

# THE *Plain Brown Rapper* The SAA Newsletter

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November, 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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## *From the Editor*

For many of us, we have struggled with our self-concept. We learned long ago that our value depended upon our actions and not who we were. Our value as individuals was at the whim of others, so we grew up with broken self-concepts or poor self-esteem. This is a common concern often emphasized by many psychologists.

I have found, however, another emphasis that often is overlooked. In my program of growth, I have discovered a part of me that does not feel unworthy or worthless, but rather the opposite: grandiose pride, self-centeredness, and selfishness. This piece of who I am has commanded great authority in my addict's life. Almost as a compensation, it has pushed aside God and introduce *me* as the one and only ruler of the universe as I perceive him. I call this piece the Old Man.

This Old Man claims that all my problems stem from the emphasis not being on myself. If only everyone else would realize how important I am, they would pander to my every need. They should all walk on eggs, carefully consider me in all their actions, and succumb to every request I have for attention.

My Old Man says my behavior is my parents' fault. If only I can focus all my energies on blaming them, I would miraculously be "cured." I should live in the past, deny them any forgiveness, and never move on with my life.

And when I feel addictive or out of control, this Old Man says, "Don't use your program! Your pleasure comes first! Your wife, your children, your family, all are not as important as your feeling good — your pain must be quenched at all cost, including others' pain!"

This Old Man of mine can be quite a tyrant. And he often tries to keep the focus on me. But that is exactly what many of the Twelve Steps — and especially Step Twelve — are all about: turning my pride into humility, becoming other-centered, and unselfishly giving myself and my time to "staying sober and helping others achieve sobriety."

And I believe Step Twelve is the key to understanding humility. For only through service to others will I see how God used others to help rescue me from my addiction — I did not rescue myself. Only through service to others will I learn to give Grace to others . . . as Grace has been given to me. Only through service to others will I learn that importance is not measured by what I do, but what I care about. And only through service to others will I come to see their intrinsic value — as well as my own.

Is your service to others lacking? Perhaps a searching and fearless moral inventory is the answer, for a humble spirit and heart are the tools our Higher Power uses to rescue those who are powerless in their sexual addiction — just as you were.

## Toward a Group Conscience

### Convention Business #5

The wording of the First Step, whether we are “powerless over our sexual addiction” or “powerless over our compulsive sexual behavior,” is to go back to groups for more discussion, with a vote to occur at the next convention.

The following thoughts reflect a very small pocket of membership in the South Central Region near Golf Port, MS, and New Orleans, LA, made up of six mixed groups (95% male and 5% female). We reflected on Number 5 of the convention business. Some of us became aware for the first time that there was discussion at the national level to change these words of the first step. We feel that we’d like the first step words to remain the same. To most of us, the word “compulsive” meant that we couldn’t help our behavior. There seemed to be a tension built up in us that our acting out seemed to release. We thought that we had no choice other than to act out once we started our ritual. Many of us thought, “What is the use in fighting this? I know that I’ll act out in 30 minutes, so I might as well give in now and get it over with.” At a later point, most of us realized that our lives had become unmanageable and that we were powerless.

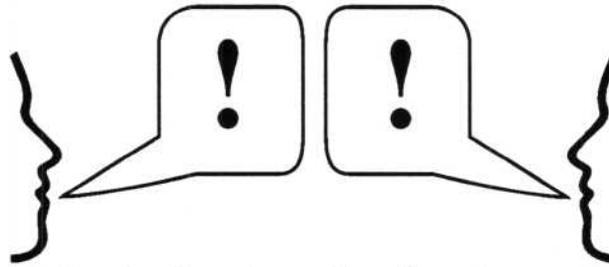
Some of us had already dealt with an addiction, such as alcohol and/or drugs. We knew that we were sexual beings . . . how could we give up sex like we had given up alcohol? We gladly heard that sexual sobriety around specific boundaries was attainable when we first attended meetings. We heard in the preamble that we were powerless over our sexual addiction. We welcomed both points of view, one in the First Step and the other in the preamble. There was a sense of hope for many of us.

Some of us have been in treatment where we were labeled with “compulsive sexual behavior.” In some of our readings and input, we were told that compulsions “generally do not change or escalate over time.” But at SAA meetings, we saw and experienced recovery in others and in ourselves. We feel that a power greater than ourselves has helped us with our compulsive behavior.

