



Plain Brown Rapper

THE SAA NEWSLETTER

The purpose of the Plain Brown Rapper is to be a voice of the SAA Membership, published by and for those recovering from compulsive sexual behaviors. We strive to be informative, sensitive, and responsive in expressing the experiences, strengths and hope of recovering sex addicts. Unless otherwise noted, the content of the PBR reflects the opinions of the writers and editors and not necessarily of the National Service Organization, the Literature Committee, or Sex Addicts Anonymous as a whole. Contents ©S.A.A. N.S.O. Subscriptions are available for \$6 for 12 issues from S.A.A. N.S.O., PO Box 70949, Houston TX 77270.

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This issue of the Plain Brown Rapper was co-edited by Lester D. and Lisa G.

Running in the Race for Recovery

Tony L. is the secretary of the Board of Trustees and represents the Pacific/Northwest Region. Those who heard him tell his story at last year's convention will not soon forget his message of redemption from shame. Tony wrote to those he serves in his region of the benefits of service work. We reprint his letter here as an invitation to all PBR readers to come to Phoenix Memorial Day weekend for the Seventh Annual S.A.A. Convention.

My Dear Sisters and Brothers,
Once again it's convention time, but this convention is more important to those of us in the Pacific Northwest region than usual.

Last year, only three people, including myself, came to the convention. When it was time to caucus, there was no delegation. Without a delegation, decisions could not be made, there was no discussion, and more importantly, no way to elect a representative for the region.

I accepted the position again, not by mandate but by default.

When I came upon the opportunity to serve three years ago, I accepted it as a way to steam towards recovery, realizing that I could have it only if I was willing to give something back.

I have since been blessed with nearly 5 years of abstinence from my bottom line behavior, but now, it's time to move on.

Recovery has allowed me to make strong progress in my profession, with my family, and in general, to live a happier more fulfilling life.

For me, the next step in recovery is to dedicate more time to my family and my job, and put more support into my local home meetings.

But this is also a chance for someone else to reap the benefits of service at the national level.

There is nothing more satisfying in recovery than

realizing that you're carrying out the will of the thousands of recovering sex addicts in your area, and insuring that SAA will continue to be available for the many thousands who will follow us.

Airlines are doing battle with each other...trying to get as many flyers as they can.

For you and for me that means lower air fares.

If we put in a request for vacation time now, we need only a couple of workdays plus a weekend for the most energetic retreat I have ever known.

You will meet hundreds of people just like ourselves, and hundreds who will motivate you to become even greater than you already are.

The convention call has gone out now, and I ask you again to do everything in your power to meet me in Phoenix May 27th through May 30th.

Don't stop running in the race for recovery of the thousands who still suffer...come to the convention, serve and vote.

Sincerely,

Tony L., Secretary, Board of Trustees, Pacific NW region. ■

NEWS FROM THE NATIONAL SERVICE OFFICE

Travel Appeal Results & Future Needs

Travel expenses to the Board's Mid-Winter meeting in January came to \$1,838.68, with membership contributions totaling \$2,098.67. A region-by-region breakdown shows the following surpluses and deficits:

Southwest.....	+ 138.00	North Central.....	+ 72.37
Great Lakes.....	+ 288.67	Pacific Northwest....	- 316.00

The Northeast and South Central regions did not incur travel expenses nor did they make an appeal for funds. Board representatives from the North Central, South Central, and Pacific Northwest will need financial help for the upcoming national convention in Phoenix. Also all members of the Literature Committee from all regions need contributions to cover their expenses. Please support them as generously as possible, both through individual and through group donations.

According to the latest NSO report finances are very tight. Expenses for April and May are expected to be much higher than income due to convention travel expenses for the Board, the Literature Committee, and NSO staff. No special appeal for funds will be made other than appearing above. It is hoped that the Lifeline Partnership, the new fundraising appeal, will increase revenues enough to meet expenses.

The Board of Trustees held a teleconference on March 4. Besides continued work on formulating a budget to be presented for adoption at the Phoenix Convention, some of the other financial matters discussed were:

- Discussed and voted to acquire a surety bond for \$10,000 to cover essential employees, trustees, and Convention officers.
- Discussed and voted to raise the maximum individual donation to \$2500.

