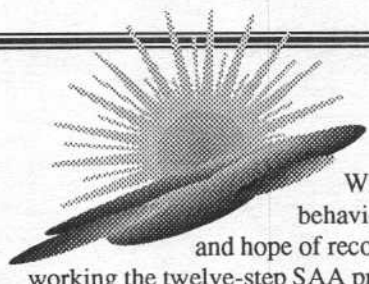


# THE *Plain Brown Rapper* The SAA Newsletter

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October, 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

## From the Editor

In last month's issue of the *PBR*, an article was printed concerning the book *Hope and Recovery*. Upon reflection and advice, I feel the article should not have been printed. I received a letter from the primary author of this book. He recalls that S.A.A. was given ample opportunity to participate in the publication and adoption of the book, up to the time it was published by CompCare. The author did not feel the *PBR* article gave accurate information concerning this issue. Obviously, there often is more than one reality surrounding an issue. I regret the publication of this article may have caused unwarranted anger or controversy, and agree with the letter writer: "It no longer matters and it distracts us from our primary purpose."

In the future, the *Plain Brown Rapper* will refrain from presenting articles that concern subjects whose merits are better addressed and debated within the intergroup structure or the NSO Executive Committee.

## Step Twelve

*Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to others, and to practice these principles in all our lives.*

I'm Snoopi and I'm a sex addict. The court date for my name change isn't until August 17, but I'm already going by my new name. It might take awhile for some of you to get used to my new name. I'm already used to it because it's been my nickname for years. My career is at the point where I'm slowly getting known, and I feel I want a really unusual name so I'll really stick out. So I'm totally changing my name rather than only having a stage name just to make things easier.

I feel like it's been a year since I did a step talk. For all the new members that don't really know me, I always type my talks out and have someone read it for me. That way I know I'm being understood. I do it the same way when I give talks in other places. The only hard thing about it is I always feel dumb just sitting there while my stuff is being read. I'm trying to find a way to deal with that problem, but I'm afraid there is no real solution.

Anyway, I want to start by talking about a spiritual awakening because I feel I've really had one over the past 6 months. I'm a little scared because my recovery not only seems strange, but is strange. So I'm going to talk a lot about where I'm personally at, but I don't want to give the impression that this is a good way to recover, because it's probably the best way to have a slip. On the other hand, we all work our personal program differently to get our needs met. I think what I'll be sharing will have great personal meaning to all of you, so I hope you keep in mind that some of this stuff is only for me.

A spiritual awakening to me has a lot to do with letting go of the past. In every other step talk I've done, I went into great detail on how I was abused as a child and everything, and it always felt like I did that only to somehow prove I really was abused. The only thing I ever proved was that I was still living in my childhood pain. I had this fantasy of somehow going to court and have the judge order that I be turned back into a child so I could grow up in a healthier home. I still sometimes wish that could happen. Ward and June Cleaver would be my parents (just kidding). But what it comes down to is, what would I want to have come out of it? The answer is I want an engraving of a wonderful time in my life that I can look back on. At times it seems like the abuse I had is an engraving on my soul. But if you think about it, the abuse was only a painting my environment put into my memory. It was not something I willingly took part in. The pain is painted

*Continued on Page 2*

## **Step Twelve (continued)**

in my mind, but it doesn't have to be engraved in my heart and life. Then how do you create the good old days? Well, you start with today. Yes, you still have to get up each day and work your program, but yesterday does not get up with you. We tend to think "one day at a time" means don't set your eyes on the future, but I think it also means don't carry yesterday into today. We all have the power to make today count. Yesterday will always speak for itself, and to a point yesterday can never become the future. Yesterday can affect the future, but you can't relive yesterday unless you know something I don't know. So what I've been doing is making today matter to me. Today is the day when I can turn things over to my Higher Power — God — and know I have choices in the here and now, that I can let become an engraving and build me up as a person, rather than tearing my emotions apart.