We also see how we fit into addictive behavior because we who felt compulsive, also felt like we were split into two persons. There was that part of us that acted out, and of whom we hated and felt ashamed. The “normal” part of us denied this addictive part as we went to work and pretended the other side didn’t exist. But when we were acting out, we denied that we had work responsibilities and had to face the terrible consequences.

In conclusion, we feel that perhaps the struggle among the professionals to define sexual addiction and compulsive sexual behavior is affecting us. We don’t want to be caught in between when we know that there are other sex addicts still out there suffering. We need to focus our energies in twelve stepping others. We’ll let our Higher Power use these words as they are now, to bring others to recovery. Both concepts have been influential in our recovery and that is why we would like the wording of the First Step and the preamble to remain the same.

— Francie E.  
Louisiana



### Favor a Change

I feel that the recent discussion concerning what the First Step wording should be has brought out some good thoughts concerning who we are and what our program is all about.

I am in favor of changing the wording to “powerless over our compulsive sexual behavior” for the following reasons:

1. “Compulsive sexual behavior” is less shaming than “sexual addiction.” In AA, you never hear of alcohol addiction, rather you learn of alcoholism; thus people in AA are called “alcoholics,” and not “alcohol addicts.” I believe the word “addict” portrays historically and presently a sense of hopelessness beyond redemption. Also, to say I am an addict gives me a shaming sense of who I am — I am not a person, an individual, or a human first, but am an addict. To say I am a “sexually compulsive person” or “sexually compulsive individual” gives me a valuable identity with a dysfunctional behavior. Basically, the one says who I am and the other says what my behavior is. And there is quite a difference between the two.

2. The phrase “sexual addiction” can be too extreme a pill to swallow for a new member. Often, a new member — one who has never been in SAA before — comes to a meeting seeking whether his or her dysfunctional behavior is rooted in sexuality. Their “bottom” may not be as severe as others’, and for that new member to hear the very first step of the program stating powerlessness over his or her “sexual addiction” may very well scare that new member away. If the First Step talks about powerlessness over “compulsive sexual behavior,” that new person may be more open and receptive to hearing more about the message and the program of SAA.

3. There is still a dispute in the medical community as to what exactly is an “addict.” At this moment, there are very respectable psychologists and psychiatrists who would fervently argue that sex cannot be an addiction, but rather falls under the definition of compulsion. To leave the First Step with wording that is, at the least, controversial is to take away from our organization legitimacy in the eyes of many mental health professionals around the country.

4. Finally, I would say that the community at large would be much more receptive to understanding, affirming, and accepting SAA’s goals and concepts if the label “sexual addiction” were reapplied in a more constructive manner such as “sexually compulsive behavior.”

— Mike S.  
Minnesota

**SAA ORDERING INFORMATION — Summer/Fall 1991**

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

Please allow five weeks for delivery. Prices include shipping and handling. With overseas orders, please include an additional 20% to help defray the additional postage, and expect a longer delivery time (items shipped surface mail only). Orders of more than \$25.00 within the United States, please use a non-PO Box address so that we may ship packages U.P.S.

**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 _____
	..... or 12 for 25.00 _____	
_____	First Step to Recovery .....	@ 1.25 _____
	..... or 12 for 10.00 _____	
_____	S.A.A. Self-Assessment Brochures .....	@ .10 _____
	..... or 12 for 1.00 _____	
_____	NEW! The Bubble .....	@ .25 _____
	..... or 10 for 2.00 _____	
_____	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 _____
_____	* Order any six tapes for the price of five .....	@30.00 _____

**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 .....	@ 3.50 _____
	..... 12 for 35.00 _____	

**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: \_\_\_\_\_



## Prison Outreach

Excitement runs high among the members of the Prison Outreach Committee as new doors seemingly open daily. Opportunities abound as prison chaplains, caseworkers, and program directors begin to recognize

a tremendous need for support groups for sex offenders.

It was recently said to me by the director of a sex offenders program, "We really need you guys in here." Now that's exciting. Letters are coming in from all over the country: inmates write asking for help, professionals write asking for information, and new groups are forming in places never before possible.

In Minnesota, a group called 'Reflections' has begun in a state prison, a county workhouse is begging for help getting meetings started, and a correction treatment center began two groups on October 13, after 15 years of saying "no" to in-house support groups.