The next meeting of the Board of Trustees will convene at 8:30 a.m., Wednesday, May 25, 1994, in Phoenix, Arizona. ■

Work Progressing on Story Collection

The Literature Committee has quickened the pace of production on the projects in its hopper in order to have new material ready for the Phoenix Convention. A teleconference was held on April 10th and another is planned for May 1.

The personal story collection is in the process of being edited and formatted. The exact number of stories and length of the book isn't clear yet, but there will probably be 25 to 30 stories in a book of about 150-200 half/letter-size pages, spiral bound. The stories are from a wide range of addicts, men and women, straight and gay, with varying degrees of time and sobriety in the program.

The subcommittee working on the book is quite excited about this publication. The experience reflected in these stories and those to come are the wisdom given through us to help one another in the Fellowship and the addicts who still suffer.

Given the state of finances at the NSO, it is unclear where all of the money to print a limited first edition will come from. One source is advance orders. The prepublication price is \$10.00 plus shipping and handling. Contact the N.S.O. for details.

Committee members are also at work on other projects, including the Spanish translation of the 12 Questions pamphlet and a pamphlet affirming inclusivity in S.A.A. for all sex addicts no matter what their race, gender, or sexual orientation.

Search for PBR Editor Continues

The last PBR was well received and those working on this one hope to continue the level of quality in design and content into the future. For this reason the deadline for choosing a new PBR editor has been postponed until the Convention to allow time to ensure that the new editor will have the skills and commitment necessary to uphold the standards the Fellowship deserves in its newsletter. We have received some applications and hope they will remain patient with the process. See page 6 for more details. Meanwhile, Lisa G. and Lester D. are co-editing the PBR. The next issue will be out before the convention; local groups may not receive the mailing before the convention but copies will be available in Phoenix.

Opportunities to Serve on the Literature Committee

The terms of several Literature Committee representatives and alternates will be over at the end of the 1994 Convention. We invite S.A.A. members who are sober, willing, and literate to participate in the service work of the Literature Committee. If you have been sober for a year or more and are interested, run for Representative or Alternate from your region. Representatives are required to attend Literature Committee meetings at the yearly convention, participate in several teleconferences throughout the year, and participate in the work of one or more of the subcommittees working on literature. Or, consider writing for the PBR, or becoming involved with Friends of the Literature Committee, an informal networking group. ■

Using the Third Legacy Procedure

The Three Legacies of A.A. are Recovery, Unity, and Service. The Third Legacy procedure is used in A.A., to elect delegates, regional trustees, and trustees at large. It is also recommended as a voting procedure in the bylaws of S.A.A. in Article III, Section 9, as adopted by the 1993 Conference in Louisville. How one A.A. group used it to decide a different kind issue is described below; perhaps this tool of service would be useful in similar situations arising in S.A.A. The procedure is also described on pages 41 and 42 of the A.A. Service Manual. -L.D.

By Lisa "God-biddable" G.

Recently I attended a Twelve Step meeting that was conducting a group inventory around selection of a closing prayer, and I was impressed with the refreshingly simple and effective process for arriving at a group consensus. Someone had printed up sheets listing the six different "prayers" that had been nominated, and someone else passed around small sheets describing what A.A. calls Third Legacy Proceedings.

All nominations are listed, and nominations are taken from the floor. Required for final selection is a two thirds majority of the total votes cast.

After the first ballot, if there is no selection qualified, any nomination receiving fewer than 20% of the votes cast are dropped from the slate.

After the second ballot, if there is no selection qualified, any nomination receiving fewer than 20% of the votes cast are dropped from the slate.

If there is no two thirds majority after the third ballot, nominations receiving fewer than one third of the vote are dropped from the slate.

After the fourth ballot, if there is no nomination receiving a two thirds majority, a motion is entertained to cast a fifth ballot. If this motion is made, seconded and chosen by a simple majority, any remaining nomination receiving fewer than one

third of the total votes cast on the fourth ballot is dropped prior to the fifth ballot.

