



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 addictive 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

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

Out of the Ashes, Into the Light

THE PHOENIX, ARIZONA

1994 S.A.A. CONVENTION

More than 300 S.A.A. members gathered at the Holiday Inn Corporate Center in Phoenix, Arizona to share their recovery, tend to the financial and organizational health of S.A.A., and to plan for our future as a Fellowship. Simultaneously, COSA held its first annual convention and attendees at both conventions participated in several joint functions during the hot, dry but sunny weekend in Sun City.

Nearly 80 delegates and service workers with voting privileges once more braved the rough waters of Robert's Rules of Order crossed with the addict's flair for the dramatic to conduct business in two delegate meetings.

One of the first orders of business was acceptance of the budget. This was followed by reports from the Board, the Prison Outreach Committee, the Office Oversight Committee, the Literature Committee, and the Inter-fellowship Dialogue Committee on their past activities and goals for the coming year.

The official change of address of the office required by the statutes of Minnesota, where S.A.A. is legally incorporated, was approved as a bylaw change to be ratified at the next Conference. Another noncontroversial bylaw change provides for a regular audit of the books.

The delegates broke into small groups to use the Delphi method to prioritize proposals listed in the Call to the Convention — proposals generated by interest groups throughout the Fellowship and submitted to the office by

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the March 15th deadline.

The agenda priorities were:

1. Approval for sale of *Out of the Shadows* and *Hope and Recovery*, which was a substitute motion for a proposal to sell unspecified "recovery related literature."
2. Convention approval of revision of a Preamble for S.A.A.
3. 1994 S.A.A. Program for Interfellowship Dialogue.
4. Convention approval of Abstinence Statement.
5. Community service announcements. (Arranging for announcements in public media making our Fellowship known to the public.)
6. Conference approval of *Getting Started* pamphlet.
7. Approval of By-Law change re: restructuring organization. (Clarifying the relationship between the N.S.O. Board and the Literature Committee and adding members to the Board to include viewpoints from various service committees.)

Tempers flared as the issue of sales by the N.S.O. of *Out of the Shadows* and *Hope and Recovery* were brought to the floor. Proponents pointed to the widespread use and acceptance of these particular books in many meetings across the country as evidence of their utility. A member of the Prison Outreach Committee argued that making available *Out of the Shadows* — which has credence in the therapeutic community — would help them get useful literature into institutions. Opponents pointed to Tradition Six, which states that S.A.A. should not engage in outside enterprises, as reason enough to drop the books from our list. They pointed out that other 12 step groups do not sell outside literature except for, in most instances, A.A. literature. They also expressed fear that continued use of outside literature would stifle development of original literature from within the Fellowship. The measure passed after lengthy and impassioned debate by a margin of about two-to-one. As in delegate meetings in the past, the minority was given a chance to speak after the vote; the person who spoke did not request a re-vote.

A later special session was scheduled to take up the rest of the agenda. There was some difficulty finding a quorum (half the delegates) but eventually the second meeting got underway. Discussion was limited to ten minutes on the next two items. The motion to approve a Preamble failed.

A motion to recognize the Interfellowship Dialogue committee as a standing committee of the N.S.O. Board passed. Opponents saw it as a violation of Tradition Six and a diversion of our resources and energy. Supporters spoke to what they saw as the need for S.A.A. to cooperate with other 12-Step "S" fellowships to learn from them how they approach recovery from the disease and to share what S.A.A. has learned. A further provision, to budget Fellowship monies to promote dialogue, did not come to the floor.

Speakers and Workshops

Roger M. from Twin Cities Intergroup was the keynote speaker. After sharing his story of addiction and recovery, he delivered his message of healing and acceptance from the St. Paul/Minneapolis community of sex addicts that gave birth to our Fellowship. He told the assembly that the resentments of many who opposed the decision of the N.S.O. to move the office from Minneapolis to Houston have been set aside. He also spoke of his personal gratitude to the

Houston community for accepting the challenge and burden of supporting the National Service Office.

The Saturday night banquet featured speakers Mike and Marcia O'D. of Phoenix telling their story as a recovering couple. Their honesty and humor illuminated and lightened the familiar themes of pain and betrayal transformed into healing and trust. The applause of the audience also acknowledged the work they put into making the convention possible. The banquet was followed by a dance which many of the participants found to be a joyous release of energy rather than the cruising behavior it had been for them in the past.