The Michigan Intergroup has made great sacrifices of time and money and it has paid off. After much diligence, persistence, and determination, Arnold and Bill have paved the way for several new groups. Arnold has also blasted the barriers of red tape and regulations and set new precedents.

In Virginia, the persistence of one inmate determined to recover from his sex addiction has brought about the formation of a sex offenders program, thus opening the way for an SAA group. In Utah, an inmate due to get out soon is in the process of establishing a meeting in his community so he will have a place to go. Volunteers have stepped forward from Alaska, California, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, Ontario, Texas, and Utah. But with one or two volunteers for thousands of inmates in each area, the burden is awesome. Letters come from areas all over the country where there are no local volunteers. We are in desperate need of committed people to help us reach out and answer these cries for help. How can we turn our back on suffering addicts? One very special inmate with whom I correspond expressed his gratitude toward God for bringing him in contact with SAA this way: "This expression of thanks is for that special force of love and grace that magically transformed my dull mirror into a looking glass of introspection for me, and the wonderful source that is providing this trail of bread crumbs in my walk toward inner freedom. Thank you, God, today and everyday. Toward lighted pathways, your brother, Kenny."

Please write and let us know you're out there and willing to help.

— Gary L.  
Prison Outreach Committee Chairman

## Came to Believe . . .

*Spirituality has to do with the totality . . .<sup>1</sup>*

*Spirituality is a simple way of living. It involves moving from fear to trust, from self-pity to gratitude, from resentment to acceptance, and from dishonesty to honesty.<sup>2</sup>*

When I was growing up, I thought spirituality had to do with the "holy rollers" who would dance, shout, shriek, and swoon in a storefront Pentecostal church in my hometown.

After my first serious night of drinking, I had an extended out-of-body experience. The experience was blissful, peaceful, serene, and it scared me. Later, I would look back at it as my first spiritual experience since I met other spirits in that out-of-body experience. I next saw several mystical experiences as spiritual, in that it was my spirit — not my body — that was experiencing a guided tour of the universe or lovemaking with Mother Earth.

After I realized I had been sexually abused by my mother, I came to doubt the spirituality of my Earth Mother experience.

Increasingly, I am inclined to view spirituality as one's relationship to one's Higher Power. A relationship can be described by its traits, such as honesty, acceptance, appreciation, and trust. As I grow in recovery (now five years of sexual sobriety), my spirituality grows, too. There are many other ways to describe spirituality, however it's defined. What has *your* experience been with spirituality? What has it meant for your recovery?

— Jon S.  
Minnesota

1. Alan Kolp, *Fresh Winds of the Spirit*, FUM Press, 1991.
2. Jimmy Dollard, *Toward Spirituality*, Hazelden, 1983.

[If you would like to share your story concerning your specific spiritual journey, please write the N.S.O. office, attn.: PBR Editor.]



## Women in Recovery

What an appropriate title for a column — appropriate and exciting because women are beginning to fill up the open seats in not just the “women only” meetings, but in mixed meetings as well. To have a newcomer — a man or woman — for me is so encouraging because out of all my past lovers (and they were all sex addicts), I have not seen one in a meeting (one of my biggest fears). I do see this program as definitely a growing sprout. This particular column is reserved for topics about women in SAA, for women, from women — any experiences in your program that you would like to share. I would like to begin with my outreach to the newcomer: *Women and Mixed Retreats*.

— What! — You mean men will be there??? Are you crazy????!! My first thought also when a retreat was suggested to me. For some unknown reason (but it seems to be a common one), when I started in SAA, I changed from a “flaming” sex addict to an ‘instant panic attack’ child at the mere mention of a mixed meeting. I was in the program for eight months when I went to my first retreat. At that point I had only been to ‘women only’ meetings. I couldn’t even *look* at a man coming or going to a men’s meeting. It wasn’t until I was 30 minutes away from Camp Cho Yea in Livingston, Texas, did it occur to me, “Oh my God, there are going to be men there!” I couldn’t believe that the thought NEVER entered my mind until that moment, much less had I processed that with *anyone!* Then, within an instant, I decided “Well, if they spent all this money, drove all this way, left their kids like me, . . . etc. . . , surely they were as serious as I about recovery.” Silly, I know, to think such thoughts seeing as how I would do all those things compulsively in my addictions. Yet, I really wasn’t in fear.

