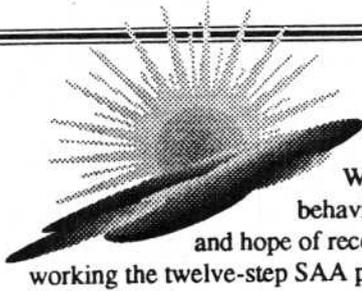


The SAA Newsletter

THE Plain Brown Rapper

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February, 1991 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

Thought For the Month

While pondering the overwhelming amount of dysfunction prevalent in our world, have you ever wondered if Twelve Step work — whether meeting with someone, spreading the word about SAA, service work, or just listening — makes a difference? If you have had your doubts, you are not alone.

In his book, *The Star Thrower*, Loren E. Eiseley talks of the day when he was walking along a sandy beach where thousands of starfish had been washed upon the shore. He noticed a boy picking up the starfish one by one and throwing them back into the ocean. Eiseley observed the boy for a few minutes and then asked what he was doing. The boy replied that he was returning the starfish to the sea, otherwise they would die.

Eiseley then asked how saving a few, when so many were doomed, would make any difference whatsoever? The boy picked up a starfish and as he threw it back said, "It's going to make a lot of difference to this one."

Eiseley left the boy and went home to continue writing only to find he could not type a single word. He returned to the beach . . . and spent the rest of the day helping the boy throw starfish into the sea.

Decidedly Celibate

I have made a conscious choice to abstain from sex on a long-term temporary basis. My reasoning has nothing to do with the AIDS scare or other sexually transmitted diseases, morality or frigidity. Oddly enough, my decision ultimately comes of an intense, determined desire for an intimate relationship.

Whereas married people sometimes take sex for granted, single people of all ages and experiences face continuing decisions about their sexuality, including the choice of being sexually active, being sexually active with one person, or with more than one.

As a single person, I won't criticize those who partake in what could be called "sex for sport." Some of my favorite people have gone through at least a short-term participation in the game. This "phase" has its place — and takes its toll — in many lives.

Singles often justify their promiscuity, rationalizing that they're temporary (or permanently) incapable of (or unwilling to) commit themselves to any form of an ongoing relationship.

A friend who has been divorced ten years is honest to say, "I miss the cuddling and holding and touching. What I miss most is the physical contact."

Continued on Page 2

Decidedly Celibate (continued)

She wasn't even necessarily talking about sex, although I expect she misses that, too. She confesses guilt over several short-term sexual involvements in the first couple years following her divorce. She revealed to me, "I was so pathetically lonely after my divorce. I wasn't only mourning my marriage, I was mourning that there might never be someone else." Sexual contact with lots of men was a desperate way for her to seek male approval after the rejection suffered in divorce. Her one-night stands were a trade-off of a sort; the act of intercourse in exchange for a moment of pretended intimacy and manufactured affection, all too fleeting.

Deprived for prolonged periods of time of touching and stroking, even good old-fashioned sex — and given a cocktail or two to lower inhibition — intense body hunger can drive any normal libido into the arms of an agreeable stranger or moderate friend. It's not a crime to like sex, even a lot, and two adults consenting to have sex can have sex; no one made it a physical requirement that they love one another.

I, however, look for more emotional intimacy than can be found in casual sexual encounters. I expect it to be difficult to find a partner who cares about intimacy as much as I do, and I expect it to take a great deal of time to develop such a relationship. I'm not one for love-at-first-sight, thanks, but it's a lovely compliment. The quality sharing that my ideal of lovemaking is all about just isn't going to be found at closing time in the neighborhood country western bar.

Meanwhile, abstinence removes all worries of venereal disease, pregnancy, and a great deal of the anxiety in dating. I know that the men I see spend time with me for my delightful company. I don't have to worry about whether we'll wind up in bed. Getting to know the person is the emphasis, that's what matters. We can be equals. We can be friends. I don't need anything from him, and I'm free to be me. Dating can be innocent and fun when the complications of ego and sex are left out of the picture. Many men worth their salt are happy to have a friendly, nonsexual relationship. There's a notable relief on the part of most men when the pressure of such expectations is removed. It's amazing.

