before. They realized their chances for not going back to prison were not good.

As their cases drew closer and closer to disposition, Billy and John kept coming back, working hard at the program, sharing their hopes and fears. They also modeled their acceptance. On the one hand, they were living, breathing examples of the seriousness of the disease we call sex addiction. On the other, they were living, breathing examples of the miracle we call The Steps.

Then they were gone. We do not know when they will return or if they will return. The idea of putting an empty chair in the middle of the room was introduced to our group by Paul W., who heard about it from Mark N. in Grand Rapids, MI, where the Thursday Night Hope & Recovery Group places an empty chair in the middle of the circle as a reminder of the members who cannot attend because they are behind bars as a consequence of their acting out.

When I called Mark to learn more about how the custom got started, he told me it was originally suggested by Ken B., a member of the group who had served time, when a fellow member, Larry D., had to leave the group to do the same. It was wonderful to hear from Mark that Ken still attends the meeting and that Larry has returned and attends as well.

Our Sunday Night Group is



## WAIT FOR YOU ??????

large, with forty men or more in attendance on many nights and rarely fewer than thirty. It makes for a big circle. The empty chair out there in the middle presents a stark and striking image.

I like what our group conscience decided to insert in our meeting preamble. To me, the words are sobering and serve as a weekly reminder of the seriousness of my addiction and of the destruction it can wreck upon my life and upon the lives of those I love. After we have completed our self introductions, our meeting leader reads the following:

"The empty chair in the middle of our circle awaits the return of members who are currently suffering the consequences of their addiction in prison. Also, the chair awaits the return of those members who have left the Program in search of their true bottom. Finally, the empty chair is to remind all present of the loss of those members whose disease drove them to take their own life."

I am grateful that Ken came up with the idea of The Empty Chair, that Mark mentioned it to Paul, that Paul suggested it for our group, and that I have the opportunity to pass it along to others. I am grateful to SAA that the empty chair is not out there waiting for me.

Jerry B.

"We know we are traveling together. If our pace is slow, go on ahead of us. We won't envy you but rather will seek to catch up with you. However, if you consider us capable of a quicker pace, run along with us. There is only one goal, and we are all anxious to reach it - some at a slow pace and others at a fast pace."

St Augustine - Sermon on a New Canticle  
[SENT BY LOUIS D.]

### WEBMASTER NEEDS HELP WITH SPANISH FOR SAA WEBSITE

Bob D., SAA Webmaster, dropped the PBR a line this week asking for some help from anyone out there able to translate items from English to Spanish for a "Test site" on the SAA Web Pages. This means some items of literature as well as that in the Web Pages at this time. As we gather, the whole of the Web Pages, if possible, at some time in the future. Working with Bob could be done through regular mail or on line through e-mail. If you are interested and have some time and can write both languages, write Bob S., Webmaster, at the ISO Office, Box 70949, Houston, TX 77270. His E-mail address is Webmaster@SAA-Recovery.Org. He will inform you of exactly what is needed to get started.

This might be an excellent project for Prison Outreach in reverse. If you are a bi-lingual prisoner with some time to donate, this would be a most worthwhile effort. You may not have a computer for use, but some funds might be available for supplies and postage.

ED...



**MY STAFF OF  
LIVING  
Ed L.**

I have been in recovery for almost six years. I has not been an easy road for me. For much of that time I have been at odds with myself--torn between self-will and God's will. I have had a few slips. Recently, I suffered a major relapse and come very close to ending my life. The anguish of that recent experience convinced me that something had to change, that obviously something in my life wasn't working.

For almost six years I have had a sponsor. I have attended meetings at least twice a week, and frequently more often. I have read thousands of pages of recovery books and literature. I have used the phone. I have attended recovery retreats and conventions. I have prayed. I have been in therapy for the entire time. Throughout these years my sponsor has told me that SAA is a Twelve Step Program, and this if I am not working the steps then I am not working the program. Enter denial. I could not hear him. All I could hear was me telling myself how well I was doing. I mean, look at all I was doing--how could he say that I was not working the program? So, I took what I wanted and left the rest. However, the rest that I chose to leave [out] was working the steps.