Sunday brought more workshops and in the evening, a performance of *The Shame of it All*, a play written and performed by David W. and Wendy of Minneapolis. As with previous performances, this one-act play about the dynamics of a dysfunctional family evoked strong responses — laughter and tears — and there was an opportunity for audience members to share feelings that came up for them after the play. Afterwards, convention-goers had a chance to attend the annual talent show or attend a candlelight meeting.

On Sunday a brunch featured SAA and COSA speakers, followed by the closing ceremony in which the Michigan Intergroup was awarded the privilege and responsibility of hosting next year's convention in Ann Arbor.

As usual, the convention program was filled with well-attended workshops and panels on topics as diverse as meditation and suicide, focusing and prison outreach, helping professionals and starting meetings for perpetrators. Some breakout groups brought like-minded S.A.A. members — Christians, HIV positive, men, women, couples, gay and lesbian, and helping professionals — together. The tradition of marathon S.A.A. meetings was continued, and numerous opportunities to play volleyball were presented.

Come to Ann Arbor Michigan on Memorial Weekend in 1995 to experience the incredible and uplifting energy of an S.A.A. convention for yourself.

— Lester D.

REPORT OF THE N.S.O. BOARD

Kevin steps down from Board and Chairmanship

It is with sadness that I write you saying I have ended my service as chair of the N.S.O board of trustees. Also leaving the board are Tom R. (SE region, intergroups) and Tony L. (Pacific NW, secretary). I am grateful for the opportunity to give back a little of what I have gotten, and for knowing the others on the board and in the fellowship who are committed to S.A.A. recovery.

This year at the convention, the fellowship ratified a bylaw change authorizing an audit, and enacted a bylaw change for the new address; and it appointed an interfellowship committee. It voted down adopting a modified Preamble for use in S.A.A. publications. Overall, I got that we are all connected, working together toward sobriety, health and happiness.

The new N.S.O board of trustee officers are: Harry S. (Great Lakes region) chairperson, Mike O'D. (At Large - convention), secretary, and Robert S. (NCen.), treasurer. Other board members are: Claude E. (At large - office oversight), Elizabeth N. (SW), Frank (SE), and Penny T. (SCen.). There is a vacancy in the Pacific-NW; and we may have a NE region representative. I am

confident that the N.S.O. is in good hands.

During my term we hired a new office manager and moved the office from the birthplace of S.A.A., to it's present location. We had several interpersonal crises, with each individual deepening their recovery by use of the tools - principles were what healed the crises. I served under two chairpersons, then acted as chairperson for the last two conventions, the midwinter board meeting, and six teleconferences. We have put in place procedures that will make the board and N.S.O. more accountable, easier to serve, and improve use of N.S.O. resources for what benefits S.A.A. members, groups, and suffering sex addicts. I have even witnessed two board members getting married in the last 14 months!

I believe I affected the service organization on several personal goals:

Making the N.S.O. more efficient and accountable;

Making S.A.A. and N.S.O service more rewarding, fun, and attractive;

Facilitating S.A.A. members being heard, empowering them to communicate their needs to the convention or others in the fellowship by:

insisting board and convention agenda items to be fully developed in writing, and distributed before the meeting,

providing convention delegate time for committees or interest groups to meet;

and asking the fellowship for help when I saw where they could contribute.

For those of you who have not personally committed to giving to the N.S.O., consider what you have gotten from N.S.O.'s help to the fellowship. Then consider being a regular contributor using the lifeline partner pledge program and give at whatever level is sober for you. Thank you.

What I got from international service was that we are all connected and can be helpful just because we understand each other. I have seen a commitment to recovery and bringing that to others. I believe I have seen the light that shines from God in the love and goodness of the fellowship. I am grateful to each of you who have been a part of this.

It is with love that I close. I will continue in service in other ways now.

Humbly, a sex addict,
Kevin

REPORT OF THE LITERATURE COMMITTEE

Story collection published!

Thanks to inspired contributions, hard work, and the trust and generosity of members who ordered prepublication copies, our new book *From Shame to Grace* was available for sale to the delegates at the 1994 convention. Thanks to the convenience of fast copy printing directly from electronic files, a Phoenix printer was able to produce the first hundred books overnight. Most of them not already promised were snapped up in the first hour of sales.