For the time being, celibacy offers a safeguard for my personal freedom, too. Being single and unattached has allowed me to do what I want when I want. I help others solve problems, rather than have my own. My relationships grow richer. My friends and I appreciate each other more. I've come to better understand the importance of friendship. I'm as embedded in relationships and social networks — maybe more — than my women friends who are presently married or living with someone. My family, too, is a significant source of intimacy and helps to fill any need I may feel for more important relationships.

Once the choice was recognized and accepted, it opened up new possibilities for security and comfort in my life. I'm happy and satisfied, enjoying affection, the company of friends, and lots of sensual pleasures.

Without intercourse, life is not without sensuality. Quite the contrary, sexuality unfolds in new ways; just feeling the sun on your skin, exchanging a massage with a friend, luxuriating in a bubble bath, and a variety of pleasures are provided by cuddles, caresses, and hugs from many sources. These body experiences are enriching, making one feel alive and vital as any lovemaking session should. The largest human sex organ is the mind.

I expect to find much more quickly the relationship I hope will last a lifetime of sharing, trust and commitment, than I would wading through one half-committed sexual relationship followed by another.

I just don't care to detract from sexuality by splitting it from my emotions. Terrific sex occurs with total abandon. Total abandon means a high degree of vulnerability. Vulnerability without hurt isn't possible without trust. For such high level trust to evolve, any relationship requires an enormous amount of time, work, love, and shared experience. You can't get any of that without the security of strong commitment.

In a long-term relationship, lovemaking provides a way to express deepest feelings of tenderness and mutual caring. A loving partner who understands and accepts and is willing to compromise is an important element in a satisfying sexual relationship.

I'm decidedly willing to wait . . . for it all, thanks.

— Anonymous

NSO REPORTS

Notes From the NSO Office

Donations Note

Starting with this issue of the P.B.R., donation acknowledgments will appear quarterly. We are doing this to give as much space as possible to recovery articles. If you have any questions or comments, please call the N.S.O. office at 612-339-0217.

Wish List

The National Service Office is in need of several pieces of office equipment. We wish to gain these items so that we might improve office efficiency. Those interested may give towards an item (not in excess of \$1000 per year), or you may choose to donate equipment that you possess.

All contributions are tax deductible and our office will return a receipt for these donations of funds or office goods.

Here is a list of office machines which we are in need of. The figures which appear next to the items are rough estimates of what new products would cost.

- | | |
|--|------------|
| 1. Folding machine | \$ 500.00 |
| 2. Laser printer | \$1,000.00 |
| 3. Fax machine | \$ 700.00 |
| 4. IBM comp. Modem | \$ 100.00 |
| 5. A new copier which is more efficient. | \$1,000.00 |

Poetry of Recovery

Inventory

I did some 12 step inventory,
it was not as easy as I had thought.
It looks like someone else,
I wish I could pretend it's not me.

Can I deny my past?
Don't return to denial.
I'll try not to run away in fear,
but I do need some help.

Can I ever get over my past?
Will it ever disappear?
I feel ashamed of myself,
I don't like feeling weak and powerless.

— Bob
Oregon

Love

Love is not having to be sorry;
Love can sometimes be full of
worry.

Love is a very necessary part of
life;
Live sees us through our pitfalls
and strife.

Love is human, love is fun;
Love is to be shared with every-
one.

Love takes risks; love is caring;
Love is our soul to others baring.

Love is complex; love is simple;
Love can start from someone's
dimple.

Love is for ourselves and those
around;
Love must be shared for it to
abound.

Love is silent; love is loud;
Love is private; love is proud.

Love is what you to me brought;
Love is something we must be
taught.

Love is what you make it to be;
Love is what you share most with
me.

— Walter P.
Iowa



The Child Within

Sex Addiction Connection

It was at the May SAA Conference in Minneapolis that it happened. Bambino was presenting his section of "Letting the Child Within Play." He asked us to image our earliest memories of ourselves as children. No memories came for me, than I remembered a photo of myself; I was 6 or 7 that I could see in my mind's eye. But when Bambino asked us what feelings we could remember, I went blank. Then I heard the cry of a diapered 18-month-old baby sitting in the grass. Somehow I knew its age. Its crying so disturbed me, I don't remember the rest of the session other than blindly going up front to collect handouts. The handout was all on incest . . . "I don't want this," I thought, but kept it.