After surviving my relapse I knew it was time to take a thorough and fearless look at my life and my program. I asked some tough questions and I found some hard answers. I made some clear decisions and I vowed solemn commitments to myself and to God. Then I began working the steps honestly and thoroughly, and, in the words of Robert Frost, "that has made all the difference".

Today I am living my life according to the spiritual principles of the Twelve Steps, and my life is

centered on and revolves around my relationship with my Higher Power. I have learned that for me, as a sex addict, staying centered is an absolute necessity. My thoughts and prayers have crystallized around five distinct points or ideas that have enabled me to stay clear and remain centered, even in the midst of turmoil. By taking the first letter of each point I make the acronym STAFF. Rather than the staff of life, this is my staff of living. Like any good staff, it supports me when I'm feeling weak or weary, I can lean on it when the going gets tough, and I can hold it out to others to give them support as well. Here, then, I offer my STAFF to any who may find it helpful:

Surrender- my will and my life to the care of God.

Trust- that everything is just as it should be, according to God's plan.

Acceptance- of people and circumstances without criticism or judgement

Focus- on my own life and relationship with God.

Faith- living without controlling, allowing God to work in my life.

Ed L.

**The following letter was written by an SAA member in response to a letter in her column. It was not printed. It is printed here with permission [anonymously]. [ED..Hope she will think again about printing it!]**

Dear Ann Landers,  
I am writing you about the topless dancer who was convicted of assault on a customer after he had attacked her. I can't comment on the specific case; I wasn't there. I can tell you what topless bars are like

since I was once the assistant manager of one. From my experience, I believe that topless bar customers are kidding themselves if they think that topless bars are fun and safe entertainment. Topless bars are frequently dangerous places. We kept weapons on hand to deal with assaults on our dancers. Customers often acted entitled to more than what was being offered. I know that drug deals, illegal gambling, prostitution, and anonymous sex took place in and around topless bars.

Domestic violence and violence between the dancers were common experiences for the women who worked there. I, myself, was stalked by a pimp and robbed at gun point by a customer. While topless bars may be OK for a bachelor party, they are not fun to visit more often. Our repeat customers came in alone and regularly. They sat, grim faced, for hours and spent hundreds of dollars. The dancer's lives weren't any better. All of the dancers had drug or alcohol habits and histories of sexual abuse. I would like any of your readers, who go to topless bars, to ask themselves, "would I be drinking in this bar, with these people, in this part of town, if there weren't women dancing topless here?"

You can sign me been there, done that, in Michigan.

Yours truly,

[SIGNOR]

p. s. I quit the job over eight years ago and joined a twelve step group which deals with sexual addiction. I haven't been in a topless bar in over six years.

+++++



**FROM KANSAS.....**

Dear PBR,

I'm Laura and I am a recovering sex addict. I have been involved in the [an] "S" program for 5 years now. Last year I moved to a small town in Western KS where there no "S" meetings. I stayed in touch, however, with my group via telephone and letters.

I attend AA meetings on a regular basis here in my little town and that helps me with my day to day living. I can not, however, get honest in an AA meeting about my sexual addiction. About 4 months ago I found it harder and harder to keep in touch with my old group and began to think that my AA meeting were enough to keep me sexually sober. I also lost my SAA sponsor at this time, and never tried to get another one. I quit referring to my SAA material as often and began to think I was invincible. I figured AA was enough.

I was wrong. Working the AA program helped but it wasn't enough. I need to remember, all the time, who I am. I am a sex addict. I relapsed 3 weeks ago. I know it's too little-too late, but I don't want to go back to being the same raging sex addict I was 5 years ago! I want sobriety.