I've been hanging out at the Gay 90's about five nights a week, and I feel like I live there. I can always be found up in the piano bar with a 7-Up or Coke in my hand. That place really means a lot to me. I wish I knew how to tell you this, but by being there I have learned how to love myself. I have a computer that I program to sing, and I often get requests to do certain songs. I do impersonations, jokes, comedies, you name it. It takes an average of 70 hours to program one song. It's hard because I have to do it so the pianist can follow, and also leave the right amount of time for him to do the instrumental parts. But aside from doing music and things, I've been able to prove to myself that Dad was wrong when he said I could never do anything.

I've been writing since age 8, and had a book published when I was 18. I've also done a lot of other stuff in the area of art in music. When you're the writer, you don't always see people's reactions before your stuff gets lost, thrown away, or whatever. I get a lot of junk mail, and every time I throw some away, I know the newsletter I write for must go to a few people who consider it junk mail. It hurts when you work so hard to get someplace, and one rejection out of 1,000 is enough to make you give up. The first couple of times I did a step talk I got a standing ovation. That's very hard for me to deal with because it doesn't feel right. I guess I always hope my talks will be engraving to people; standing ovations give me the feeling I was heard, but not really. I think of God as not wanting a standing ovation. He wants us to reflect everything He has done in our lives; to keep finding meaning for our own lives to also give Him meaning. As I write and use all the talents I have, I want it to be meaningful to other people in a way that will help them with their own spirituality.

We all have jobs, we all have things that take up time. We can have some great moments like graduating from school, getting a job, buying a house, having a kid, or whatever. I live in a nursing home where people regularly die, and I'm faced with the question of what do I want to take to the grave some 60 years from now. If I was hit by a car today, what would I die with? Earthly accomplishments are really no answer. I think things like the Twelve Steps help bring about my spirituality to where I know I admitted my powerlessness, made my amends, and did each of the steps, along with communicating with my Higher Power. Then I know that I'm dealing with the necessary things.

When I think about Bill, who first formed a Twelve-Step program, I think he wanted people to walk a mile in each others' shoes; to be able to get together and look beyond the common addiction and share the source of the problem. The message we carry is not that we all have the same addiction, but rather it's an acknowledgement of understanding and hope. Different people like to think of the Twelve Steps in different ways. I have four wheels, so let me tell you my interpretation. Say you're trying to ride a bike — or a wheelchair in my case — up a long, steep hill. If you try to ride straight up, it's very hard. If you zig-zag all the way up, you don't have to peddle so hard. Well, I think of the Twelve Steps along with the tools of the program as being continually laid out in a zig-zag formation. If you're having a hard time, or if you should step on a banana peel, you can use any part of the program as leverage to keep going forward. A lot of times I feel I'm not recovering, but then I realize I just took a big zig or zag to keep right on going. And when I know other people in the program share my shoes in their own way, it makes it easier to pick up the phone, or come to a meeting, or do whatever it is to keep me going.

My parents both died by the time I was 18, so I don't have much of a family. I tried finding a family within a church, but for me it's not possible. Too many people pat me on the head or talk down to me because I appear to be retarded. I totally understand this because sitting in church reading a hymn book doesn't tell anyone much of anything. The other day something on the radio sparked a thought in my mind that didn't go very far, yet I want to work it into this talk. I listened to a talk show I used to love, but the guy wouldn't let anyone ask a full question or make a full statement, which was annoying. It's a religious talk show, and he has all these witches and satanists on his show who often sound more sane than he does. The thing that really struck me — and I hadn't heard after listening for two years — was that, in almost every religion, to love someone should mean you want them healed. I'm not saying the talk show was wrong, but I just find it interesting that everyone was looking for faults in other people. I think the reason I find it interesting is because it tells me we are all basically brought up to believe everyone has something wrong with them.



# NSO REPORTS

## Notes from the National Service Organization Office

We have been deluged with letters from an Ann Landers column in which she gave out our address to a female who had written to her about being sexually addicted. We estimate having received and responded to 3,500 letters, within two weeks of the time the column appeared in syndication around the nation and Canada. We hope almost every group will gain new members through this call for help, and foresee new groups in areas where we had nothing previously. Obviously there is a profound need for S.A.A., and the National Service office is doing as much as possible to meet the needs of these many newcomers.

