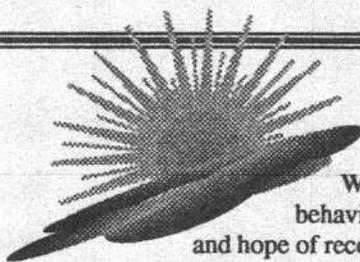


THE *Plain Brown Rapper* The SAA Newsletter



September, 1989 Edition

The purpose of the Newsletter is to be a voice of the SAA membership. Written by and for brothers and sisters recovering from compulsive sexual behaviors; to be informative, sensitive and expressing the experiences, strength, and hope of recovering members. It is intended as an additional tool of recovery for those working the twelve-step SAA program.

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I've discovered something very important to me: my growth doesn't start and stop with SAA. Many of our brothers and sisters are involved in Alcoholics Anonymous, Overeaters Anonymous, Emotions Anonymous, Adult Children of Alcoholics, Al Anon, etc., etc. And so I've expanded my recovery horizons also. What have I learned? I've learned an amazing thing. As an SAA member, I share a common affliction and recovery process with my brothers and sisters in SAA. As a recovering person, I share a common path and goal with a world filled with recovering persons. My conclusions? I have two. First, I need to seek *all* avenues of recovery that may apply to me. Second, not only am I not alone in my recovery, but I am **really** not alone!

My 4th Step

When I first came to Sex Addicts Anonymous at age 19, I thought that my problem was that I grew up in a dysfunctional home where I had been molested by male and female cousins and babysitters, emotionally abused by my father, and emotionally incested by my mother. With the help of God (my H.P.), SAA, and the Twelve Steps, especially Step Four, I can see today that my biggest problem is that I am a sex addict. I have this tendency, say compulsion, to use other human persons and my own sexuality to escape the reality that I am powerless over other people, places, and things.

Indeed, uncontrollable feelings and memories of incest and abuse that rendered me unable to function, and my uncontrollable battering brought me to the point that I was willing to ask for help. I had been masturbating daily for 10 years at that point, so when it was suggested that I might be a sex addict, I was so miserable and desperate for the solution that I was willing to try SAA. I had been in psychiatric wards, arrested, suicidal, and homeless, and I didn't want to go back, but mostly, I just hurt really bad.

It took me a good 6 months of acting out "research" to begin to get the idea of how this recovery stuff worked, and I had hit a new bottom when I tried to stop masturbating and couldn't, so at this time, I asked someone to sponsor me and help me get on with my Fourth Step. I had heard that only "action and more action" could keep us sober, and I finally wanted it badly enough that I started writing my Fourth Step. Thus began probably the best, most sober time I've had in recovery.

I became sober from compulsive masturbation for the first time in over ten years. I needed some specific directions and suggestions on how to actually write my Fourth Step, so with my sponsor's guidance, I used the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous and their *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* to get the specific instructions that are not in *Hope and Recovery*. As I looked back on my life with a new attitude, I felt less like a victim. For the first time in my life, I was taking responsibility for what kind of man I am. What a sense of freedom this gave me!

(continued on page 2)

My 4th Step (continued)

It really is freeing for me to see that my biggest problem today is not that stuff from yesterday makes me a jerk today. It's important for me to look at it this way because it reminds me not only what my life was like before recovery, it reminds me what I am like TODAY if I don't ask for help in taking responsibility for who I am today. For me, Steps Four through Seven and Ten are not about getting a hold of my defects so that I can forever cast them aside and move towards sainthood. My inventory is about acknowledging in a very real and personal way that I will always be capable of infinite "good" and infinite "evil," no matter how "recovered" and well I get. If I forget what I am, I'm bound to start acting it out again, and pretty soon I won't be able to bear myself, and I'll turn to sexual acting out again. If I don't remember that I'm a sex addict and a child molester, I'm bound to be a sex addict and child molester. There's nothing that I haven't yet done that I am not totally capable of doing.

I hope this doesn't sound shaming. I meant to cast off my attitude of shame and just see who I am. When I was using people, I often pretended that I cared about them, and often fooled my partners and myself with delusions that I was a nice guy when I was using them. I pray for the strength to be honest with others and God and myself about who I am.

— Tom
Tucson, AZ

Thanks, Tom.