The next weekend a friend and I drove up north to a cabin in the woods to put closure on my living in Minnesota and getting ready to move to Louisiana. She was dealing with childhood abandonment issues and woke in the night screaming from a nightmare. This woke me and as she shared her dream, I remembered the one I was having. The next morning I couldn't connect any meaning to my dream, so I decided to try right brain use. I put my pen in my nondominant hand, closed my eyes, and started to draw. It scared me because the muscles in my hand and arm became tight in rage as fierce strokes appeared. My thigh and leg muscles started to pain. There was a stabbing pain in my vagina. I opened my eyes and I had drawn a seated baby. The head and arms were disconnected from the lower body. That was my first body remembrance of being sexually abused as an 18-month-old baby.

Those of you who have begun to remember know the doubt that is there — the denial that this is just part of my imagination. But it is almost two months later and I know, through dreams and body sensations, that it happened twice, once as an 18-month old and once as a 3-year old. Time will share its secrets with me. In each new discovery I feel the pain that I had to stuff then. I've cried almost daily. Now I understand in a new way why I was sexually addicted. I have four and a half years of recovery in SAA and it is for me the ripe time to remember. This is my story and in the future I'd like to continue to share the process of my healing my little one within.

— Francie E.
New Orleans, LA



Women In Recovery

Dear sisters and brothers of SAA,

You'll never know how much the *Plain Brown Rapper* has meant to me here down in Atlanta. I am originally from Minneapolis and transferred down here to Atlanta about three years ago. In February I will have six years in this program. I started in the Saturday Morning SAA Women's group in Minneapolis. We in Newnan/Peachtree City just started a Monday Noon SAA Women's group. There are three of us so far, but I know that we will blossom and grow. The *Plain Brown Rapper* is my connection to Minneapolis and has a significant piece in my recovery. I would like to say "Hi!" to ya all! Below is a piece of my thoughts about my recovery.

Better Today's

Most of the time my days are good.
I have a choice of recovery.
When I look in the mirror, I am my best friend.
No longer am I my worst enemy.
My H.P. smiles around me.
My precious child smiles and coos.
We are on a journey all together this time.
Knowing we'll never part.
I now have peace.
I now set boundaries.
And I deserve recovery.
The walk I am on is just a beginning.
I have faith and hope of good things to come.
We walk as a family, H.P., precious child, and I.

Thanks!

— Linda M.
Atlanta, GA

REPORT FROM THE N.S.O. LITERATURE COMMITTEE - 11-90

At the end of November the literature committee met in the Twin Cities. At the meetings we had committee members from Louisiana, Texas, Washington, and Minnesota. The editor of the P.B.R. was present for most of the weekend meetings as well.

High-lights of the meeting:

1. The group guide was revised and updated significantly, and will soon be published.
2. The committee drafted and passed on to the N.S.O. board a statement on felonious and life threatening behavior.
3. Our little brochure was revised significantly to provide more information.
4. Worked on revision a piece from Los Angeles called "The bubble", we are awaiting obtaining copyrights before it can be printed.
5. Discussed everything.

TWO NEW THINGS TO CONSIDER:

1. We now have aluminum medallions available.
2. T.C. Intergroup has just published a "Wonderful!" new booklet, "Exploring healthy sexuality".

(See order blank)

A TRADITIONAL COLUMN

"Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities."

Having anonymity at the core of our program means that in essence we sacrifice our personal desires for the good of the group. It means that we do not seek acclaim or recognition for membership in this program. Knowing that we are just a piece of the whole is what gives us assurance, confidence and trust in this program. We are all anonymous, we are all sex addicts, these are the most important characteristics we share when we get together as a group.

Another aspect of anonymity that encourages our confidence and trust is simply that we do not reveal names or anecdotes of members of this program. An important piece of claiming our own recovery is choosing how and with whom we break our own anonymity; but always we must remember to remain anonymous in the public forum.

Practical working of this tradition can sometimes be difficult, I know that I have struggled with it. Sometimes I have lost sight of the principles because of the personalities. This is not entirely bad, because certainly, it is to personalities that I look, for expressions of the program's principles. I did not learn much about acceptance, humility or how to turn things over, from reading about it in a book. No, I first learned to value these things and later attain them, to some degree, by listening and relating to other addicts. The principles of the program are made real to me by personalities, and this is inherently good. The problem though, for me, has come when I focused too much on the personalities, either by limiting the principle to a certain person's expression of it (which amounts to aggrandizing someone) or when I forgot the principle because of the personality (which amounts to resenting or judging someone.) In both of these instances I had forgotten the essential link between principle and personality which is anonymity.