Right now my only real contact with the "S" program is the PBR. I think I devour every PBR newsletter I get because I identify with so many of the writers who submit articles each month. You see, I'm just like them.

Growing up in a dysfunctional home I learned to "tune out" with romantic fantasies when I was 8. In these fantasies I was popular, pretty, smart, and most of all, attractive to the opposite sex.

In my teen years I learned about the powers of flirting. I began to use sexual means to get attention. I was becoming more and more addicted to pursuing boys so that I could feel my fantasies come to life, and fill my spiritual emptiness.

Coming from a very strict religious family I just knew something was wrong and I tried to use my religion to help me be less "abnormal". So I met my husband at church when I was 17, and 11 months later we got married.

**After our 1st month of marriage we began to explore pornography together and decided to have an open marriage. What more could a sex addict like myself want?! I could be married and date!!**

The next 8 years were a series of one affair after another. I kept thinking the next conquest would be the ultimate one. It never was. I finally hit a bottom and began the program of SAA. My life has not been the same since. I have spent the last 5 years seeking recovery instead of actively chasing my addiction.

I don't know why I relapsed 3 weeks ago other than to say I eased up on my "S" recovery and allowed the lies of my addiction to speak to me. If you feel you are in a danger of relapse, don't do what I did. Get in touch with another fellow "S" member, use your sponsor, get to meetings and work the steps. I wish I would have taken my own advice because nothing has changed. Sexual acting out still left me empty inside. I guess it's true, "a head full of SAA and acting out, don't mix".

Living outside of sexual sobriety doesn't work for me. I need sobriety and all that this program has to offer.

I have no one else to turn to for help right now and so I want to thank you, PBR, for hearing my story.

I must say in closing that I especially identified with the poem by Carol T. in Iowa. I read it in the last PBR issue and I must say, "Carol, THAT'S ME".

Laura W.

+++++

**WE ARE  
NOT  
SAINTS**

**WE ARE NOT SAINTS**

About two months ago, I celebrated nine years of meeting attendance in SAA. In short, finding a place to talk about my compulsive sexual behavior has been a God-send. I couldn't have found the program without the assistance of a Power greater than myself.

I've attend meetings, led meetings, been the speaker at meetings, worked the steps, prayed, meditated, sponsored others, worked on retreat committees, worked on convention committees, done just about anything I could think of to recover. I wanted recovery really bad! I was steeped in shame and resentment when I got here.

Over the years, I've looked for other things I could do to progress in my recovery. Reading has been one of the most frequent efforts. In fact, I have wondered whether or not I might now be addicted to recovery reading. Tend to isolate in a lot of ways, so I don't have to deal with those "wonderful feelings" [as one of my sponsors was prone to call them].

One of the books I have had in mind for quite some time was written by William James, who is referred to in the "Spiritual Experience" section of the Big Book. I have been curious to read what I heard Bill W. had read and see how the book might have influenced and shaped what today we call the Twelve Steps.

Finally, I could stand it no more. I called the library and asked them to hold it for me, having previously seen the book at the branch library near my home. When, after I picked up the book, I was overcome with a feeling of utter exhaustion.

The book, The Variety of Religious Experience, was written in

*(Continued on page 9)*

1902, and William James has been described as a philosopher and psychologist [another of my vices]. As such, it was not an easy read as far as style, or content, is concerned.

At one point, the author describes saintliness in some detail, and proceeds to give examples, also in some detail, about the behaviors in which saints have engaged. Amazing!, Unbelievable!, Painful!, and Insane! [exclamations intended] are some of the feelings came to mind. Upon further reflection, I realized that what saints were trying to attain through their practices seems very similar to what I tried unsuccessfully to attain through my compulsive sexual behavior and lately through my compulsive meeting attendance -- union with God!

Today, at a meeting I realized that I need to surrender my compulsive efforts to gain this union. I have made many efforts to do so in the past and I haven't even attained compliance with my pre-established sex plan.