**NSO Donations & Sales
August, 1989**

NSO DONATIONS — August, 1989

John G.	Chambersburg, PA	\$25.00
Ray O.	Waseca, MN	10.00
Rochester group	Minnesota	10.00
J.C.S.	Canton, OH	20.00
Las Vegas SAA	Nevada	25.00
Tacoma SAA	Washington	7.11
Gordon P.	Galveston, TX	25.00
Lester D.	Madison, WI.....	5.00
Swartz Creek SAA	Michigan	10.00
Tucson Thursday Night SAA	Arizona	30.00
Music City SAA	Tennessee	30.00
Merri P.	Tampa, FL	2.00
Madison group	Wisconsin	10.00
Francis H.	New York	10.00
Greensboro SAA	North Carolina	15.00
"This Is It" group	Carencro, LA	15.00
Golden Valley Monday Night	Minnesota	40.00
Anoka Monday	Minnesota	24.50
7:30 a.m. Tuesday	Minnesota	10.50
4:45 Wednesday	Minnesota	9.50
S. Minneapolis 5:30 Wednesday	Minnesota	35.00
S. Minneapolis 7:00 Wednesday	Minnesota	30.00
Bloomington 5:00 Thursday	Minnesota	3.00
8:00 Thursday	Minnesota	17.50
S. Minneapolis 7:00 Sunday	Minnesota	29.50
10:00 a.m. Survivors of Incest	Minnesota	10.00
S. Minneapolis 5:00 Thursday	Minnesota	22.50
S. Minneapolis 10:00 a.m. Women's	Minnesota	17.50
St. Paul 7:30 Sunday	Minnesota	83.50
Duluth SAA	Minnesota	2.50
4:30 Thursday Univ. of MN D.T.A.	Minnesota	10.00
4:30 Thursday Univ. of MN	Minnesota	12.50
Rochester SAA	Minnesota	10.00
St. Paul 5:00 Wednesday	Minnesota	5.00
S. Minneapolis 12:00 Tuesday	Minnesota	25.00

August Donation Total:\$587.11

NSO SALES — August, 1989

The following is a listing of the SAA National Service Organization's August sales, less postage costs.

Group Guides	\$ 92
Abstinence and Boundaries	414
First Step to Recovery	128
Plain Brown Rapper	68
Hope and Recovery	239
Brochures	73
Medallions	564

August Total Sales\$1,578

12-Step Meetings

Different areas handle newcomers in varying fashions. I think it is important to look at options which best serve individual groups. When writing about a 12-Step meeting I am referring to the process of when a new person contacts a local phone number, P.O. box, or an intergroup. The intergroup, or the person who answers calls or letters for your group, gets the person's first name, first initial of the last name, and a number where the person can be reached. That person in turn gives this information to two members of the group who volunteer to do the 12 Step. The 12-Step meeting is explained to the newcomer at a meeting with two members of the group. The meeting is held at a mutually convenient time and place. At the meeting the two group members talk about what got them into the program, and the successes they have had since their involvement with SAA. They answer questions the new person might have about recovery. They then ask the new person to disclose what he/she feels comfortable with, detailing some of the behaviors which they felt powerless over, and which caused their lives to become unmanageable. If afterwards the new person feels the group is appropriate for him/her, then the members become that person's temporary sponsors. The two group members then explain the exact location of the meeting place, asking the new person to commit to attending at least six meetings.

This process has some drawbacks:

1. It is slower than an open (walk in) meeting format in getting newcomers into regular meetings.
2. It requires individuals in the group to take it upon themselves to get back to newcomers on the phone or in writing to set up the 12-Step meeting. Ideally the same people should not be the only ones doing 12-Step meetings and calls.

I believe the positives, however, outweigh the costs in that, though the process is slower, groups tend to be very involved in helping newcomers to get started with their recovery. Another benefit of the 12-Step meeting

is that the newcomer knows at least two individuals when he/she first walks into a meeting. This way the newcomer may feel less alienated and alone, because he/she knows some of the two members' stories and personhood.

Following this brand of entry into groups requires some commitment and follow through. It encourages those who are genuinely interested in recovery, to be somewhat patient in the knowledge that help is on the way.

This process is not designed so that members can pick and choose who they will let into "their" group (program, not personalities).