After the fifth ballot (or after the fourth if the motion to cast a fifth ballot is not carried), all remaining nominations are placed in a hat and the final choice is drawn. This is the way that our final authority is expressed when the group conscience is unable to come to substantial unanimity.

In this particular meeting, it was pretty intense, with all but two nominations eliminated with the first ballot, the next four votes saw the balance swinging back and forth, first favoring The Lord's Prayer and then the Seventh Step Prayer. Even after five ballots there was no clear two thirds majority, so we popped them both in a basket and let God decide. Now when we get down at the close of our meeting, on our knees in a huge circle, as we do in this group, we say the Seventh Step Prayer:

My Creator, I am now willing that you should have all of me, good and bad. I pray that you now remove from me every single defect of character which stands in the way of my usefulness to you and my fellows. Grant me strength as I go from here to do your bidding.

-page 76, *Alcoholics Anonymous* ■

Step One: We admitted we were powerless over addictive sexual behavior – that our lives had become unmanageable.

For most of us the first step was diametrically opposed to our core beliefs—that we were in control and that if we just tried a little harder or tried one more time we'd have it.

We found Step One was the first of many paradoxes we would confront in the program—we eventually recognized that the only way we could stop our destructive acting out behavior was to admit that we couldn't stop.

The First Step became so important because we found we couldn't take any others until we had succeeded to some degree with it. We learned that our First Step was both an event and an on going process. There was a time for most of us, a specific time, when we took that first step. For some of us, it was when we choked out "Hello, my name is _____. I'm a sex addict," and it came from deep in our gut. For others it was a struggling encounter with a brother or sister in the fellowship. For others it came when they decided to attend their first meeting or while listening to someone's "story," and identifying with it. For most of us, those moments of acceptance, however or whenever they occurred, were to be followed by periods of doubt, delusion and denial.

We find now, that we have to take the first step daily in order to keep current or centered. Many of us struggle and would like to introduce ourselves in some "prettier" more affirming way than "I'm a sex addict,"

but we find the need to face that reality daily, lest we deceive ourselves into believing that we somehow can manage on our own.

Powerlessness and unmanageability are really not two things but different expressions of the tangled mess our lives were in. When we finally admitted our state, we were quite unaware of the extent and pervasiveness of our unmanageability. Our denial had blinded us to the mess we had made.

For most of us, it was through painstakingly working the First Step Guides and sharing our story with others in the program that the denial broke down and we came to a greater understanding of how powerless and unmanageable our lives really were. Some of us said—"Why didn't someone tell us?" They probably had told us but we were not ready to face the truth and we had no support to deal with the raw pain and so, to protect ourselves, we went into denial. In the program we find the support and acceptance to acknowledge our behaviors.

Those of us who have been rigorous at this point in specifically identifying our behavior and its far reaching consequences, and shared that with our SAA group in a meeting, have found this a cleansing and healing event. Some of us took this step within the first few weeks of entering the program, others came to meetings for years, before they were ready to lay open their story. Some of us who

rushed into the first step, later discovered this might be another expression of our need to control things and work the "perfect program." We also found that whatever efforts we made, we were affirmed by our fellowship. We found that now these people who knew things about us that we did not want to admit to ourselves were offering acceptance, love and support. Our fear of rejection was unfounded.

It is important to note that the first step is not a solitary or private activity. In the steps it is "We admitted..." The first step needs the light of the caring

and love of our group members. It is not safe to attempt taking this Step alone. It is too easy to delude ourselves. The first step is a matter of honesty and openness—in the shadows of loneliness, we can trip and bury ourselves in shame.

Step One, like all the others, has a basic simplicity. It is not about making any changes. It is about telling it like it is about ourselves. The step is not about our family or our spouses or about others. It is telling the truth about our own behavior and its consequences. ■

PBR Editor To Be Chosen by Convention's End!

The position of PBR editor will be kept open until the Phoenix Convention. We hope that interested applicants would also be involved enough in S.A.A. to make coming to Phoenix a priority — though this is *not* a requirement for consideration. Interested persons will have familiarity with and access to a computer and modem and the necessary software — PageMaker 5.0, word processing software, capability to work with Macintosh or DOS text files. (America Online basic service is provided.) Some additional qualifications are sobriety time, past SAA service work, organizational skills, and the ability to organize a local PBR subcommittee to help with proofreading and editing. We are interested in hearing about your reasons for wanting to serve and your view of the role of the PBR in serving the fellowship.