Enough already! We are not saints! It's time to relax and let God do his part.

When I'm supposed to reach this peak experience, God will let me know. Until then, I can just be grateful that I am in recovery today and that people like Bill W. walked with a similar path before me -- including reading books like The Varieties of Religious Experience.

I'd be better off if I leave the hard stuff to the saints, read the Big Book, and just work on Craig's stuff.

Craig S. -- Houston, TX  
PS. The book is back at the library.

**PLEASE GIVE THIS YOUR ATTENTION. FEED-BACK NEEDED!**

Although this version has not changed significantly in the last several months, it is now ready for submission to the literature committee and the PBR. Although there is not an intergroup as such, this draft has been approved by the Saturday Morning Greensboro SAA meeting, and has received feedback from many of the more experienced members attending other SAA meetings in the area.

I have volunteered to be the point person for feedback from a PBR article based on this literature submission.

Thank you  
Bruce B.  
Beginning of draft

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This statement is written to protect newcomers to SAA who may have committed criminal behavior of a sexual nature or who may have abused a child.

All recovering addicts need a safe place to share both what they are struggling with and what they have done in the past. Only by sharing openly and honestly can we be accepted and loved for who we truly are, and finally begin to let go of the shame that has crippled many of us for years.

Although SAA meetings strive to be safe places, the admission of certain past behaviors (particularly sexual or physical abuse of another person) or the intention of committing similar behaviors in the future, can put into jeopardy both the newcomer and the listening members of the fellowship, depending on the laws of the state and the consciences of the individuals attending the meeting.

For this reason, we suggest that:

Those who feel at risk of acting out in ways which sexually or physically abuse another person seek immediate help from members of the group and seriously consider seeking outside help in addition to working the 12 steps of the SAA program of recovery.

Each meeting investigate

the laws in their state pertaining to the reporting of instances of sexual or physical abuse, and prepare a written sheet to be given to each newcomer.

Each newcomer familiarize him/herself with the laws pertaining to the reporting of instances of sexual or physical abuse PRIOR to sharing on these subjects either in an SAA meeting or even with a sponsor.

A possible addition to the opening statement to be read when any newcomer attends his/her first meeting at that location:

If you are new, and would like to discuss past or current behaviors/fantasies that are criminal in nature, please speak with a more experienced member after the meeting. These people are willing to hear anything you have to share and will honor your trust with complete confidentiality. Please respect their personal boundaries. By criminal behaviors, we mean principally those behaviors that involve sexual and/or physical abuse of another human being, especially a minor (someone under 18).

Would those open to speaking with a newcomer, on a completely confidential basis, please raise their hands? Because of potential legal and ethical ramifications, sharing on these topics by newcomers during regular SAA meetings is not recommended.  
END OF DRAFT..

I think that this would be a useful addition to the group guide.

For any who feel moved to give feedback, they can write to Bruce B., care of the International Service Office, and Jerry can forward it to me. You could also respond to me via e-mail at [sareco99@netwizards.net](mailto:sareco99@netwizards.net)  
Thank you.  
Bruce B. Greensboro, NC

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**YOUR ATTENTION IS INVITED TO THE ARTICLE TO THE RIGHT OF THIS COLUMN. IT IS FOR THE SAFETY OF ALL WHO MAY BE CONCERNED, AND YOU AND YOUR GROUP MAY WELL BE CONCERNED.**

**SEX ADDICTION AND THE INTERNET...  
ONE METHOD OF BREAKING THE CYCLE..**

Dear fellow SAA member:

I'm forwarding an article that I typed out for The Plain Brown Rapper. Use it if you'd like. Best wishes, and wonderful job on the publication!

Peace and Serenity,  
Joel D.

Subject: Sex Addiction and the Internet

Sex Addiction and the Internet seems to be a recurring issue in my face to face group and in various internet recovery postings. Certainly, I wrestled with this new "venue" or "outlet" with my sex addiction.