Many have found that 12-Step meetings have many benefits toward the health of the group. Trust levels in such groups are quite high, because many unknown individuals are not just coming to a meeting never to be heard from again. Trust is facilitated by having boundaries, and groups which have boundaries reflect a healthy family type system in which a member can attend and feel truly safe.

In summary, 12-Step meetings are in and of themselves a fulfillment of the promises, losing interest in selfish pursuits and gaining interest in our fellows. Extending oneself to another who is seeking recovery, is an example of receiving by giving, for going out on a 12 Step is a rewarding experience. A good connection usually results from the meeting, and the newcomer is no longer an anonymous person in the group.

You might want to hang on to this as a reference for conducting 12-Step meetings in the future. Best wishes in your recovery.

—Douglas P.
Minneapolis, MN

[A special thanks to Michael G. for his contribution to this article.]

Poetry of Recovery

I wish I could share everything that's going on in my life right now because they are things I never dreamed possible, but are becoming a reality because of one thing — my recovery. I believe, as Pat Carnes says, my recovery must come before **everything** else. Now unemployed, and on the edge of financial bankruptcy, I am experiencing "spiritual renewal" thanks to my higher power, my SAA support groups, my sponsor, AND my belief in myself!

The reason I wrote was to share one of my recent experiences. I finally reached the last page in my journal which I began writing at Golden Valley SDU on November 1, 1987. I hated to have to begin a new book as this one was so special to me and I couldn't find another like it. I was so moved by the power that my journal has had in my life and all the gifts it has given me that I wrote this poem on the last page:

MY BOOK OF LIFE

That tree once stood tall,
 reaching for the sun's light,
felled that I might record my own
growth on its sturdy bark.

 Each page, once filled with the
life-giving ink,
 and the tree grows taller;
 stained with the tears purified
 by the light of day,
 and the tree grows greener.

 Blown by the winds of anger and hatred,
bending now
 yielding to the Earth's
nurturing powers
 and the tree grows sturdier.

 Now centered in life,
its pages tightly bonded one
 to another, all together stronger than
each alone,
 it bears the fruit of wisdom
 and hope
of healing and joy,

 of self-acceptance, and then

 the tree lives on...

— Kevin M.
Lafayette, LA

Thank you, Kevin.

Personals

Our program teaches me to love and take care of myself and to ask for what I need. So here it is: For my recovery I feel the need to correspond with other recovering female addicts. I have been the only female addict in our group in the last year on a regular basis. I would love your input and experiences in recovery that you would be willing to share.

You can write me in care of: Recovery Unlimited SAA,
P.O. Box 1955, Claremore, OK 74018-1955

Gratefully recovering — Beth C.

Do you have a story, a poem, an experience of growth, or would you just like to share your emotions and feelings? Please write The Plain Brown Rapper. Your brothers and sisters in SAA would like to hear from you. We have much to share with each other. Please write to PBR Editor, c/o SAA, P.O. Box 3038, Minneapolis, MN 55403.

A Christmas Poem

Here it is another year
 Christmas trees with decorations
 Once again Christmas is here
 We come together for celebration

Time to be with family and friends
 Shopping people come and people go
 We look for cards to send
 Everyone is wishing for snow

Holidays for some are lonesome times
 Do we know the real meaning here
 God wants us to be loving and kind
 This is the time there should be no fear

Time for happiness and sharing gifts
 Food and candies everywhere found
 Santa Claus and reindeer myths
 Church bells with heavenly sound

This joyous time will soon be gone
 Our love for each other will never die
 We will remember the many songs
 And we will think of Jesus and look to the sky

Merry Christmas to everyone...

— Bob P.
 Minnesota

A Sex Addict's Prayer

Lord, lend us your hand as we thread our way through the labyrinth of our sexual dysfunctions, for without Thee we shall surely be lost.

You have taught us that the greatest growth results from the deepest pain. Therefore, we thank Thee for our afflictions for they reveal to us truths that might otherwise remain hidden forever. Pain is one of the keys that can open the secret doors that lead to Thee.

Bless my brothers and sisters who share this disease. For by giving unconditional love and support to each other, we prove the Divine Presence within each of us.

We walk a lonely path, Lord. Be with us.