Locally, many individuals have extended themselves a great deal, volunteering long hours to help answer all those letters. We could not have done it without their help!

We are in awe and filled with gratitude to receive so many letters from sex addicts who are seeking recovery. However, we incurred some large expenses as the result of this onslaught of inquiries due to costs of brochures, other printing, copying, envelopes, postage, etc. Because of this, we are seriously low in funds. If you and/or your group are able to send the National Service office additional donations, you will greatly help our endeavors to meet current monthly expenses and ensure that future requests for information will be fully and timely met.

### Prison Outreach

A prison outreach fund has been created. This fund is aimed at supplying S.A.A. literature to people who are incarcerated and sexually addicted. Some future funds will also go toward meeting the expenses of a (hopefully) soon-to-be-formed prison outreach committee.

Current account balance: \$0.00

## August Donations to the National Service Organization

GROUP:	CITY:	STATE:	AMOUNT:
KINO GROUP .....	TUCSON .....	AZ .....	\$ 16.00
TUCSON INTERGROUP .....	TUCSON .....	AZ .....	89.30
DON E. ....	.....	CA .....	10.00
SERENITY FELLOWSHIP .....	ATLANTA .....	GA .....	18.00
ROCKFORD S.A.A. ....	ROCKFORD .....	IL .....	50.00
MEETING OF FRIENDS .....	ELKHART .....	IN .....	10.00
TOPEKA S.A.A. ....	TOPEKA .....	KS .....	20.00
KALAMAZOO S.A.A. ....	KALAMAZOO .....	MI .....	50.00
HOPE FOR WOMEN .....	.....	MI .....	10.00
FLINT S.A.A. ....	FLINT .....	MI .....	25.00
SWARTZ CREEK S.A.A. ....	SWARTZ CR. ....	MI .....	30.00
DESCHONE/UTICA S.A.A. ....	UTICA .....	MI .....	30.00
LANSING S.A.A. ....	LANSING .....	MI .....	10.00
WEDNESDAY MEN'S BOUNDARY .....	S. MPLS. ....	MN .....	7.50
THURSDAY MEN'S CLOSED 5:30 .....	ST. PAUL .....	MN .....	54.00
8:00 CLOSED MEN'S .....	ST. PAUL .....	MN .....	18.00
THURSDAY MEN'S CLOSED .....	SE. MPLS. ....	MN .....	10.00
THE BALANCE GROUP .....	SE. MPLS. ....	MN .....	5.00
MON. MEN'S CLOSED .....	ANOKA .....	MN .....	20.50
SAT. WOMEN'S BOUNDARY .....	S. MPLS. ....	MN .....	35.00
FRIDAY MEN'S WALK-IN .....	S. MPLS. ....	MN .....	20.00
SAT. MIXED OPEN .....	S. MPLS. ....	MN .....	22.00
THURS. CLOSED MEN'S .....	U OF MN .....	MN .....	38.00
ANONYMOUS .....	.....	MN .....	10.00
ROCHESTER SAA .....	ROCHESTER .....	MN .....	10.00
THURS. 8:00 MEN'S CLOSED .....	ST. PAUL .....	MN .....	25.00
THURSDAY 5:00 MEN'S .....	S.E. MPLS. ....	MN .....	25.00
WED. 7:00 ST. PAUL MEN'S .....	ST. PAUL .....	MN .....	5.00
SUNDAY MEN'S OPEN .....	S. MPLS. ....	MN .....	20.00
MEN'S CLOSED SUNDAY .....	LONG LAKE .....	MN .....	50.00
LAKE HARRIET, SUN, BOUNDARY .....	S. MPLS. ....	MN .....	27.00
ST. PAUL MON MEN'S BOUNDARY .....	ST. PAUL .....	MN .....	14.00
THURSDAY MEN'S OPEN GROUP .....	BR. CENTER .....	MN .....	20.00
TUESDAY GAY AND BI-SEXUAL MEN .....	MPLS. ....	MN .....	15.00
TUES. OPEN MEN'S .....	S. MPLS. ....	MN .....	12.50
TUES. MEN'S CLOSED .....	ST. PAUL .....	MN .....	16.00
JOURNEY INTO LIGHT .....	DAYTON .....	OH .....	40.00
FREEDOM GROUP .....	TULSA .....	OK .....	15.00
RENO S.A.A. ....	RENO .....	NV .....	10.00
KNOXVILLE SAA .....	KNOXVILLE .....	TN .....	20.00
CHERYL C. ....	.....	TX .....	20.00
SAN ANTONIO S.A.A. ....	SAN ANTONIO .....	TX .....	10.00
THE PINES GROUP .....	DALLAS .....	TX .....	55.25
IRVING S.A.A. ....	IRVING .....	TX .....	5.00
VICTORIA H. ....	DALLAS .....	TX .....	5.00
HOUSTON INTERGROUP .....	HOUSTON .....	TX .....	64.00
TACOMA, SATURDAY .....	TACOMA .....	WA .....	40.31
SHARON S. ....	.....	WI .....	100.00
WED. NOON .....	MADISON .....	WI .....	\$20.00
TOTAL .....			\$ 1,252.36