Duties include soliciting, editing, and writing articles on recovery topics as well as news of the N.S.O., the Literature Committee, and local intergroups. The articles must be then formatted in Pagemaker and laser-printed for reproduction. The production schedule is once a month and requires working with the office manager in Houston to coordinate printing and distribution. In addition, the PBR editor is a voting member of the Literature Committee and participates in Literature Committee meetings and teleconferences.

This requires a commitment of up to and perhaps more than 25 hours a month for a consultant's fee of \$50 — so this is essentially service work.

Interested persons should contact the Literature Committee chairperson, Steve L., at (818) 417-6060, or Jerry at the NSO at (713) 869-4902, or write the NSO at PO Box 70949, Houston TX 77270. ■

I Was The Queen of Rationalization

Sex Addicts Anonymous is simultaneously the best and the hardest thing I've ever done for myself. The program has forced me to look at my sexual history with a fresh perspective, and I was appalled by what I saw. I have spent time with some of the strongest women I've ever met — the strength and courage that is amassed in one room during our meetings is astounding. My newfound awareness of the compulsive motivation behind many of my thoughts and actions has been incredibly painful. I have discovered that my sexual behavior is not something I have control over, and that it isn't something I can fix myself. While this frustrates me no end, it is comforting to have made this discovery amongst people who can and are willing to help. I am in the process of drastically reconstructing my ideas about sex — ideas that, after 25 years, are pretty firmly embedded in my mind. But through all the pain has been the realization that I am finally doing something positive for myself — something that will, in the long run, make me a much happier person.

How did I get here? This isn't a story with an obvious starting point. All I know is that at some point when I was growing up, I became firmly convinced that the only thing of value about me was my sexuality. That was the commodity I had to offer. Prostitution fascinated me as the ultimate use of sex as an exchange item, and in junior high I told my parents I wanted to be a prostitute when I grew up. At the age of 20, I finally lost my virginity in essentially a date rape situation — a situation that continued for the next four months. During this time, he would come to my room at night, have sex with me without speaking, and leave. During the day, he would not acknowledge that he knew me. He ignored my written requests that he stay away from me, and I was afraid to challenge him directly. Instead, acquiescing to his sexual demands seemed to be the simplest way of making him go away.

To this day, I don't understand why it happened. I don't know why I was afraid, or why I didn't tell someone, or why I didn't even lock my door at night. I do know that this experience firmly established the idea that sex was something that men had the right to demand and something I had no right to deny.

A man's sexual desire for me soon became my only measure of self-worth. I became very promiscuous, sleeping with anyone that would have me, and obsessing about how to get more partners. I kept score, feeling as though after I reached some magic number, I would somehow become a worthwhile person. Each new encounter filled me with a sense of desirability and worth, but these feelings soon faded in the morning light, following yet another sexually unsatisfying night. I was queen of rationalization — this time would be different, because I've figured out how to do it "right." For,

although I never would have admitted it, I didn't really enjoy the sex, and I never reached orgasm. But I claimed to be a regular sex machine, especially after I came out as bisexual, and many of my friends had great fun living vicariously through my exploits.

There have been good sexual experiences in my world, however — it hasn't been all bad. I have had a few lovers, both men and women, whom I honestly cared about, and with whom sex was a part of a friendship that included love, trust, and respect. But those experiences have not been the norm in my life, and I regret that. Now I am hoping to resolve some of my issues surrounding sexuality, which will enable me to have a healthy long-term relationship — something I think I want very much.

I became involved in a local movement to legalize prostitution, and through my contacts with people in this group, I began working as a part-time prostitute for about a year. Half of me loved this. It was risky, adventurous, and I felt as though I had achieved the ultimate measure of worth — men were willing to pay for the privilege of sleeping with me. But it also made me feel even more like a sexual object, because it wasn't me they were paying to sleep with — it was a generic woman's body.