Thank God there was only one man there my addict noticed; and wouldn’t you know, put two addicts in a room of 100,000 . . . and they’d find each other! I always think if I have on my sunglasses, no one can read my radars. Wrong! As my fear set in, I carefully objectified him before I could catch myself (which I did do). I stopped. That first evening he approached me

inappropriately twice. After I totally denied it, minimized it, and was shocked by it, my little girl felt like she was having a heart attack. I was able to see that this person — just out of an A.A. treatment center and the first time to ANY S.A.A. meeting — was clearly in his addiction. I did not allow it to scare me into my car and race home, vowing men were worthless and worthy to be feared. But I was very angry. I processed and rehearsed my next words and moves all night. I learned to move to another seat when he sat by me. I learned to not engage in his hooking conversation. I learned to observe him hook other women. I learned that 48 other men there were safe, were as serious about their recovery as I was, were wounded little boys, that they were warm and wonderful. I learned there were men afraid to even speak to me because of my appearance — and that was painful. But best of all, I learned to say “NO, I would not like a hug.”

After I left there, in my first meeting back home when the promises were read, I heard one — really heard one — and that was number 10: “Fear of people and economic insecurity will leave us.” It had. It really had. I no longer feared men. It was very moving and very memorable.

Since then, the men that were honest enough to tell me their addict was too afraid of me to even say hello, as I also had felt, have become my brothers in my new family.

Retreats are scary. I have come against challenges: fears and boundaries being crossed (more than once). Yet, what better place to learn how to deal with and cross over these mountains than being surrounded with a support system. I have bonded, blended, benefited, and been *blessed* with retreats. They give my recovery a giant leap of progress. My Higher Power got me there (mixed meetings) not a minute before my mind and heart and soul were ready.

As our fellowship grows, so should sharing our experiences. Please, as women helping women, people helping people, let’s hear from you. We don’t have to be silent anymore. There are pages to fill with feelings and thoughts, ears eager to hear, eyes eager to see, and souls eager to connect in a positive way.

— *Joni R.*  
*Houston, TX*



## The Child Within

Dear little Jeff,

You are such a cute, cuddly, lovable little boy, all full of wonder and excitement about the world. All you wanted was to be loved in a healthy way, to be understood, to be respected, to feel safe. As an adult now, I know those things were not meant for you. That really makes me sad to admit that fact. But Little Jeff, I am in recovery now. I am learning how to get my adult needs met, and I am also learning how to get those things for you that you didn't receive as a child. I am learning how to find and receive healthy love, I am finding people who understand and respect me, and I am learning how to find safe places in this world.

I am your best friend. I am learning to listen to you, and I want you to know that I love you, I care about you, and I mourn for the hardships you have endured. It is now my greatest privilege to listen to you, to protect you, and to nurture you. Remember, Little Jeff, I am your greatest ally, and you are my guiding light. Together, we are special!

— Jeff L.  
Minnesota

## Dear Friends . . .

I just had to write again. I just read "The Way of Peace" by John H.

It's as though I wrote it — the only difference is I'm not married. Many Easter mornings I've knelt before the Blessed Sacrament and left before mass started. I felt so alienated from God because of my addiction. I shed tears of shame and despair. I felt close to God, yet alienated. I had not been to Confession or Communion for years.

I also liked "The Promises of Continuing to Act Out My Addiction." What is written is true. I've been on that road, too. I've walked off from my short times of sobriety and found myself in a deeper downward spiral and totally out of control.

My addiction scares me. It took many years for me to realize I was an addict out of control. SAA brought me to that point.

I've been sober again for about six weeks and I struggle on. As John H. said, "You must forgive yourself." I find that truly hard. Pray for me.

— Clay R.  
North Dakota

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## 1991 National Convention Tapes

The Literature Committee is in the process of reviewing the presentation tapes from the 1991 National Convention in Grand Rapids, MI. We are looking at program suitability, marketability, and sound quality. Although not all tapes have been reviewed, the following tapes have been approved for distribution:

- Prison Outreach
- Jill's Story
- Healthy Sexuality by Kevin
- Sponsorship by Jean O.

You can order copies of these tapes by contacting the N.S.O. office.

*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 can submit your writing on a computer disk (either 800K Macintosh or IBM), that would be greatly appreciated. Please ensure that all IBM disks (either 5-1/4 or 3-1/2 inch) are formatted consistent with their physical density (i.e., high-density disks formatted high density; low-density disks formatted low density). Please submit all writings for the December newsletter by October 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.