## **Recovery News**

### **National Sexual Addiction Hotline Introduced by Golden Valley Health Center**

(Minneapolis) — Persons with addictive sexual behavior now have a resource for professional help: the National Sexual Addiction Hotline, 1-800-321-2066. This Hotline is sponsored by Golden Valley Health Center.

The toll-free number offers callers confidential information on sexual addiction, and locations of sexual addiction professional treatment providers. A national computer base of private practitioners is accessed by persons answering hotline calls. Since its inception in January, the hotline has received more than 1,600 calls.

### **1990 Fall SAA/CoSA Retreat**

We are returning to Camp Cho-Yeh, a beautiful wooded place set in the Piney Woods of East Texas, about 1-1/2 hours north of downtown Houston. The retreat will be held in a motel-like facility, with separate housing for men, women, and couples (room assignments on a first come, first served basis).

Cost per person is \$70 Triple Occupancy and \$85 Double Occupancy. Arrangements for special dietary needs must be made no later than September 29.

A confirmation letter will be sent as long as registration is received before October 31, 1990. (We are sorry that there can be no refunds due to our financial commitment to the camp.)

For further information and/or a registration form, please call Craig (713) 488-6602 or Roberta (713) 868-3935.

### **Letter From Victoria**

Dear South Central Region,

This is to let you know that I have resigned from the NSO Board as your Representative. Pressing personal issues and a more demanding business life require all the energy I have.

I have enjoyed serving you this last year, and I am confident the universe will provide the perfect replacement.

Peace be with you on your journey,

*Victoria*

*Trusted Servant*

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**SAA ORDERING INFORMATION  
SUMMER 1990**

Mail to: S.A.A. Literature, P.O. Box 3038, Minneapolis, MN 55403; phone (612) 871-1520

Please send me the following materials. Prices include shipping and handling. (With overseas orders, please include an additional 20% to help defray the additional postage.)