So why did I join SAA? I got sick of it. I got tired of having a disastrous fling, vowing never to do that again, and doing it again anyhow. Tired of hearing my important friends say, "Are you listening to what you're saying? Do you realize what you're doing to yourself? You're a good person — why do you treat yourself so badly?" Tired of obsessing about potential flings, and feeling disgusted if they materialized and feeling undesirable and pathetic if they didn't.

At first, I was mortified — me, of all people, in a twelve-step group? I'm a strong woman, I'm independent, I don't even believe in God! But I'm coming to realize that strength sometimes lies in knowing when to seek help, and getting help doesn't take away my independence, because the battle (and there's really no better word for it) is all mine, each and every day. As for God, I may not believe in the standard perception of what God looks like, but I do feel the need for some source of strength, whether that comes from within, from a church, or from a twelve-step group. Everyone finds their power in different places, and the specifics don't really matter — whatever works for you is fine.

I was afraid of the name, too. What kind of a person is a Sex Addict? What do they look like? What would I see when I walked into the meeting room? What I saw were eleven women. Normal, basic-looking, non-threatening women. Some have partners, others are single or divorced. Many are recovering alcoholics, and many are survivors of sexual abuse. They range in age from mid-20s to mid-40s. And they are friendly — very friendly and welcoming. It's a group of women working together for the benefit of everyone. I think that's what struck me the most at my first meeting — these women were there for each other, and they were willing to help me too, because they understood exactly what I was dealing with. It doesn't

matter that we have all had different life experiences — something I had trouble with at first. I felt as if they couldn't possibly understand me because they weren't like me, and that I couldn't learn much from them, because I wasn't like them. But everyone is there for the same basic reason — compulsive sexual behavior of one sort or another — the rest of the life details are just additional factors that make us unique.

SAA has made a huge difference in my life, and for the first time I feel good about what I'm doing. It's not easy — there are days when I want to give it all up and go back to my old ways, because that's what I'm accustomed to dealing with. Treating my sexuality, not to mention myself, with respect is very unfamiliar and does not come easily for me. But when I feel that way, I go to the meeting and look around the room to see others making tremendous and courageous progress toward fighting off her own personal demons. While no one's path has been straight and easy, and everyone has had her setbacks, watching them inspires me, and I am filled with pride for each success, each medallion, each new day spent in sobriety — pride for them, and hope for myself. ■

POETRY

Eventually reality and fantasy become indistinguishable, and compulsive sexual behavior enabled by substance abuse becomes a dreamlike reality of its own.

And Then

I dreamed that we were together in a crowd—
maybe it was a party—and I held you by the arm.
There was something I wanted to say to you—
something very important—but people
kept coming up and talking to you,
and I could not keep your attention

And then you would turn to me and I would begin again
but always you looked away and spoke to someone else.

And then things got confused and you disappeared
and I began to look for you and ask people if they had seen you.

And then I realized I was naked,
and I was very embarrassed, but people seemed not to notice
so I kept walking through the crowd looking for you.

And then I was outside and the wind was blowing.
I could feel it moving through my hair and flowing over
my bare skin. It was dark and I could not see.

I was afraid and crouched within some shrubbery.

And then you found me and you were angry
and I was ashamed and tried to cover myself.

And then you held me and I cried.

From the confusion and pain of our childhood we stumble into the role of adults. I have always had the feeling of being a number of very different people. I was a student, a professional, a voyeur, a husband, a father, a collector of pornography, an active church member, a visitor to unspeakable places, a respected member of my community, an alcoholic. Life becomes beyond the grasp of sanity.

Multiple Roles

I have spent my life performing in
a long play based on a fictitious character,
a representation of the American Ideal,
while in other productions
held in unmarked theaters known only to a few,
I have played other roles.

Dark figures creeping in shadowed places,
doing strange contorted dances
on a stage littered with shards of glass,
writhing in ecstasy and blood,
rushing back to the main play
resuming the major role while hiding the scars,
wanting to be free but knowing no escape.
There is no end to this cycle of madness.
The curtain falls only when the hero dies
and leaves them all in tears.

