

# THE Plain Brown Rapper

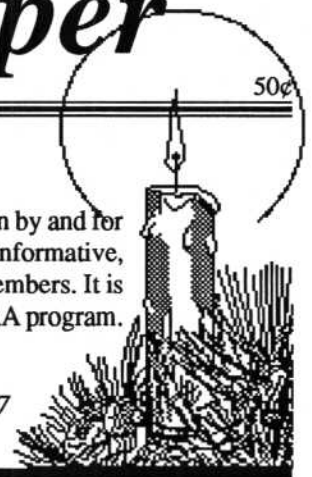
The SAA Newsletter



December, 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



## From the Literature Committee

In our continuation to address controversial issues facing us as SAA members, three more letters about the wording of the First Step appear on page 2. Some would like it to say, "powerless over our sexual addiction . . .," others think it should read, "powerless over our compulsive sexual behavior."

The following two months, we will be asking members to express their opinions about the wording of How It Works. What follows is excerpted from the newest edition of the Group Guide. The NSO Literature Committee of SAA feels that there are strong beliefs for two versions of How It Works and we feel it would be unwise for us to make that choice for you. As a committee, we are turning it over to your group conscience until the 1992 convention when there will be a vote to decide which version will be adopted by the membership.

How It Works comes from the book Alcoholics Anonymous. When the Group Guide of SAA was first printed, a shorter version was used. The difference between the two versions is in the opening paragraph. Italicized text has been deleted from the shorter version and text in brackets has been added.

### How It Works

Rarely have we seen a person fail who has thoroughly followed our path. Those who do not recover are people who cannot or will not completely give themselves to this simple program, *usually men and women who are constitutionally incapable of being honest with themselves. There are such unfortunates. They are not at fault; they seem to have been born that way. They are naturally incapable of grasping and developing* [They cannot develop] a manner of living which demands rigorous honesty. *Their chances are less than average.* There are those, too, who suffer from *grave* [serious] emotional and mental disorders, but many of them do recover if they have the capacity to be honest.

### Voice for the original version

The original version is viewed by some as the spiritual foundation of recovery. We ask ourselves who are we to rewrite what has worked for millions of recovering addicts. The powerful language found in the original version of How It Works brings to bear the urgency that sex addiction is about life and death. How It Works spells out what we need to do if we are to recover.

### Voice for the shorter version

The shorter version is just as powerful and effective as the original, but does not use shaming language. We are not Alcoholics Anonymous and some things that work for them may not work for us. Sexual addiction is rooted in shame and before finding the program, many of us believed we were inherently defective — "born that way." The language that has been removed reinforces the sense of hopelessness and shame that keeps the addict in the cycle of the addiction.

Starting in the March edition of the PBR, we will be encouraging discussion and ideas about alternatives to the Lord's Prayer, which is what some groups use as a closing prayer.

We welcome ideas about other subjects which could be addressed in this forum. Thank you.

— National Literature Committee

## Toward a Group Conscience

### 1st Step — Sexual Addiction

Concerning the wording of the First Step, it is important for me to say that I am powerless over my sexual addiction, in part, because it is not only my behavior that makes my life unmanageable, but I must also address the underlying emotional and philosophical beliefs which are integral to my addiction.

Another important piece of my sexual addiction is what I could call my anorexic side — the part of me that denies and suppresses all expressions of my sexuality. For me, there is much more involved than simply compulsive sexual behavior.

— Elizabeth

### And

The AA model requires that a person should not think of him or herself as a wonderful, positive person who happens to have this bothersome compulsive problem. To a certain degree, minimizing the problem is what got the person in trouble in the first place. Rather, humility, facing up to shortcomings, and comprehension of the immense damage and pain his or her denial has caused others (i.e., bottoming out) is the only way a person can begin to attain sanity out of the emotional, physical, and/or mental wreck he or she has become or is becoming. To minimize my behavior, my destructiveness to self and others, and my insanity by saying I am “compulsive” is tantamount to calling rape “sexual harassment.”

I would be remiss if I were to encourage new people in my group to think of themselves as not really being addicts, but merely persons with a “compulsion.” In my effort to caretake someone by minimizing the seriousness of his or her situation, I may very well keep that person from hitting bottom and truly starting his or her road to recovery.

