

It All Depends On Me...

by Joel...

Today is the second day of the Jewish New Year holiday. The Jewish New Year is not just the beginning of a calendar year but it is also begins the beginning of a ten day period during which Jews repent for their sins and ask for forgiveness. In the last four years that I have been in recovery, the Jewish New Year has taken on a different meaning for me. For one, I during this holiday, I take a look back over the previous year to assess where I have been in various aspects of my life. This past year, in particular, I have started to see a merging, a melding of various parts of my life back towards one coherent whole.

Take for example the increasing synergism between my religious and compulsive life. The word we use for getting better from our addiction is 'recovery'. Why this word in particular? For me, recovery suggests that my life was out of balance and that I am trying to re-establish a balance, an equilibrium.

Balance for me is perhaps one of the most, if not the most important word to convey a healthy lifestyle. Now take one of the most important words used during the Jewish New Year, "teshuvah". Most prayer books translate this word to mean repentance - the essence of the holiday. But the root of the word and perhaps a more apropos translation would be 'to return'. Recovery - returning.... how close they really are when I think of it.

What I am learning and beginning to live more and more lately is that melding of the various parts of my life together. For my first few years of recovery, everything was separate. I went to meetings, did 12 step and other recovery work and that stuff was totally separate from the rest of my life. Recovery stuff

was only to stop my acting out and none of it rubbed off on anything else. Conversely, things I did at work, at home, or religiously had no impact on my recovery life. I said and espoused to have given up my 'double life' but all I did was make it public and shift it into something else - a recovery life and everything else.

Lately, things have begun to cross over and impact each other. I am increasingly turning to things like my religious life to gain strength and understanding for aspects of my recovery as well. I am getting more open to ideas for everything from everywhere.

I want to recount a story I heard during a sermon I heard yesterday which is a really good example of some really useful ideas and concepts that can help me in my recovery. The story comes from one of the Jewish books of law that was written about 2,000 years ago. This particular story comes from the section which is discussing the laws for the Jewish New Year holiday. As the story goes (I am recounting it as I remember hearing it yesterday), there was a very evil Jewish man who was very wealthy and used his money to have relations with every prostitute on the face of the earth (prostitution was and is a transgression of Jewish law). At one point it came to his attention that in a city far away, there was a prostitute who he had not yet done business with. So he traveled to that city and paid the prostitute. While he was with her, the prostitute made a comment that he was a really bad person and that no matter how hard or how much he tried, he would never be able to do enough penitence to deserve a portion in the world to come.

Then the evil person began to

realize how much he had sinned and decided that he needed to stop and atone for his sins. But he didn't want to do it himself, so he went to a large canyon and began to pray to the mountains to atone for him. The mountains replied that they could not since they too had no part in the world to come (which was flat). Then he prayed to the sky and the earth - same result. Then he tried the sun, moon, and stars - same result. Finally, it became obvious to him what needed to be done. In Hebrew he said "Hakol Taluy Ela Be". Which translated word for word means "It all is dependent except for me". In others words - nobody can atone for me... nobody can make better - only I can do it.

The Rabbi then went on to say in his sermon that when people do things wrong and want to set things right, they tend to do two things: they blame their problems on others and they ask others to fix their

"The first step in recovery is recognizing that I am the most important part.."

problems for him. He mentioned that the first 'sin' was eating from the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden. When God asked Adam why he did it - Adam blamed it on Eve and Eve blamed it on the snake.

I listened to this yesterday and it really reinforced what I have been learning and hearing these last years. The first step of recovery is recognizing that I am the most important part. I can come up with all sorts of reasons and excuses for why I started to act out and why I continued for all those years. That may be very useful information to understand but if I use it as an excuse and if I do not take on personal responsibility for my past actions, then 'balancing my life' or 'returning' to a healthy life style is not possible. Taking ownership and responsibility does not mean going it alone. For example, Jews are not expected to atone or ask for forgiveness alone. For most of yes-