Response so far has been good — there does seem to be a real hunger to hear the message that the program of S.A.A. works as is shown in the accounts of the addicts whose stories appear in the book. Several delegates were overheard expressing the desire that their stories be included; no doubt a future edition or second volume of stories will be produced.

New Members of the Literature Committee

The bylaws of S.A.A. call for the election of representatives to the Literature Committee by regional caucus every two years. This year some members' terms expired and new representatives were elected. Lester D., Dee N., and Jay S. ended their service as representatives, and Lisa G. ended her service as PBR editor, but they will continue to assist the work of the committee to assure continuity and to make their special skills available for the work of carrying the message.

The new composition of the Literature Committee is as follows:

Pacific/Northwest Region: Steve L. of Los Angeles, Representative; Frank A., Los Angeles, Alternate.

Southwest Region: Ted F., Tucson, Representative; Carolyn L., Tucson, Alternate.

South Central Region: Jon K., Houston, Representative; Dave, Dallas-Fort Worth, Alternate

Southeast Region: Open. The caucus did not choose a representative.

North Central Region: Don S., Scottsbluff, Nebr., Delegate; Barry D., St. Louis Park, Minn., Alternate.

Great Lakes Region: Tip L., Bedford, Ind., Delegate; Alan K., Alternate.

Northeast Region: Though there was a caucus this year, it did not elect a Literature Representative.

At-Large Delegates: Connie B. of Northfield Minn. was appointed by the Literature Committee and confirmed by the Delegate meeting as an at-large representative. (The bylaws provide for up to three at-large representatives "from the metropolitan area which is the focus of Literature Committee work.". With the increased use of telecommunications this geographic location of at large representatives seems less important. To change this stipulation would require a bylaw amendment approved by one convention and ratified by the next one.)

The Literature Committee's 1994-95 Goals and a Vision for the Future

The Literature Committee is committed to expressing a voice unique to Sex Addicts Anonymous. To achieve this vision we have set the following goals:

- Publish a pamphlet-size guide to working the 12 Steps by the 1995 Convention.
- Begin work on a book on the 12 Steps to be published by 1997 Convention.
- Begin work on a sponsorship pamphlet.
- Continue development of Spanish translations of selected Conference-approved literature, specifically the Self-assessment Brochure and the Three Circles .
- Revamp and revise existing literature to eliminate redundancy and achieve consistency of language.
- Produce a Literature Committee manual.
- Continue to improve the quality of the *Plain Brown Wrapper* and achieve a timely publication schedule.

The goals were accepted as stated by the delegate meeting in Phoenix.

Sponsorship: Learning through Listening

I think sponsorship is the single most significant individual program relationship available to us. We choose sponsors who "have what we want," and are willing to share that with us, then we follow them around or call them a lot, or do whatever it takes to get to know them well enough to get some of their experience, strength and hope.

Temporary sponsorship is a short-term commitment to help a newcomer keep coming back, and begin to sober up. Usually it has involved (for me) just listening, keeping in touch, encouraging them to come back; and sharing my own experience around sobriety. I also talk about powerlessness. They don't usually get much farther than Step One in six weeks anyway. In our group, temporary sponsors are the people who do the twelve-step call, and they make a six week commitment only; after that the newcomer is expected to find their own permanent sponsor. I think that when a person is relatively new to the program, it is very important for the sponsor to walk the sponsee through the steps, in order, with a high expectation of thoroughness and completion. For me, that means sitting down with someone when they've finished a step, and talking about it, listening to what they did, and sharing my own experience. It also means (for me) suggesting that they read the 12 & 12 and other appropriate program literature. Sometimes this takes a long time, sometimes it's relatively fast. I don't think that part matters. What matters is that they're consciously working

on a step all the time, and that they follow the suggested sequence. After a sponsee has cycled through the steps in order, sponsors should try to suggest appropriate steps to work for particular life situations, and also perhaps, suggest continual attention to Steps 3, 10 and 11.

This all, of course, presupposes that a sponsor has done the steps in order herself, and is keeping a commitment to work the program in her own life.