I understand the issues concerning shame; I’ve had to deal with them myself. But we can get so caught up in our fear of shaming others that: 1) we give an example to others that it’s better to avoid the issue of shame rather than to face it and overcome it, 2) we caretake them, helping to hold them back from hitting that wall of powerlessness, and/or 3) we hesitate telling others — and ourselves — the truth.

I strongly urge that we quit minimizing our situation by using “compulsive sexual behavior” in the First Step and change it back to “addictive behavior,” so we can get on with recovery.

— Martin S.

### First Step — “Compulsive Sexual Behavior”

As a newcomer on the SAA block, I have virtually no experience or opinions about its organizational ins and outs.

Nonetheless, I wanted to share a little feedback from an admittedly elementary vantage point. When I first came to the group, I struggled with the issue of whether I could “belong” because, although I knew I was sexually compulsive, I didn’t feel I could truthfully say that I was sexually addicted. I didn’t think I exhibited enough of the outer life profile of unmanageability that seems to accompany addiction, and my problem centered more on acting in than acting out behavior. I was able to get past the humiliation and fear about needing to be in a group that centers on sexual compulsivity, but I almost withdrew. Why? Because somehow I thought if I couldn’t eventually admit to addiction, I might not ever feel bonded or close with my group. I didn’t realize for quite a few weeks that my “acting in” sexual behavior was just as self-destructive, rendering my inner spiritual and emotional life equally unmanageable, and manifested itself in my outer life in the same kind of isolation and troubled relationships, characteristic of sexual compulsivity and addiction.

I’m glad that definition didn’t frighten me away, but it was close. Because there is such an intense degree of shame, denial and confusion when one first approaches an SAA group, a broader definition that implies permission to belong whether we are comfortable with the word “addiction” or “compulsion,” acting in or acting out might be helpful and speak to a greater range of people that need group help and support, yet don’t understand the subtle shades of difference.

It could be argued that this is why a person needs to attend a group for six weeks before they decide. In any event, I’ve learned that however I define it, or state it to my group, the fact is that sexual dysfunction has rendered my inner life unmanageable, and I need to be here as much as any of the others in my group.

— Nadine



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

# NSO REPORTS

## SAA INCOME STATEMENT 1-1-91 - 9-30-91

	Twin Cities Intergroup	National Service	Literature Account	Total
<b>Income</b>				
Sales .....			33,431	33,431
Donations .....	7,457	12,710		20,167
Commissions .....	4,506	469	<4,975>	-0-
Total Income .....	11,963	13,179	28,456	53,598
<b>Expense</b>				
<i>Personnel:</i>				
Salaries .....	6,519	6,518		13,037
Taxes & benefits .....	1,107	1,108		2,215
Consultants .....	468	469		937
<i>Cost of sales:</i>				
Literature .....			18,510	18,510
Medallions .....			3,070	3,070
<i>Other:</i>				
Printing .....		677	700	1,377
Supplies .....			734	734
Postage .....	47	55	3,165	3,267
Staff travel .....	71	71	71	213
Telephone .....	1,987	1,987		3,974
Conference calls .....		1,340	218	1,558
Rent .....	1,260	1,125		2,385
Board .....		909		909
Sales tax .....			345	345
Miscellaneous .....	220	344	141	705
Prior year .....	28	28	15	71
Total Expense .....	11,707	14,631	26,969	53,307
Income over <under> expense .....	256	<1,452>	1,487	291

### SAA 1992 Annual Convention Ramada Inn, Tucson, AZ May 22-24

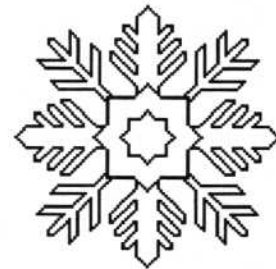
The serenity of the Sonoran Desert will provide a fitting setting as Tucson, Arizona hosts the 1992 Annual Convention of SAA International. In keeping with our southwestern style, the theme for the spiritual gathering will be "La Promesa de Gracia," which is Spanish for "The Promise of Grace."