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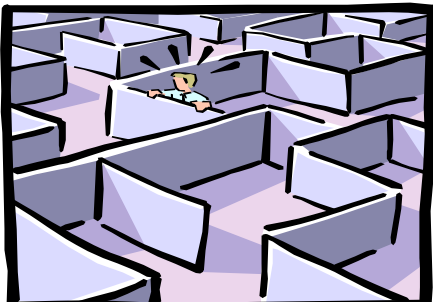
It **STILL** Depends on ME !!!

terday and today and again next Wednesday (Jewish Day Of Atonement) Jews will be together in large groups. While the following analogy could be considered 'stretched', many religions including Judaism stress not only personal communication with God/higher power but also group communication. The prayers including personal communications. I am in a group of people asking for forgiveness. It seems to me that working within a group is stressed as much as working alone. I think the same holds true for my continued recovery and return from my compulsive behaviors. I take on personal responsibility to improve myself and help others and both of these efforts are accomplished through personal work, one on one effort, and within a group context.

Deciding to go into action starts it - but then going into action is the necessary next step. It all depends on me - I can listen to others, I can read all about it, but unless I get into action and do something myself, the positive results are few and far between.

I wish for all - Jews and non-Jews alike - a year full of happiness and enriching experiences. A year where balance and return mean finding a way to fill the void left by negative compulsive behaviors with behaviors and experiences that have positive and fulfilling meaning.

Joel



It's All in How You Look at it.

by Jim F....

Two men, both seriously ill, occupied the same hospital room. One man was allowed to sit up in his bed for an hour each afternoon to help drain the fluid from his lungs. His bed was next to the room's only window.

The other man had to spend all his time flat on his back. The men talked for hours on end. They spoke of their wives and families, their homes, their jobs, their involvement in the military service, where they had been on vacation. And every afternoon when the man in the bed by the window could sit up, he would pass the time by describing to his roommate all the things he could see outside the window.

The man in the other bed began to live for those one-hour periods where his world would be broadened and enlivened by all the activity and color of the world outside. The window overlooked a park with a lovely lake. Ducks and swans played on the water while children sailed their model boats. Young lovers walked arm in arm amidst flowers of every color of the rainbow. Grand old trees graced the landscape, and a fine view of the city skyline could be seen in the distance.

As the man by the window described all this in exquisite detail, the man on the other side of the room would close his eyes and imagine the picturesque scene. One warm afternoon the man by the window described a parade passing by. Although the other man couldn't hear the band-he could see it in his mind's eye as the gentleman by the window portrayed it with descriptive words. Then unexpectedly, a sinister thought entered his mind. Why should the other man alone experience all the pleasures of seeing everything while he himself never got to see anything? It didn't seem fair.

At first thought the man felt ashamed. But as the days passed and he missed seeing more sights, his envy eroded into resentment and soon turned him sour. He began to brood and he found himself unable to sleep. He should be by that window-that thought, and only that thought now controlled his life. Late one night as he lay staring at the ceiling, the man by the

window began to cough. He was choking on the fluid in his lungs. The other man watched in the dimly lit room as the struggling man by the window groped for the button to call for help. Listening from across the room he never moved, never pushed his own button which would have brought the nurse running in. In less than five minutes the coughing and choking stopped, along with that the sound of breathing. Now there was only silence-deathly silence.

The following morning the day nurse arrived to bring water for their baths. When she found the lifeless body of the man by the window, she was saddened and called the hospital attendants to take it away. As soon as it seemed appropriate, the other man asked if he could be moved next to the window. The nurse was happy to make the switch, and after making sure he was comfortable, she left him alone. Slowly, painfully, he propped himself up on one elbow to take his first look at the world outside. Finally, he would have the joy of seeing it all

himself. He strained to slowly turn to look out the window beside the bed. It faced a blank wall.