Acting out on the internet is so terribly easy, isn't it: close the door; click a few buttons; and you're there in la-la land wasting away hours. I believe this is a new frontier for sex addiction. How many old-timers do we have in our fellowship with some substantial clean-time around the internet? I invite them to share their experience, strength, and hope because I know there are people like myself who have suffered, and more who are still suffering, from this new addictive outlet.

For the meantime, I offer my experience, strength, and hope. As of this writing, my last bout with pornography on the internet was October 18, 1997. My inner circle boundaries keep me from having sex with other people other than my primary partner. Avoiding pornography is in my middle circle boundary. For me, when I start acting on my middle circle behaviors, I know there is something really bothering me. It's time to do a 10th Step, make calls, and pray.

Luckily, I have noticed a pattern with my using the internet for inappropriate uses. Whenever I arrived home from town and found myself alone, that situation was ideal for me to log on to the net.

After several more trials,

promises, and nifty ideas -- you know the drill -- I asked for help. "We're only as sick as our secrets," is what I have heard in 12 Step fellowships; so I fessed up to my sponsor. He suggested I pray about the matter and, of course the other extreme, I can get rid of my modem if it is that much of a burden on my recovery. I realized that I was dealing with my fear of abandonment, finding myself alone in the house when I would arrive there first instead of my partner. I realized too that I need to turn to my Higher Power for help.

I prayed, but I felt I needed "to do" something more. I came up with a "God journal." When I find myself alone at home, I write in my God journal, writing down how I feel: fearful, angry, etc. I also write for help for keeping me from logging on to the internet looking for pornography. So far this action has worked. In one instance, however, I failed to write in my journal when I found myself alone after declining to go with my "in-laws" to a drinking get-together -- this was October 18th.

I am actually very hopeful with using the internet in a healthy way. I'm staying in touch with one both of my sponsors, and I'm in a "cyber" men's group where both my sponsors are sharing. There is a recovery web page where I can share about a current topic. I can also read the original wording of the AA Big Book on the net.

I had to be taught that pornography on the internet was not a solution. It was a problem. Being in SAA, I knew there were solutions. I had to be willing to pick up the tools of recovery. I have to be continually willing, one day at a time, to pick up and use those tools. My sponsor once shared with me that the phrase "God willing" is a given: God is always willing. The question is: am "I" willing??

JOEL D.

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**FROM THE ISO BOARD**

**MORE MULTI-LINGUAL PURSUITS. GUIDELINES NEEDED.....**

The ISO Board, at the request of a deaf SAA member, is working on guidelines to be distributed to SAA members, groups and intergroups. If you have input you want considered in the formulation of these guidelines, please contact the ISO Office immediately by mail/e-mail.

Until guidelines are published, local groups and intergroups can find out about the availability of translators in their area by contacting: The Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf [RID], 301-608-0050 or fax at 301-608-0508; or write them at 8630 Fenton Street, Suite 324, Silver Springs, MD 20910.

**OTHER BOARD ACTIONS**

At the November teleconference the Board stopped deposits to the Capital and Operating Reserve Funds until a positive cash flow can be re-established, the Office Oversight Committee to direct resumption based on month-to-month reviews.

**PLEASE READ THE ABOVE PARAGRAPH AGAIN. THIS IS ANOTHER REASON WE NEED YOU TO RESPOND TO THE ANNUAL HOLIDAY FUND APPEAL. BLESS YOU!**

Approval was given to a British Isles request for "Outreach Region" status, and that the Pacific Region be designated as their Autonomous Region Sponsor.

Approved Mexico City's request for caucus [at no cost to ISO] to name a contact person to the Literature Committee to work on the approval process of SAA literature in Spanish.

Approved the Midwinter Teleconference date as January 17, 1998 from 10 AM to 2 PM, Central time, and requested the Literature

*(Continued on page 11)*

(Continued from page 10)

Committee person in charge of Spanish translations be present to participate.