**National Service Organization Approved Items**

QUANTITY		TOTAL AMOUNT
_____	S.A.A. Group Guide .....	@ 4.50 _____
_____	Abstinence and Boundaries in S.A.A. ....	@ 2.50 _____
_____	..... or 12 for 25.00 _____	
_____	First Step to Recovery .....	@ 1.25 _____
_____	..... or 12 for 10.00 _____	
_____	S.A.A. 21 Questions for self assessment, brochures .....	@ .10 _____
_____	..... or 12 for 1.00 _____	
_____	The Plain Brown Rapper (1 year) .....	@ 6.00 _____
_____	NEW The Plain Brown Rapper group subscription rates (1 year, each)	
_____	10 to 19 to the same address .....	@ 4.50 _____
_____	20 or more to the same address .....	@ 3.00 _____
_____	NEW S.A.A. Fellowship Directory .....	@ 3.50 _____
_____	S.A.A. Medallions .....	@ 2.50 _____
_____	Blank	_____
_____	6 MO	_____
_____	18 MO	_____
_____	4 YR	_____
_____	7 YR	_____
_____	10 YR	_____
_____	1 MO	_____
_____	9 MO	_____
_____	2 YR	_____
_____	5 YR	_____
_____	8 YR	_____
_____	11 YR	_____
_____	3 MO	_____
_____	1 YR	_____
_____	3 YR	_____
_____	6 YR	_____
_____	9 YR	_____
_____	12 YR	_____

**"CARRYING THE MESSAGE" CONFERENCE - AUDIO TAPES**

QUANTITY	AMOUNT	
_____	1. The Founding of S.A.A., Pat C. ....	@ 6.00 _____
_____	2. Multiple addictions: Barbara B. ....	@ 6.00 _____
_____	3. Measuring and Celebrating Progress, Rich S. ....	@ 6.00 _____
_____	4. Exploring Healthy Sexuality, Douglas P. ....	@ 6.00 _____
_____	5. Sharing our recovery — Three stories: S.A.A., COSA, and a Couple .....	@ 6.00 _____
_____	6. Sharing our recovery Part Two .....	@ 6.00 _____
_____	7. Personal Stories, Gregory M., Linda M. ....	@ 6.00 _____
_____	☛ Order any six tapes for the price of five .....	@ 30.00 _____
_____	"Carrying the Message" T-shirts in _____ large or _____ extra large .....	@ 9.00 _____

**Twin Cities S.A.A. Intergroup Items**

_____	NEW! Getting Started in Sex Addicts Anonymous; a beginner's packet for recovering sex addicts .....	@ 2.50 _____
_____	.....	12 for 25.00 _____

**Other Recovery Items**

_____	Answers in the Heart (meditations) .....	@ 8.00 _____
_____	Out of the Shadows (Carnes) .....	@ 12.00 _____
_____	Contrary to Love (Carnes) .....	@ 11.00 _____
_____	Women, Sex, and Addiction (Kasl) .....	@ 20.00 (\$10.00 softcover) _____
_____	Hazelden Collection of step guides .....	@ 10.00 _____
_____	Hope and Recovery (paper-back) .....	@ 12.00 _____
_____	áHope and Recovery (abridged, on tape) .....	@ 17.00 _____
_____	Hope and Recovery Workbook .....	@ 10.00 _____
_____	A Male Grief: Notes on Pornography .....	@ 4.50 _____

Mn. residents add 6.5% sales tax .....

Total Enclosed .....

Make checks payable to SAA literature

Ship to (please print clearly):

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

## Literature Description

### N.S.O. Approved Items:

1. **Group Guide** — A complete guide including a suggested meeting agenda, the twelve steps and twelve traditions, tools of the program, the promises, How it Works, etc.
2. **Abstinence and Boundaries in S.A.A.** — A booklet of contributions made by S.A.A. members sharing their written sexual sobriety programs. This booklet is a helpful tool for individuals who are in the process of defining both abstinence and boundaries in their own program.
3. **First Step To Recovery** — A helpful booklet (guide) for preparing a first step presentation. The guide is useful in facilitating addicts in viewing the differing areas of their powerlessness and unmanageability.
4. **S.A.A. 21 Questions For Self Assessment** — This pamphlet is a tool for people seeking to find out if they have a sexual addiction.
5. **The Plain Brown Rapper** — The National Service Organization of S.A.A.'s monthly newsletter, filled with fellowship updates regarding upcoming events, and new projects. This newsletter is written by and for the S.A.A. membership, and includes recovery stories, insights, and poems. The P.B.R. will soon be available at group discounted rates.
6. **S.A.A. Medallions** — The S.A.A. "From Shame To Grace" medallions are both a keepsake and a staple of recovery, helping S.A.A. members build and honor a positive history.
7. 1990 "Carrying the Message" Conference audiotapes — A selection of powerful recovery presentations from the conference.