When I was new to this program I erred by thinking that the principle of anonymity is supposed to operate inside the group, not just outside the group. I heard that "our status outside the group" was not important and somehow I took that to mean that I had great license to choose what I would reveal about myself to the group. Bill W., a co-founder of Alcoholics Anonymous speaks to this very directly when he says that a lack of anonymity within the group is as crucial to recovery as is a policy of anonymity outside the group.

The views expressed here are mine.

-Elizabeth G.

Literature Description

N.S.O. Approved Items:

1. **S.A.A. 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. Self-Assessment Brochure** — 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.
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. An aluminum version for up to 9 months is available at a reduced cost.
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.
9. **Exploring Healthy Sexuality** — A collection of personal stories on what healthy sexuality has come to mean to some members of S.A.A. in their recoveries.

Other Recovery Items:

10. *Answers In The Heart*, Hazelden
A daily meditation book written by a female and male member of S.A.A.
11. *Out Of The Shadows*, Dr. Patrick Carnes
This was the first book explaining and detailing sexual addiction.
12. *Women Sex And Addiction*, Dr. Charlotte Kasl
This book looks at sexual addiction from women's perspectives.
14. *Hope And Recovery*, Compcare/paperback
A "Big Book" styled book for recovering sex addicts. Includes a section of personal stories.
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.

SAA ORDERING INFORMATION — SPRING 1991

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

<u>QUANTITY</u>	<u>TOTAL AMOUNT</u>
_____ S.A.A. Group Guide	@ 4.50 _____
_____ Abstinence and Boundaries in S.A.A.	@ 2.50 _____
_____ First Step to Recovery	or 12 for 25.00 _____
_____	@ 1.25 _____
_____	or 12 for 10.00 _____
_____ S.A.A. Self-Assessment Brochures	@ .10 _____
_____	or 12 for 1.00 _____
_____ The Plain Brown Rapper (1 year)	@ 6.00 _____
_____ The Plain Brown Rapper group subscription rates (1 year, each)	
_____ 10 or more to the same address	@ 3.00 _____
_____ 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	
_____ NEW! Aluminum S.A.A. Medallions	@ 1.50 _____
_____ Blank _____ 1 MO _____ 3 MO _____ 6 MO _____ 9 MO	

"CARRYING THE MESSAGE" CONFERENCE - AUDIO TAPES

<u>QUANTITY</u>	<u>TOTAL AMOUNT</u>
_____ 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 _____
_____ <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Order any six tapes for the price of five	@ 30.00 _____
_____ "Carrying the Message" T-shirts in _____ large or _____ extra large	@ 5.00 _____

Twin Cities S.A.A. Intergroup Items

_____ Getting Started in Sex Addicts Anonymous; a beginner's packet for recovering sex addicts	@ 2.50 _____
_____	12 for 25.00 _____
_____ NEW! Exploring Healthy Sexuality	@ 3.00 _____
_____	12 for 30.00 _____

Other Recovery Items

_____ Answers in the Heart (meditations)	@ 9.00 _____
_____ Out of the Shadows (Carnes)	@ 11.00 _____
_____ Women, Sex, and Addiction (Kasl)	@ 11.00 _____
_____ Hope and Recovery	@ 12.00 _____
_____ Hope and Recovery Workbook	@ 11.00 _____
_____ A Male Grief: Notes on Pornography (Mura)	@ 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: _____

Twelve Steps that Don't Work

1. We admitted that some people in our lives couldn't stand some of our sexual behaviors and that putting up with their attitude was making our lives unmanageable.
2. Come to believe a power greater than ourselves could help us to control our compulsion, or at least make it easier to live with.
3. Made a decision that if God didn't like our sexual behavior that we were willing to let him take care of it.
4. Tried to sit down and admit some of the things that caused us to act like we did.
5. Admitted to the group and intellectually understood that some of our actions weren't in our best interest.
6. Were entirely ready to have our Higher Power substitute our behavior as long as it wasn't too great a sacrifice.
7. Expected our Higher Power to remove our guilt which made us act shameful.
8. Made a note of anyone who misunderstood our intentions and said we were sorry that they got involved with us.
9. Decided that confronting such people would cause us or them to act out so we smiled and pretended nothing happened.
10. Promptly felt guilty about our slips and wondered if our boundaries were too restrictive.
11. Thought incessantly about how our Higher Power could show us the correct way out of our imperfect self-will.
12. Having been cured of our guilt we sought out other addicts to help cure them as an alternative to old acting out behaviors.