Another important aspect of sponsorship is the sobriety statement. A sponsor and sponsee can work together on the sponsee's statement at some point early in their relationship. (I usually do this after Step 3.) I think the Three Circles pamphlet is helpful, but there are also other ways to look at it. The important thing is that the sponsee defines her/his bottom line behaviors and attempts to stay sober, and begins to see what "grey behaviors" lead to slips. I think the sobriety statement bears repeated scrutiny over time, but there is a definite need just to get it going in the beginning.

A third aspect of the sponsoring relationship is that of listening. All of us addicts need someone to bounce ideas off, and someone to tell when we're feeling addictive and like we might slip. A sponsor must have time for this. Not boundless, endless time, but willingness to make a commitment to listen for reasonable amounts of time, and to give feedback if necessary. It is most useful to a sponsee to receive program feedback (i.e. Step feedback, or tools or slogans, etc.)

When I work with my sponsor, it is

important for me to remember that she does not have all the answers. She is another addict with the same delusions as I have. She's just been around longer and has more experience. It is not OK for me to put her on a pedestal and claim her every word as the word of God. I need to take what fits for me, and leave the rest. I also need to be willing to examine what she says, even if I don't like it, and make sure it doesn't fit before discarding it. I can never assume that I am always right about what's best for me. Often she knows more about what I need than I do, but she is occasionally wrong, and that has to be OK.

A sponsor is not...

a judge or jury. A sponsor can point out destructive patterns that lead to acting out behavior; but must be careful not to be judgemental

a therapist. Sponsors cannot give therapy feedback, or do analysis of their sponsees. Sponsors listen, befriend, share experience, and love their sponsees.

a parent. Sponsorship does not involve authority. We are basically two addicts coming together for mutual support and sobriety. One may have more experience than the other but both have something to offer.

a bank. Money can really confuse the issues if lent to a sponsee. It is not the job of a sponsor to get a sponsee out of debt.

I seem to get people to sponsor that have my same issues and problems. And so I end up learning a lot more about my own stuff as I try to listen to theirs. Sponsorship is a valuable tool for a sponsor, as well as the sponsee. It is one of the most direct ways to do Twelfth Step work, with another addict. Anytime we do service work we improve our own programs.

I have left several sponsoring relationships, for various reasons. I think sometimes people move in different directions and they just need to find a new person who fits better. Sometimes we move geographically apart, and it's tough to have a sponsor who lives far away. Sometimes we find ourselves in honest disagreement on how to work the program. This last can be a growing experience if people are willing or able to work through it, but sometimes the problems are too great and the relationship needs to end. I think it's important to say that it's OK to end the sponsoring relationship from either end if it's not working, but that every effort should be made to keep the personal relationship intact if possible.

— Connie B.

Share your Sponsorship Experiences!

The Literature Committee is interested in gathering articles about the experience of being a sponsor or a sponsee in SAA. If possible we would like to have a series of articles in the PBR on this subject and we are beginning to gather ideas for a pamphlet on sponsorship. We are seeking input from the membership, including the experience, strength and hope gleaned from this powerful tool of our program. Send ideas and articles to: Literature Committee, NSO, P.O. Box 70949, Houston, TX 77270

My Secret Life: No Secret Anymore

For most of my life I was too ashamed or afraid to ever admit what was really going on in "my secret life." In my secret life, I would masturbate and fantasize about very young girls or seek out opportunities to act out those fantasies. My secret life kept me in a state of shame and isolated from the rest of humanity. It was more important than anything else and my only real "joy" in life. Everything else revolved around it or took a back seat to it. But the cost of my secret life was very dear.

Not only did it keep bringing me back to prison and cost me everything I could have had or been, it also hurt the people who cared about me. And though I did not believe that I was really hurting anyone at the time, I now know that the young girls I had sexual contact with will probably carry a scar on their hearts, minds and emotions for the rest of their lives because of what I did to them. They will not grow up to be the same people they would have been if they hadn't been exposed to my abuse.

Sometimes I got sick and tired of the misery my secret life was causing me, and I would try to get help for myself. Over the years I saw 9 or 10 different psychologists who I talked to about my problems, but none of them were really able to help me. In time I resolved to myself that I was stuck with my secret life so I might as well try to enjoy it. When I wasn't in prison, I was in a progressive cycle that took me from riding around in cars exposing myself to young girls, or exposing myself to them in semiprivate public places, to getting out of my car and fondling them in residential yards or apartment complexes (if it seemed I could get away with it), to working a sixteen hour a day job so I could support families and have them move in with me so that I could have access to their children.