### Twin Cities Intergroup approved Items:

8. **Getting Started in S.A.A.**, a beginner's packet for recovering sex addicts — This newcomer booklet offers a great deal of information which helps to ground people in the program of S.A.A. The booklet focuses on answering questions beginners often have about recovery from sexual addiction. Many people already in the program have found it very helpful to read this booklet.

### Other Recovery Items:

9. *Answers In The Heart*, Hazelden  
A daily meditation book written by a female and male member of S.A.A.
10. *Out Of The Shadows*, Dr. Patrick Carnes  
This was the first book explaining and detailing sexual addiction.
11. *Contrary to Love*, Dr. Patrick Carnes
12. *Women Sex And Addiction*, Dr. Charlotte Kasl  
This book looks at sexual addiction from women's perspectives.
13. *Collection Of Step Guides*, Hazelden  
Twelve separate step guides. These guides are well crafted and can be transposed for several addictions.
14. *Hope And Recovery*, Compcare/paperback  
A "Big Book" styled book for recovering sex addicts. Includes a section of personal stories.
15. *Hope And Recovery*, Compcare/cassette tapes  
An abridged version of the above.
16. *Hope and Recovery Workbook*
17. *A Male Grief: Notes On Pornography And Addiction*, David Mura.  
This booklet is a powerful essay on sex addiction and our sexual culture.

In keeping with the sixth tradition, S.A.A. offers no opinion on non-program materials. We choose to sell these items as a means of offering resource options, but they do not necessarily represent S.A.A. The conference tapes although put on by program people, are as of yet not approved.

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## Step Twelve (continued)

I think it's hard for any of us to hear "you did fine" without having a "but" attached to it. I gave up trying to be perfect because trying to be perfect just drove me further into my addiction. I taught myself how to write music because I didn't want to feel I had to learn whatever the teacher would want. I like it because I can spend all the time I want on a song without having to meet a real deadline or be told what the song has to say. It's easier for me because if I feel I won't do something right, I tend to put it off and/or not do it at all. I'm not saying this is always right because I do have other skills I can't uncover on my own. However, I find this goes back to the engraving I was talking about. I think if a person can set up his or her environment to increase their self-esteem, their own emotions will somehow bring about new talents that perhaps were just covered up because too many people were putting them down. It's a fine line because you don't want to never hear anything negative, yet it should be a healthy environment so you don't hear more than what you can handle. In recovery, none of the Twelve Steps rush you into anything, or say do it perfectly. Also, a step is never really finished. That helps me because I don't like doing something one time only, and then find I could have done more.

I believe in God and I'm so glad I can talk to Him more than once a day. Did you ever lock yourself out of your house? You head out to your car with the full tank of gas. Everything is perfect until you try starting the car: the car key is on the same keyring as your house key, both sitting on a table you can see from an outside window. Okay, now imagine you're praying and you feel great because you think you told God everything. You end the prayer and two seconds later you remember a major thing you need to pray about, but you can only pray once a day. I'm glad I can never lock myself out of communicating with God. It's the same idea with the Twelve Steps. We can reach a point in our lives when we feel we are totally done with a certain step, but all the steps and tools remain there to fall back into at any time. That personally means a lot to me.

I hope you can see how the Twelve Steps and the whole Twelve-Step program is a reflection of God. I have this tradition of sharing a song with every step talk. I wrote a song that wasn't intended for the Twelve-Step program, but I think it fits in. It's called "Reflections of God," and it was intended more for a church service. I usually try to play a song that doesn't talk about Jesus because I'm not really into forcing religion. So if you can try to adapt the song to your own Higher Power, I hope you can draw from this song. I wrote it and someone recorded it just a bit too slow. I'm going to play it a little faster because not only is it too slow, but she did it in the wrong key. So if you're wondering who has such a strange sounding voice, it's just the tape at a faster speed.