The event is to be held from May 22 through 24 at the downtown Ramada Inn of Tucson, and is being coordinated by the Tucson SAA Intergroup organization. According to organization representatives, convention

### Newly-Registered SAA Groups

State	City
WA	Lacey
TX	Victoria
NY	Mamaroneck
NY	N. White Plains
NY	Bellport
NM	Albuquerque
MS	Natchez
MN	Stillwater (prison)
MN	Golden Valley
LA	Harahn
ID	Boise
CA	Long Beach (women's meeting)
CA	Montrose
B.C.	Trial (Canada)

Welcome friends!



plans are proceeding well: fund-raising events are occurring, generous donations are coming in, and all committees are active.

The Los Angeles, CA Intergroup has agreed to host the Saturday night entertainment. The Phoenix, AZ group has volunteered to lead the marathon meetings. And look for raffle tickets soon! At 3.00 each or two for \$5.00, you could win a full convention package including registration, two nights at the hotel, and meals.

Registration materials will appear in the *Plain Brown Rapper* in January. Or you can write directly (include stamped, self-addressed envelope) and a registration form will be sent as soon as they are printed.

Send all correspondence to:

La Promesa de Gracia  
P.O. Box 13942  
Tucson, AZ 85732-3942

On behalf of the Tucson SAA Intergroup, we hope to see you in Tucson this spring!

## *I Am the Tropical Rain Forest*

Years and years ago, I came to this planet a tiny seed. A green, tender, alive baby sprout. My face shining, my spirit looking to grow, I turned towards the sun, totally alive.

Before long, clouds, dark, heavy clouds formed overhead. The air turned cold, the landscape withered. Snow, ice, sleet, wintery elements blanked my surroundings. For years the snow kept coming. Blizzards, arctic air, an occasional ray of sun greeting me, day after day, in this frozen tundra.

Many years passed. I hardly noticed those years go by. Slowly, with each minute, hour, day, my youthful spirit was drained. I was imprisoned in layers of cold, unrelenting, suffocating ice. How could I still be alive? I felt pain, pressure, dull, a hopelessness — if only I would die, I'd be free.

But I wouldn't die. There was a flame, a minute flame within me, at my center, which refused to give up. The little sprout spirit within me longed to really live again.

The hell of this imprisoned life stretched on for decades.

Alas, a day came where there was a slight shift in my tomb — barely noticeable, a piece of my root system actually moved a fraction of an inch.

Time passed, there were more shifts.

One day, warm, moist breath came out of my being, melting a portion of ice in front of my eyes. My God, something is happening.

The ice receded, bit by bit. I was able to move, breathe, actually have hope.

The fear came, what if this was it — a little movement, within my frozen vice? No sun or blue sky or fresh air — just a place to move. The panic overtook me, I wanted to scream, the prison was still too small for my lungs to expand, the scream stayed inside.

Some power greater than myself was giving me nourishment and strength to continue in spite of my gripping fear.

Now, these years went by. Huge chunks and boulders of ice fell away. At times, just a small trickle would melt away.

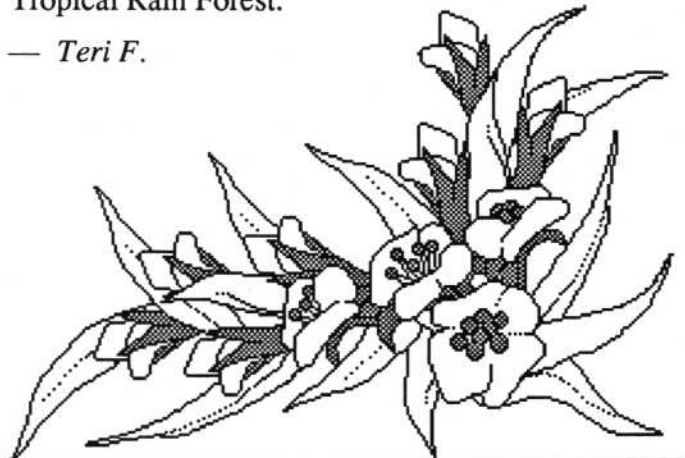
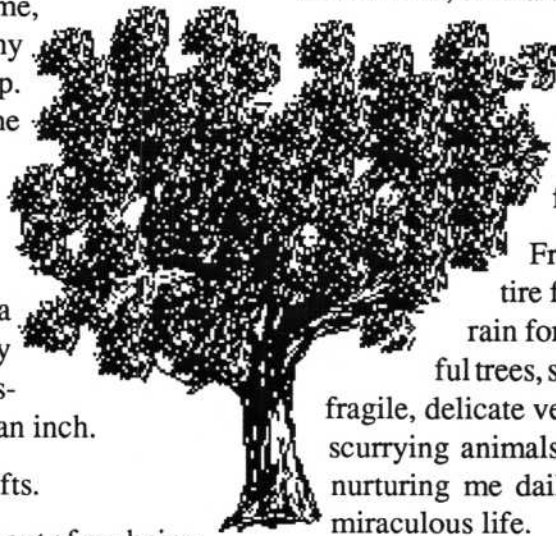
The day came when all the snow and ice melted completely. I poked my head up into the fresh air, it was intense, exhilarating, exhausting. The bright sun hurt my eyes at first.