Although I would pick up and leave to avoid being arrested, the consequences of my secret life would still catch up with me and I would be put in prison, again and again. While in prison my secret life continued and I would masturbate while fantasizing about young girls, to kill the monotony and alleviate the boredom, pain, stress, anger, loneliness, depression and shame of prison life. All the while I was all alone in my secret life, just me, the fantasy and my orgasms. But the fantasies became realities whenever I got out of jail.

Then one day I stumbled across a program called Sex Addicts Anonymous. I attended meetings for a couple years and began to read everything I could find about sexual addiction. I found that meetings were a safe place to share with other people what my life had really been like and I began to understand how my addiction to sex worked to keep me addicted. I also began to see how horrible my addiction had made my life and I learned that it was really possible to change. There were people attending those meetings who once had the same kind of problem I did, whose lives were no longer out of control and who were making it out in the world instead of doing life on the installment plan. I got a glimpse of what life might be like for me without being ruled by my secret life.

Today I have been sober for about a year. By sober I mean that I have not fantasized about young girls while masturbating for that length of time. In fact,

I stopped masturbating entirely and find that I like the way this makes me think and feel about myself. So I intend to continue this throughout my next year of sobriety.

You see, I came to realize that if I was ever going to be free of the control my secret life had over me, and all of the devastating consequences it brought me, I was going to have to lay down my secret life here and now, even though I was still in prison. Though I have no way of knowing how long I will remain in prison, I do know that while I am here, I can work on my recovery and maintain my sobriety, "one day at a time" until the time comes for me to leave here. I believe that the work I do on my recovery now will enable me to continue my sobriety when I leave, though I also recognize that might not occur for quite a few more years. It's my belief that an extended period of sobriety while incarcerated will empower me to lead a normal life when I leave here and never return to prison if I continue to work the program.

Perhaps my story will in some way benefit you. I wish that someone had shared such a story with me years ago. Perhaps I would not be here now.

— *Anonymous*

REFLECTIONS

Self-Contained

Here I am once again suffering from the pains of acting out to an excess. My mind and body ache. My esteem is sinking again. I am wondering if I will ever be free.

Of course I know I can't get rid of the memories which stimulated this last episode of instant self-gratification (before I could even get out of bed this morning!) But I am aware that it was my actions of the night before that stimulated the memories and it was my own rationalizations and justifications the night before that, that let me convince myself that once would not hurt me, etc., etc.

After all I was alone!

This is not sexual sobriety for me! It is only a continuation of the battle I have been fighting for 40+ years. I have heard that abstinence makes the heart grow fonder, but somewhere along the line I am either doing too well or too poorly to cope with myself. Sooner or later I am indulging myself in that private hell only an addict knows: the pleasure and pain of successful failure. Just enough to prove I am not good enough.

I am writing this to be able to communicate my feelings and find someone else that understands. Now, more than ever, I need to be freed from the bondage of self. As an addict I can only find relief with the aid of others of my ilk and the grace of my Higher Power.

— *Anonymously, a new member*

N.S.O. Office Energizes Houston Community

The arrival of the NSO office in the Houston Community of SAA has offered us both a great gift and a great challenge. In responding to the needs of the office, the Houston fellowship has had a chance to look at its level of commitment, and has experienced the pains of an enormous growth spurt. Already, the move has kicked recovery in Houston to the next level.

We members of SAA in Houston feel greatly honored by the choice, and have resolved to support the office in the most effective ways we could muster. Many creative things have been tried, and we have had some surprising successes:

Members with a legal obligation for community service work have been approved by the Board to assist in the office, and have come to work for up to 20 hours a week, thus greatly relieving Jerry B. (the office manager) of many burdensome, rote tasks.

Volunteers have been pitching in, supporting PBR production, filling literature orders, answering inquiries and other miscellaneous tasks at about 150 hours per month.

A community organization is being formed (similar to our Phone Response Committee), to organize volunteer support for the office.

"Homework" in the guise of labeling literature has been "farmed out" to various individuals, and more work that is not time-specific is being lined up for future effort.