Amen

— Donald E.
 Fresno, CA

God's Way Not Our Way

I have to tell you a story about me. As you know, I cannot speak for others, but only for me.

I am a sex addict. I was arrested and through the Grace of God allowed to get help before I was sent to prison, but the bars that hold me now in time will be gone. The bars that held me my whole life have been removed. I have lost my seven children, my farm, my wife, all that I thought I needed until I was arrested.

Today I feel more freedom to be Me than ever before in my life. Perhaps God will also allow me to see my children in time.

I met many a friend here in this place. I've been able to with the help of another man who also was allowed to get help from SAA before coming here. We have been able to give support to others who are hurting as we were before we found SAA.

We have tried, my friend and I, to get SAA inside the prison walls. It appears we are close. Please pray for our dreams so SAA can reach the hurting and the bruised.

Although we may be in "a prison," the freedom we feel now is stronger than at any other time in our life. Thanks to SAA and our Higher Power.

— Bob & Walt
 Oakdale, IA

Letter From Jan

I feel deep gratitude when I reflect on the gift of recovery that I've been blessed with since I reached out for SAA help in May of 1988. At that time, suicide was a rapidly increasing thought as a solution to the pain I was experiencing. The only other conceivable option was SAA recovery. I knew that I couldn't stop my sexual behavior on my own and that I'd either die at my own hands or recover. There no longer was any middle ground. I was out of control and the shame I was feeling was choking out what little life was left in my soul.

I was familiar with 12-Step recovery as I had begun AA recovery in November of 1985. After a year and a half of relapsing, I began to experience continuous sobriety from alcohol. I was healing physically, but I repeatedly stated at AA meetings that I needed quality in my sobriety or recovery was of little value. I remember the concern on the faces of other recovering AA members and I felt uncomfortable. What was the matter with me? Was I a failure in recovery too? No, I hadn't been failing, but addressing only my alcoholism, a serious addiction which supported and masked my primary sex addiction.

I'm beginning to learn today what I meant when I talked about "quality" in sobriety back then. It's only been a result of my times of sexual sobriety and going through the pain of withdrawal that I've begun to touch a part of me that's been pushed aside and disowned for all or most of my life. The greatest gift I've experienced in SAA recovery is my own gradual inner healing of shame from years of abuse from others and from my own path of sexual self-destruction. That "quality" is a growing acceptance and belief in myself; that I've always had value, not for what I did or didn't do, but just by being alive. It's a growing acceptance of where I've been, that the abuse from others was not a reflection on my value as a person, and that my being a sex addict doesn't mean I'm "bad," but my highest value had been to escape pain and shame. The SAA recovery gift is a discovery (or rediscovery) of a spiritualness within me.

I read recently that the Greeks had a word for the God within, en theos. They recognized the inner Spirit (or God, Higher Power, Energy Force, Love) within every person. We use it today in the word, enthusiasm. It seems to follow that enthusiasm is synonymous with love. I remember some months ago wondering if I would ever know love. Love had always meant an intense sexual high. I no longer believe that.

Today I'm feeling enthusiasm in more areas of my life, my work and those I work with, my journaling, my children, recovering and nonrecovering people, my home, even my plants are healthier! I can honestly say that I have quality in my recovery today which is a growing enthusiasm or love for my life and the life around me.

Does this mean that I'm recovering perfectly? No. I'm embracing my humanness and no longer apologizing for my existence. For me sometimes its two steps ahead and one back. I had a sexual relapse three weeks ago, and although I wasn't happy about it, I found that my reaction to it has changed over this past year. I didn't think of suicide, neither did I want to abuse myself in sexual ways. I'm becoming gentler with myself. I'd like to share a portion of my journal entry following that relapse.

"Maybe I'm doing all that I can do at this moment and time will take care of the rest. I'm not trying to do the worst I can, I'm trying to do the best that I can. When I look back to where I was, it's a miracle how far I've travelled. I have hope today that the road ahead will be more of an adventure and less of an ordeal, there will be more love and less despair, and more growth and less backsliding. I do have faith in the recovery process, and in the fact that I'm a part of it and will continue to be."

Thank you for walking the SAA recovery path with me. Without you, the gift of recovery would not be possible for me.

— Jan
Central Wisconsin SAA

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