I always wondered if my father
played this role before me.
From what I know of him he cast the mold—
a compelling intensity, a quick mind,
a love of beauty and of alcohol,
a bent on self-destruction.

There was a story that mother told me
about his coming home from an afternoon movie
angry that some unknown man
approached and touched him in the darkened theater
and how angry he was.

I always wondered
if there was another story about that dark place
that remained untold.

What we know and understand about the appropriate sexual relationship between adults is what we see demonstrated for us by our parents, or by the adults around us, or by television, if that is all we have to go by. When our physical maturity call us to begin acting out these roles, we respond with what we have been taught. When this understanding has come from abuse and confusion, we have little chance of success.

Getting It Straight

I never could get it all straight.
What was right and what was wrong.
What was loving and what was hurtful
Why the things that drew me in so powerfully
With such terrible excitement
Were the things that left me feeling
Empty and ashamed.

I never could get it all straight.
What is affection and what is abuse.
What is intimacy and what is intrusion.
What is the difference between a friend and a lover.

I learned about love from those who I loved
When I was a very young child.
They taught me all that they knew about love.
They never could get it all straight.

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News of the worldwide fellowship of Sex Addicts Anonymous, stories of recovery, practical advice on working the steps, and more.

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RAP AROUND

INDIANAPOLIS

Enthusiastic 12 step work and networking is paying off. The phone answering committee of approximately ten SAA members, responds to an average of fifty calls a month. Last year's mailing to approximately 1700 professionals generated quite a few referrals and a second mailing is being contemplated. At the monthly Indianapolis intergroup meetings, 7-10 people show up representing the 11 SAA groups in the area. Sobriety medallions in bulk from the national office, including at least one commemorating seven years of sobriety.

The annual picnic is scheduled for July 9 at Eagle Creek Park and plans are firming up for a retreat to be held sometime in the fall in coordination with groups from Louisville, Ken., and Bloomington, Ind.

After contacting other established intergroups around the country for ideas, Indianapolis has drafted its own by-laws and is drafting a budget. Monies are divided 50-30-10-10: intergroup-N.S.O.-Region-convention travel expenses for the intergroup Trusted Servant.

SAA in Indianapolis has been affected by fallout from the "Zach Case", in which a convicted child molester kidnapped and killed a boy he had befriended. The public furor over this case resulted in an Indiana state law requiring all convicted child molesters to report their address to the local authorities. This and related incidents forced members of S.A.A. to make some difficult decisions.

In other fallout of the Zach case, many people charged with child molestation have been court-ordered to a counseling center, which requires their clients to attend a minimum of two SAA meetings a week. At the Monday meeting as many as two-thirds of the 35-40 people attending have been court-ordered. This surge in attendance of people who may or may not be willingly attending has had positive and negative effects on the SAA community. While there are plans to do a

group inventory in the near future to address some members' concerns about procedure and safety in meetings with recalcitrant attendees, it seems that the overall effect of being exposed to so much fresh pain and denial has been very invigorating for the SAA community in Indianapolis.

MINNEAPOLIS SAINT PAUL

The Twin Cities Intergroup is planning a benefit performance of the play *The Shame of it All*. Proceeds from this special showing are to cover Convention travel expenses of the two local members of the fellowship that put on the play. The play was very popular last year in Louisville, and is scheduled for a re-run in Phoenix.

Due to concerns about the unavailability of meetings for an SAA member to visit occasionally, there is a phone campaign underway to see if some groups will change their status to the more open "12 Step New".

Finally, at a midwinter intergroup meeting, TCI passed a formal resolution acknowledging that relations between TCI and the NSO have not always been the best, but the time has come to move on in unity.

DULUTH

The Duluth Intergroup is sponsoring a Park Point Play Day on Saturday, May 15, from 1-4 PM. S.A.A.s and C.O.S.A.'s are invited. Bring toys—kites, roller blades, volleyball, bubbles—snacks to share—and your inner child.

(Apologies to Duluth for truncating their listing last month.—L.D.)

RAP AROUND

Send news for Rap Around to PBR, NSO of SAA, PO Box 70949, Houston TX 77270. Include a phone number for a contact person. Remember that the PBR goes out by bulk mail, so send news of events well in advance.