Approved a modification of travel reimbursement policy.

Approved new 3 year lease.

Approved establishment of, and protocols for, the 1999 Convention Bank account.

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**1998 CONVENTION**  
**"STEPPING INTO THE LIGHT"**  
**MAY 22-MAY 25th**

**1998 Delegate  
Convention not so  
far away.  
PREPARE NOW**

**NOTES ON THE DELEGATE MEETING MAY 22-23, 1998**

For members, groups, intergroups, and committees desiring to bring items before the Delegate Convention in 1998 a recommended format is suggested so as to explain the item completely, and to expedite any action upon it. In order for the submission to be included with the official Convention Call, it must be in the ISO office prior to February 28, 1998. If not, it will be given to the ISO Board of Trustees to be placed later on the business agenda of the Delegates.

Each group has been mailed a form for the submission of items. See your Trusted Servant or contact the ISO office for another copy.

The advantage of having your item included with the Convention Call is that all delegates will have an opportunity to review it several weeks before Convention, thus assuring a better understanding of it, or at least having time for clarification.

Yes, it's already time to be making arrangements for the Hampton, Virginia SAA Convention May 22 to May 25, 1998. The 11th Annual event will be at the Holiday Inn, 1815 West Mercury Blvd. Registrations dated by April 1st will be \$65 for the 4 days. Hotel rates will be \$70 per night [until April 18th] up to 4 persons per room. Registration brochures and Requests for Presenters forms are included with this PBR mailing.

RECOVERY will be encompassed in more than 30 workshops, seminars and speakers, a 24 hour meeting room, and a Meditation Room.

Fun and Fellowship will include the Talent Show, Music Jam, and Saturday evening movies. Outside areas of interest will be the Coliseum Mall [within walking distance], Virginia Air and Space Museum, and Colonial Williamsburg. Virginia Beach calls with sand, water, and sun.

There is always a need for "presenters". If you are willing to present a workshop, be a member of a panel discussion, or be in the "talent show", you're needed! If you need a registration form, ask your group

leader.

Included with your registration fee will include full admission to the Convention and its activities for the days for which you register. This means workshops, seminars, and other events. The following meals are provided: Saturday [dinner], Sunday [lunch], Monday [brunch]. Note that the Delegate Luncheon is not a part of the convention as such and is NOT included with registration. Official "T" shirts are available for \$10.

For registration or information write:

Stepping Into the Light  
P.O. Box 7746  
Hampton, VA 23666

Since COSA will be holding their concurrent convention, information may be obtained by writing:

Convention Committee  
NSO-COSA  
9337 Katy Freeway, No 142  
Houston, TX 77024.

LET'S GET REGISTERED!!!!

**SPIRITUALITY AND HEALTHY SEXUALITY SPRING WORKSHOP**  
**SPONSORED BY THE TWIN CITIES SAA INTERGROUP**  
**APRIL 3-4-5, 1998**  
This workshop is presented by Jeff and Judy H. Content of the program is updated from the '97 program and will include 1]sexual addiction 101; 2]Spirituality in 12 step recovery; 3]Healthy Sexuality for couples, singles, gays, straights. Guided meditations. Detailed instructions sent with registrations. Begins 7:30 PM Fri, ends 1:30 PM Sun. Cost is \$85., before Feb 28-\$75. Checks to: Twin Cities Intergroup; registration send to: TCIG Workshop, 3444 Garfield Ave. South, Minneapolis, MN 55408. Phone 612-471-0086

**For the Feb-Mar issue.**  
We have some poetry for next time. Also another article from John R.[Jan-97]. There will be updates for the Hampton Con-

vention and items for the Delegates. The 97 financial report will tell how well the Holiday Fund Appeal went.

We still have need for articles on any subject on recovery.

We would like some articles on Steps and Traditions, for their respective months. And don't forget to write; your letters are a part of your story. With Love,-Ed