Local computer whizzes have put in time to help train the office manager, do formatting, troubleshoot the equipment, and respond to special programming challenges—all to continuous of the system.

A set of metal stamps has been donated, and a member who is highly skilled in metalworking is fabricating a jig that will

allow us to stamp our own chips, thus saving money and time.

Using our own forces, a metal door and burglar bars were installed to protect the office.

When the Midwinter Board Meeting was held, people opened their hearts, homes and refrigerators to the Board members, saving much food and lodging costs (and showing them a good-ole get-down Texan good time).

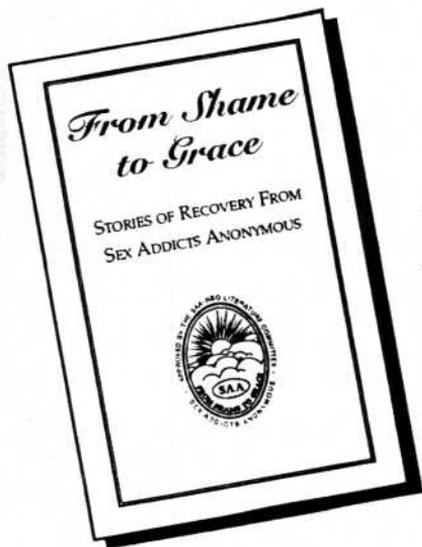
All of the office furniture was donated, refurbished and delivered at no cost to SAA. Some of it even looks good.

While these efforts have helped smooth out the transition, we are still very aware that more will be required as the fellowship grows. Our community has a lot of energy and commitment, and the challenge of the office in our midst calls us to make the stretches required to serve SAA as a whole. We humbly acknowledge the debt to our brothers and sisters in Twin Cities, and especially Douglas P. the previous manager, for their example and their accomplishments in making the office as effective as it is. We are dedicated to continuing this effort, and adding whatever we can. As our good friend Jerry B. states: "Support here in Houston has made it possible to make this transition with a minimum of disruption...especially in areas where special expertise was needed." What can you say to that, if not "thanks for having faith in us"?

—Jon K.

RAP AROUND

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



From Shame to Grace

Stories of Recovery
from
Sex Addicts Anonymous

"I no longer must live within the framework of deceptions and loneliness, for I can reach out to others and tell the truth without fear of abandonment."

"Now I see that control is an illusion. I recognize that there are many things beyond my control and only a power higher than myself can deal with those things."

These stories of the miracle of recovery from members of Sex Addicts Anonymous relate what it was like, what happened, and what it's like now. The stories make it clear that the Promises do come true...as a gift to those who are willing to live their lives on a spiritual basis.

22 stories in a book of 144 pages, spiral bound. \$10 each.

Enclosed is _____ for _____ copies, plus _____ for shipping and handling.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Send to: Story Collection, c/o the N.S.O./S.A.A., P.O. Box 70949, Houston TX 77270.

For shipping and handling, add:

\$3.50 for 1 or 2 copies • \$4.00 for 3-5 copies

\$4.50 for 6-10 copies • \$5 for 10 or more.

Friends of the Literature Committee (FOLC)

The Literature Committee is composed of elected representatives and alternate from each region, up to three at-large representatives, and the editor of the *Plain Brown Rapper*. We want to involve more S.A.A. members in literature work. Fill this form out to connect to the network of people interested in creating and distributing recovery literature. Send it to **Friends of the Literature Committee, c/o N.S.O. of S.A.A., P.O. Box 70949, Houston TX 77270.**

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Fax number _____ email address _____

Intergroup _____

Do you have a computer? Mac PC Modem?

Some projects we are working on:

- *Plain Brown Rapper*—increase the distribution of PBR in local areas and intergroups and finding local group or intergroup news contacts
- A booklet on sponsorship
- A short guide to working the 12 Steps
- A book on the 12 Steps (to be published in 1997)
- Translations of our literature into Spanish and French (We are looking for translators and reviewers of material already translated)

Do you have ideas for new literature? Send us your ideas or literature you have published for use by your meeting or intergroup.

Subscribers, Please Note

This issue of *The Plain Brown Rapper* is the May/June 1994 issue. It counts as only one issue on your subscription, which will be extended by another month.

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