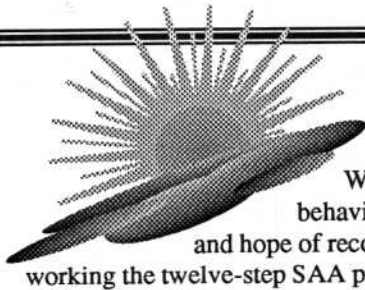


THE Plain Brown Rapper

The SAA Newsletter

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July, 1990 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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P.O. Box 3038, Minneapolis, MN 55403 — Telephone 612-339-0217

We will be starting a new format this month — albeit a bit barren. As mentioned last month, we will have columns pertaining to women's issues, childhood issues, newcomer issues, and outreach, along with our regulars such as poetry, NSO reports, and whatever else you send in.

This month we are starting a column entitled "Childhood," with an appropriate story. Unfortunately, we have insufficient submissions to fill out the other columns (you want *me* to go first, don't you?). Write to us — your story is valuable to the fellowship.

Concerning the newcomer's column, the PBR is proud to announce that any questions newcomers might have will be answered by "Dear Arthur...." Though not related to Dear Abby or Ann Landers, Arthur has a myriad of experience, much wisdom, and (especially) many connections to help him answer any questions new members may have. Please address all questions to "Dear Arthur" in care of the PBR, P.O. Box 3038, Minneapolis, MN 55403.

My First Step

My consequences of acting out sexually are varied—some emotional and some physical. I lost my marriage, became sterile (unable to bear children due to VD), got cancer, and, in the emotional pile, I found mountains of self-hate and shame were there too. I was ready to take the first step. I was ready to become powerful. The power to surrender totally is spiritual. It cannot be done alone, but must be done only by me; no one else can do it for me. To let go completely is very powerful. This is the paradox of the program.

This power is to choose to have boundaries, to not give in to the fantasy life of being loved by everyone; thinking about how and who I would seduce next to keep my power and to feel safe in every situation in my life. Setting boundaries is like stripping away negative conditioning, obsessions, and opening up to learn about myself. This power is having boundaries about fantasy, or not being sexual when I'm angry or feel lonely—not being sexual with myself or someone else to fix my feelings or medicate myself. These boundaries open up my awareness to be with myself in all my anxiety, fear, anger, and abandonment. With these markers, boundaries, fences around me, I can visit my addictive places, notice when I "feel" sexual or like I want to cruise, or sexualize other human beings. I can notice and visit these addictive places, but I do not have to live there.

I can push through my fears of new situations, meeting people without sexualizing them. I can push through my fear, anger, and fear of abandonment with my healthy powerful side by not trying to control, but by just noticing how I am feeling and being with myself. I can talk to friends, my group, my support system about my feelings, and let them get to know me as I get to know myself.

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A Gift from Rich!

At the SAA *Carrying the Message* conference, I attended with the goal of carrying the message, which I did in some ways. I also reluctantly got the message. Those who know me know that, like many addicts, I am resistant to change. I fight tooth and nail to hold onto things which no longer work in my life. One such reluctant change took place at the convention.

I spent some time talking with a man from Boulder, Colorado. He is an intelligent man with a wealth of recovery experience and has a good deal of knowledge regarding all of the sex addiction fellowships. I honestly told him of my strong bias in favor of SAA because it is what has saved my life. I complained to him about what I perceived as the "failings" of the other sex addiction fellowships. We honestly shared opinions, and thankfully he shared some truths which I had failed to see or had tried not to see. He explained that many individuals, were it not for the differences of the fellowships — i.e., the name of SLAA — would not get into recovery. The appeal of that name, for instance, attracts some who would not be attracted into a fellowship with a title as stark as Sex Addicts Anonymous.

As I let these ideas sink into my heart, I began to admit that surely many in our fellowship held the same sobriety outlook that Sexaholics holds. Certainly when I am honest I realize several things. I see that I do want the ideals of SAA to be carried to addicts who still suffer because I truly believe that SAA works. I see that I can maintain my deep belief in SAA, embracing what I believe in. I may not agree with everything about the other fellowships, but I can choose to hold them in a deservedly high regard. I sheepishly admit that I have wished the other fellowships a degree of secret ill will. Since gaining sobriety I have really identified with SAA. I now see how my "jingoism" has interfered with my spiritual development. I see and admit how my past exchanges about the differing fellowships have hurt my spiritual connection and diminished my serenity. In the past I have resented SLAA and SA for being larger organizations. I have bore limited, yet noticeable to me, resentments towards Sexual Compulsives Anonymous for having an emphasis which is geared predominantly toward gay sex addicts.