*Snoop*

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## The Boy in Me

In 1948, there was a little boy;  
Seldom did he get a brand new toy.

Blonde, curly hair and a great big smile,  
Always whistling, he had his own style.

He was clean; he was small for his age;  
Thirst for knowledge filled him in this stage.

He ran for fun and enjoyed his life;  
He did not understand the word strife.

He was so happy and full of joy;  
I love him so, this small, happy boy.

He shall live in my mind at all times;  
In me his sweet and happy peace climbs.

I wish he could reflect my love back;  
But, alas, he's stuck and can't react.

Maybe, someday, I'll be able to regain  
The true innocence and forget the pain.

His brown teddy bear and his brand new toy  
Will always be special to this young boy.

But now I'm a man with God as my guide;  
I'm walking tall with Him at my right side

While on my left walks the blonde, little boy;  
With them both, my spirit is full of joy.

*Walt P.  
Iowa*

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## Forgiveness

The dictionary has several different words that describe Forgiveness. I feel I can say one: *Love*. If you believe them, trust them, love them, you can always forgive them. You cannot have any of the others without forgiveness. Forgiveness starts in our own hearts. We will go on offending until we can forgive our true self.

Forgiveness is like an innocent child (done nothing wrong) who is *cold*. There is a stove nearby and so they go to become warmed by it. When they do, they get too close and get burned.

Now they can have someone explain to them why they got burned and they don't feel shamed or afraid of the stove, but they come to understand that the stove is only a piece of the problem. They are not made fun of for touching the stove, but loved and told how to feel the warmth but not to get burned. This is a healthy home, a functional family where God's true presence is alive.

On the other side, if the child gets burned, as it turns to find forgiveness or love (one in the same), it is shamed. From then on they feel everything God does not want them to feel. They feel small and forgotten. They feel stupid and worthless, tired and alone. They feel as though they were wrong for ever trying to get warm. They are afraid to trust their feelings that require another. They feel ashamed for simply having needs. They blame themselves for getting hurt, then others for letting them. Then themselves for they know it was all their fault, for they remember the first time they were cold and wanted to be loved, to get a little warmth. They were wrong then, so they must be wrong now. No forgiveness. No hope. No love. Only shame and deep depression because, even though they try to do what they thought was right, the family put a core belief inside of that child that they were bad. This is a dysfunctional family where true love and respect never existed.

For some of these wounded children, they find a way to get warmth only to find they were once again used and made fun of. The pain in their precious heart is so great and the confusion of what is true and what is not is so great that they convince themselves they are bad. Never have they forgiven themselves for getting burned as a child. You see, there was no love for the child, only need for the parent.

I believe that if you love somebody enough, just as Jesus loved us, that love will overpower the inner pain and trust will be gained for perhaps the first time.

Our program tells us that we are good. Steps 1, 2, and 3 tell our story in a way that only the child within truly knows. The 2nd and 3rd Steps tell and show us love — God's love and acceptance of us. Step 4 allows us to go back to the first time we were cold and to remember all the times we were confused and hurt by our own lack of forgiveness. I believe all the things I did were in some way a result of my own misconception of who I was. I was laughed at. I was shamed. I did all this to others. When I wrote it all out I saw a picture. The picture had a lot of pain in it, yet when I studied it close, I saw a way to remove the clouds and bring in the sun — to let go of the shame and to feel the warm rays of the sun. The Father would warm me.

The 5th Step allows us to be forgiven deep within, to *own* all our own mistakes and give them to God. God is a good God. Unlike our other father, He will love us and help us to see the *good* we do each day and show us the way to get warmed by the stove, while not getting burned.

Love is forgiving . . . God forgives . . . so do I. God never shames, nor should I have the right nor the desire. When you can accept the truth, the truth will set you free! You are love and you always will be.

Bob L.  
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 November newsletter by September 21, 1990.*

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