— Submitted and adapted by Tony S.
Swartz Creek, MI

Guidelines for Participation

Several people at the 1990 convention requested that I have the following "Guidelines for Participation" printed in the PBR. We read this before the sharing portion of our meetings in Saginaw.

In participation we avoid topics that can lead to dissension or distraction. We also avoid explicit sexual descriptions and sexually abusive language. The emphasis is on honesty, recovery, and healing — how to apply the twelve steps in our daily lives. No cross-talk please. Do not interrupt while someone is talking and do not give feedback unless you ask the other person if it is okay. We do not judge nor do we work others' recovery for them. If someone feels that another is getting too explicit, please signify by quietly raising your hand. Remember also: Whom you see here, what you hear here, when you leave here, let it stay here.

— Jeff W.
Minnesota

Letter From Clay

Hi! I get the *Plain Brown Rapper* and read with much interest "Forgiveness" by Bob L. of Iowa.

I'm a sex addict and am struggling with many related problems. The hardest thing to do and accept is forgiveness. Bob L. really said it well. I have trouble accepting God's forgiveness and I have trouble forgiving myself.

I live in a community where there is no S.A.A., but through a caring friend I was introduced to S.A.A. I'm out here struggling with masturbation, guilt, and more, but you and PBR are helping me through it all. Thanks!

— Clay T.

***Your past cannot be changed, but you can
change tomorrow by your actions today.***

Where's the "Monkey Knot" Man?

There was one man who captured the very essence of the N.S.O. National (International) Convention for me. I cannot remember his name, but his message to me was clear.

I met him on Friday evening as I mingled with the group outside the main meeting area. We talked. He talked as much as I did, which is something of an incredible feat in itself. I wondered what I was meant to say to him — what message of hope and recovery I was meant to convey. It was too elusive, so I guessed that he was lonely, and only spoke to me as a safe alternative to meeting the scores of others gathered there. I recall feeling sorry for his loneliness. Projection is a powerful thing for this addict.

On Saturday, he again captured my attention, and talked and talked more. I was even slightly bothered that he was monopolizing my "precious" time.

Again on Sunday, after the closing convention session, we spoke. He was riveted to me, and I was determined to listen — to hear what he was trying to convey from out of his lonely isolation. It was our eighth or ninth conversation during those few short days.

As we spoke that last morning, he reached into his pocket and produced a length of cord, about a yard long. He began looping the string and telling me about the 12 Steps. With each step, he added more loops, and eventually produced a marble which was placed securely in the center of this knotted nest. Finishing this topological marvel, he handed it to me (by the loop which served as a 'handle' which was a reminder that

I must be "... willing to reach out to others."). I held onto this "Monkey Fist Knot," and listened as he shared one last bit of strength.

He said, "There are times in my recovery when I find myself left with only three choices: I can go off in the direction that my compulsion to 'act out' is leading, I can masturbate, or I can kill myself."

It didn't sound right. I asked to hear that again, and he repeated it with certainty. There were no omissions; no deletions; nothing else. I was puzzled, caught in the midst of this knot of addictive logic. I wanted an escape, to hear of another choice — a purity beyond the madness of the addictive cycle. He met my questioning eyes with a brightness that served as an affirmation.

I am still teachable, I thought. This is an opportunity to learn. And so I have continued to grow during these several weeks since the convention. It has come to me that I, too, have those moments of desperate choices, and today I see that I am capable of valuing the least destructive choice, the healthy alternative, when facing certain madness.

I do not know this man. He gave me a knot as a reminder to keep the 12 Steps with me, and a handle with which to reach out. And he showed me a new pathway out. It was a gift, and he was an angel from a higher power that is "doing for me what I cannot do for myself."

—Kevin
Grand Rapids, MI

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 March newsletter by January 21, 1991.

Unless otherwise noted, the content 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.