My resentments have cost me. I have experienced pain from taking the inventory of others. I wish to thank Rich for helping me to grow. I can now more clearly see the gifts each fellowship brings to each of the other fellowships. It is now part of my program to spread the message of recovery from sex addiction as a member of SAA. But I will temper my zest with the understanding I have been given. I will pray to be released from my resentments knowing they have more to do with my shame than what I think they are about. The different fellowships exist because it is how God intended it to be at this time. It is better to have four fellowships than none. I feel more hopeful that greater cooperation will develop in time, but I fear financial matters may dissuade this cooperation.

Thank you, Rich!

*Douglas P.
Minneapolis, MN*

The Child Within

Like the gun
Loaded
Cocked
Ready to be fired
On an impulse
With total disregard for self

Like the newborn baby
Helpless
Hopeless
Dependent on others
Insecure

Like the wolf
Caught in a trap
Pain to the center core
Not knowing what to do
Pulling one way
Pulling another
With every ounce of energy
Fighting to get free

Like the soldier
Caught in the middle
All alone
Abandoned
Scared
Fighting for sheer existence
Peace
And Serenity

Fighting the living hell
The victim
The offender
The abused child within

I may trip
I may fail
But I will not stop fighting
My child within

NSO REPORTS

From the National Service Organization Office

Please send in group registration forms so that we might give out correct referrals to those who still suffer.

Please inform us if changes occur in your group, affecting your listing in our directory.

Thank you for supporting the National Service Organization with your contribution. Your gifts to the program continue to help carry the message. The program works!

Group Guide Request From the NSO Literature Committee

S.A.A. has been distributing a Group Guide for a number of years as part of its literature. The Literature Committee has decided to evaluate and revise the current Group Guide to better reflect the needs of our fellowship. We are therefore asking that any and all members of S.A.A. help us in this evaluation by looking over the Group Guide that is currently in circulation, and sending to the N.S.O. office all comments and/or revisions to the Guide by August 31, 1990. If you do not have a Group Guide available in your group, you can obtain one for a nominal fee from the N.S.O. office in Minneapolis. Thank you in advance for your help.

Donations to the National Service Organization

<u>GROUP:</u>	<u>CITY:</u>	<u>STATE:</u>	<u>AMT:</u>
SATURDAY	TUCSON,	AZ	\$ 12.50
MOTHER LODE SAA	VAL, SPRINGS	CA	10.00
DES MOINES S.A.A.	DES MOINES	IA	55.00
SERENITY FELLOWSHIP,	ATLANTA	GA	84.00
PITTSFIELD GROUP	CHICAGO	IL	100.00
FLINT S.A.A.	FLINT,	MI	15.00
SWARTZ CREEK S.A.A.	SWARTZ CREEK	MI	20.00
LANSING S.A.A.	LANSING	MI	10.00
GRAND RAPIDS WED. NOON	GRAND RAPIDS	MI	40.00
GRAND RAPIDS HOPE AND REC.	GRAND RAPIDS	MI	20.00
SAGINAW SAA	SAGINAW	MI	20.00
THURS. BLOOMINGTON MEN'S	BLOOMINGTON	MN	2.50
ROCHESTER SAA	ROCHESTER	MN	45.00
ANOKA — MEN'S MON. CLOSED	ANOKA,	MN	8.50
5:30 THURS, CLOSED, MEN'S	ST.PAUL	MN	18.00
SAT. MIXED OPEN	S.MPLS.	MN	13.00
THURSDAY CLOSED MEN'S 4:30	SE.MPLS.	MN	12.50
5:00 THURS, CLOSED MEN'S	S.MPLS.	MN	12.00
SUNDAY 6:30 OPEN MEN	S.MPLS.	MN	18.00
THE DTA'S	SE.MPLS.	MN	15.00
7:30 A.M. OPEN, MEN'S, TUES.	S.MPLS.	MN	25.00
RICHFIELD MEN'S CLOSED	RICHFIELD	MN	8.00
LAKE HARRIET, SUN, BOUNDARY	S.MPLS.	MN	24.50
THURSDAY MIXED OPEN GROUP	BR.CENTER	MN	22.50
5:00 THURS, CLOSED, MEN'S	EXCELSIOR	MN	20.00
5:30 TUES, CLOSED, MEN'S	ST.PAUL	MN	30.50
WOMEN'S TUESDAY	S.MPLS.	MN	12.50
8:00 THURS MEN'S ST.PAUL	ST.PAUL	MN	35.00
NOON MEN'S MON. BOUNDARY	MPLS.	MN	3.00
GULFPORT SAA	GULFPORT	MS	30.00
AL G.		NV	4.00
FREEDOM GROUP	TULSA	OK	10.00
JOHN C.	CHAMBERSBURG	PA	10.00
KNOXVILLE S.A.A.	KNOXVILLE	TN	15.00
COL.STATION/BYRON SAA	COL.STATION	TX	47.45
HOUSTON INTERGROUP	HOUSTON	TX	108.00
SAN ANTONIO	SAN ANTONIO	TX	75.00
OLYMPIA S.A.A.	OLYMPIA	WA	18.00
JANICE F.		WI	5.00
CENTRAL WI. SAA	WI. RAPIDS	WI	\$50.00