Before I knew it, I was growing in leaps and bounds, spreading far and wide. Oh, to be alive, free, energized.

From sprouthood, I became an entire forest. A lush, succulent, tropical rain forest. Strong, magnificent, powerful trees, supporting the canopy of intricate, fragile, delicate vegetation. Singing birds, reptiles, scurrying animals all around. The beautiful rain, nurturing me daily. Continuous growth, change, miraculous life.

I, I am life — life abundant, brilliant — I am the Tropical Rain Forest.

— Teri F.



## A Traditional Column

### Tradition Nine

*S.A.A., as such, ought never be organized, but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.*

This tradition serves to keep us, as an organization, away from the problems that come with hierarchical structures. No one in this organization directs or governs anything or anyone else. The closest we come to issuing a directive is to say something like, "Each group and each individual is free to do whatever they want, but the majority of S.A.A. experience does seem to suggest that . . ."

In order to function, committees of service members can deal with specific aspects of the program, but always the service committee is directly responsible to the group of sex addicts it serves. That is why, for instance, the National Literature Committee is not considered a subdivision of the Board, but rather is directly responsible to the membership it serves.

The Twelve Steps are a suggested program of recovery which we try to follow to the best of our ability. We do not do these things because we have been ordered to do so; we do them because we have learned that if we disobey our own personal spiritual principles, sobriety and, ultimately, life itself is jeopardized

Likewise, the traditions, and particularly the Ninth Tradition, direct us as a group to "obey spiritual principles; first, because we must, and ultimately because we love the kind of life such obedience brings. Great suffering and great love are [S.A.A.'s] disciplinarians; we need no others," according to the A.A. Twelve by Twelve.

Above and beyond its practical application, Tradition Nine shows us that the structure of our organization comes from this spirit of service, this spirituality of service.

— Lisa G.

## Reflections From the Desert

Here I am sitting in my room in Saudi Arabia. I have been here for three months and I have had plenty of time to think. I am in the military and in recovery from sexual addiction. Of course, there are no SAA meetings here, but I do have access to another Twelve Step group that I attend. God has guided my recovery and I believe that God wanted me to be here. I have my recovery books to read and constant reminders of what active addiction does to people. It has been painful, but I am getting stronger every day. I am so grateful to be in recovery and I miss my SAA friends. My SAA experience has helped me deal with being in Saudi Arabia and I am looking forward to returning to the meetings. I would like to ask SAA members to say a prayer for sex addicts who don't have access to meetings. Thank you, SAA, for showing me I can go from shame to grace.

— Bob M.  
Saudi Arabia

## Research Request

Dear SAA Brothers and Sisters, I need your help in conducting a Master's Thesis research project in the area of sexual addiction and recovery. Currently, I am attempting to investigate the existence and impact of withdrawal symptoms when attempting to halt the addictive cycle in a recovery program.

As a participant, your role would be to complete two separate Recovery and Symptom Surveys, each taking 5–10 minutes to complete. The information gathered from you will be tabulated and compared with the experiences of other recovering sexual addicts. Hopefully, this project can help us all better understand the recovery process. Results of this survey will be available to you through intergroup, and everyone's anonymity will be respected.

If you are interested please contact me at Box 543, Carlton, MN 55718 or call (218) 723-4044. Thank you.

— Ed B.

*Do you have a story, 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 January newsletter by November 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.