My First Step (continued)

I'm more fun to be with the better I get to know myself; the more I like myself and accept myself as a human being capable of joy, love, and mistakes. The power of the surrender of my life and my will over to the care of a higher power enables me to come into contact with my sacred inner self. The discovery of the sacred core of my being gives me power to change my life by enabling me to be gentle with myself.

I am willing to do whatever it takes. The power is in complete surrender.

Cathy

Childhood: My Story

When I first entered into the SAA program, I couldn't understand how I became a sex addict. In my group I heard horror stories about major sexual abuse of fellow members when they were young children, of people who were sexually terrorized at an early age. I could understand their being sex addicts, but what happened to me? I had a great childhood: I wasn't sexually or physically abused, I wasn't molested by a stranger or a friend. How did I get here?!

After being in the program for a few years, I began to see what happened to me. I came to realize there are some people who are highly sensitive to certain aspects of life, whether it is an inability to cope with pornography, violence, food, drugs, or whatever — almost like an allergy. That is, one person can view pornography and care less about its existence, while others need only glimpse it and all barriers are broken down.

And in an Adult Child of Alcoholism group I attended, I came to realize I had been sexually and emotionally abused. As a child of ten, my two older cousins had sexually abused me by playing sexual games with me. I had always filed that stuff away as "what children always do." But they were older, and I was coerced — I was sexually abused by them. The same thing happened with an older neighbor boy. As a child, I liked the sexual feelings created, and also I liked their attention when we played sexual games. I was being accepted at a time when I felt scared and unlovable. Later, when I was a little older, I sexually molested a couple of younger boys — again only playing "games" with them. For anyone else this behavior may very well have been a passing thing. For me, it grabbed my being and became an obsession. My masturbation, which started (again) as a game played very young called "feeling good," grew more and more important in my life. When I was twelve I started collecting pictures of women from very benign sources (Good Housekeeping as an example) but women not fully dressed. I would masturbate to those pictures. As time went on my acting out grew more powerful and more explicit. It became the life blood of my existence: it was my self-esteem, my father, my mother, my God.

Also, my father was an alcoholic. He left when I was five and I did not see him for 25 years after that, so I assumed his alcoholism didn't affect me. Reality is that his absence **greatly** affected me. I needed a father who would do more than call me up once a year at Christmas when drunk. I needed him to be there.

So as a child I felt very alone, very powerless, and very unimportant. Another child may have been able to overcome his or her circumstances, but God made me special — and also led me down the path I am on now.

Today things are the same, yet different. I have a scared and lonely child within me. But I can be the parent my child never had. I can also claim my self-esteem, for Jesus, my Higher Power, thinks I'm so special He died for me. And the obsession with sex is becoming an obsession with recovery. Best of all, I found I **can** be born again and grow into a new self — one I want to live with!

*Michael S.
Minneapolis, MN*

A Need for Love and Intimacy

As I write this I am in much pain and sadness. However, the pain and sadness are parts of life and recovery. Today I am free to bear the sadness and all my feelings, negative or positive, and to express them all and not act out. Thanks SAA and all my brothers and sisters.

I have been in recovery and 12-step groups for a very long time now. I have good abstinence in all my addictions, or should I say the symptoms to my real inner desire.

It would appear that for years, looking at me outwardly, I had “things under control”: I did not drink, I did not use drugs, I did not use food or sex to control my fears, pains, loneliness, and so on. However, there was **always** something missing, an empty place way down deep in my guts. It chewed at me constantly; I was scared, real scared of being real close to anyone. And especially a partner. I asked myself what was love and intimacy. I wanted to know, but was too scared to find out; I’d been hurt too many times.

I had so much shame I didn’t know where to go with it. Guilt was much easier to deal with than shame. In guilt I could own it, make the amends, ask God for forgiveness, and go on. What and how did I deal with shame? The shame was keeping me from being close and intimate. What if someone knew about my past and my childhood? Could they still accept and love me? I was having a hard time with it.

When God began to remove the outward signs and symptoms, what was left were the inward fears and shame.

Oh yes, I could get somewhat close and intimate with friends. That was safe. I didn’t have to live with them. I could run if it got too scary or too close.

In a partnership I believe we are much more afraid, naked, and exposed. The more I loved someone the easier it was to be hurt or misunderstood. That was the codependent part of me — my core beliefs.

All I ever knew before recovery was control, mine or someone else’s. And that wasn’t love, that was fear, mask wearing, and games. If I do things to please others or my partner out of fear of being abandoned or punished, that’s not love. But for years that’s all I did or knew.

There is a place in a good book that says something like this: “And they were naked in front of their God and each other and not ashamed.” For years I thought that meant physically naked. Today it means something very different. It says to me now that we’re naked emotionally, spiritually, mentally; no secrets, nothing to hide. That they were free from all the lies, games, control, setups, get-evens, compromising themselves and their dignity to be loved and accepted. That they could share all their feelings, their sins, their shortcomings, and so on. That they were always in respect for one another and loved for who they were, not what they did or didn’t do. That they were first individuals before they were a couple. And always their God was in the center holding them together in love, forgiveness, truth, and grace.

Thanks to God, recovery, and SAA, I truly know the gift of love. I can’t earn love nor buy it. Love is a gift always. My partner and I have this kind of love. We both will fight for, defend, and stand true to this love at any cost, for we now believe and have experienced that real love will endure the test of time or space. We have experienced some real adversities. If our love had not been real and most of all free with depth and honesty, it would have died or been crushed.

A Need for Love and Intimacy (continued)

We spent many months talking and sharing, taking some real scary risks, exposing our shames, guilts, resentments, feelings about our pasts, and fears of our futures. We were able to talk very openly about our sexualities, both positive and negative, without having to have sex to fix us or make things appear or go away for us. I had never been able to expose my sexuality so freely without judgments or fears. What a freedom to love and be loved with nothing hidden, not having to make payments of any kind for that love. To be free to be ourselves always whether we agree with each other or not.

Today, when I say to my partner "I love you," it is a different kind of love than I have ever had. I don't have to change or fix my partner today, just love him and encourage him to do and be the very best he can be for today. And he does the same for me.

I would have never known what God had intended love to be if I had not have had the fellowship to encourage me to take some risky steps. They were there whether I was failing or succeeding. No one ever shamed me, made demands on me, or told me I had to do anything. They gave me an example to follow and gave me the dignity to make my own choices. They also let me take the responsibility for those choices by myself, if the choice was a poor one; they rejoiced with me when the choice was a good one. I can't tell you today how grateful I am, even in my pain and my loss, to be free to love and be loved.

I have learned hard lessons on control, mine and others. Power struggles seem to have been a real trip for me to overcome. Today I know and believe that it may appear that I am being controlled at times in my recovery, because there are some very powerful people out there. It may look like they are in control because they can call the shots for my behaviors, but no one can change that. "To thine own self be true." I own what I think, feel, and believe today. it belongs to me: right or wrong, good or bad, I take responsibility for it all. I learned in SAA that I can try and modify my behavior, but that won't change what is inside: my core beliefs. I need to get to meetings and share what's inside to get it all out; to be honest with my partner in all things. If I do this we'll stay healthy and free.

Thank you all for loving me as I was and am now. And to God who has become a friend. But most of all to my partner who helped bring the real woman out — the soft, sensitive, gentle person I have become. His love and support kept me moving inside myself toward recovery and freedom. God bless you all.

*Anonymous
Iowa*

*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. If you have a modem, or can submit your writing on a computer disk (either Macintosh or IBM), that would be greatly appreciated. For more information concerning telecommunicating your article, please call the NSO office. Please submit all writings for the August newsletter by June 28, 1990.*

Unless otherwise noted, the contents of all articles, stories, and poems that appear in the *Plain Brown Rapper* reflect the opinions of the respective writers. Those opinions are not necessarily shared by the N.S.O, S.A.A., or the Literature Committee. Discussion of the contents of this newsletter is encouraged.