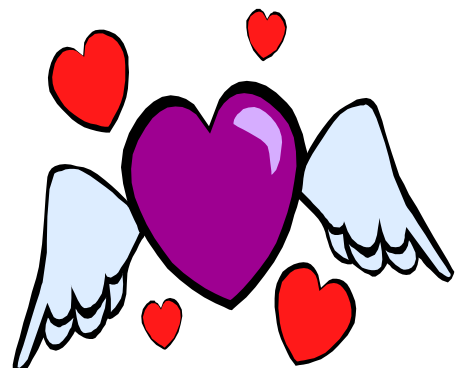
The man asked the nurse what could have compelled his deceased roommate who had described such wonderful things outside this window. The nurse responded that the man was blind and could not even see the wall. She said, "Perhaps he just wanted to encourage you."

Epilogue. . .

You can interpret the story in any way you like. But one moral stands out: There is tremendous happiness in making others happy, despite our own situations. Shared grief is half the sorrow, but happiness when shared, is doubled. If you want to feel rich, just count all of the things you have that money can't buy.

Love heals, unites and sets free.

Jim



"I have a short recovery gratitude story..." Jerry B.

Thanks To The Steps, What Is Of Value Is Safe...

Yesterday, while I was at work, somebody burglarized my apartment. They did not take the two tea pots given me by people I love. They did not bother the fountain I had built in the living room or the rice paper door I had made or the lamp one of my sponsees had so skillfully fashioned.

I wonder what the intruders thought about the seven-foot cross on my bedroom wall, the one I had hand chiseled and hand sanded during my first year in recovery, often while working having to wipe from my face tears along with the sweat. Or the books with the strange titles or the tapes by unknown artists. What did they make

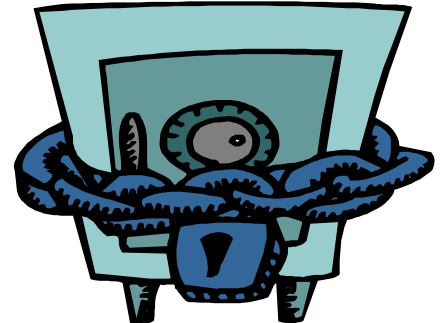
of the nine little shattered clay pots that remind me daily to pray for those I have so severely harmed?

Did they think I was so poor I could not even afford a TV or a VCR or a computer? They did take a once good camera that had given me many hours of pleasure and some good pictures. After it broke last year, I was sad when the repairman told me it could not be repaired. It had been still sitting on my desk, probably my way of talking myself into buying a new one. And they took my stereo, but I can replace it and will, most likely just before baseball season.

Those burglars actually left me more than they took. They left me with a reminder of how wonder-

fully simple my life has become since I took the First Step for the first time seven years ago. They left me with the desire to pray for their good. They left me to sleep in peace, knowing that what is truly of value is safe...

Jerry B.



IN SPITE OF US ALL, EH?.....

From Carl Y.

A lone shipwreck survivor on an uninhabited island managed to build a crude hut. He placed all that he had saved from the sinking ship in the hut.

He prayed to God for deliverance, as he scanned the horizon each day to hail any passing ship.

One day he was horrified to find the hut in flames! All that he owned was now gone. To his limited vision, this was the worst that could happen. **He cursed God!**

The very next day, a ship arrived.

"We saw your smoke signal", the captain said....

"Smart of you to set the fire, so we could see it!" "Ya!". ["Eh?....Ed"]

STEP TWELVE: "Having had a Spiritual awakening as a result of these steps, [I] we tried to carry this message to other sex addicts, and to practice these principles in all our affairs." "J" doesn't explain it, just DOES it!... Frank sends J's message to us.

"Frank - Please forward this to Plain Brown Rapper."

My name is J and I am a sex addict. I have been in recovery from sex addiction for over a decade and recently observed my 8th anniversary of abstinence from my original inner-circle behavior. About 2 years ago, one of the people whom I supervise at work engaged in inappropriate behavior with another employee and I had to respond. All sorts of ghosts from my past began to haunt me as I identified with both parties involved. The resulting inner conflict kept churning inside especially when I had to deal with either one.

Since there was also legal action involved, I began dreading phone calls since I was sure that every call was from a lawyer or my supervisor.

As I responded to the victim, I felt angry and wished that my supe-

riors had responded in a similar way when I was the victim, rather than pretending that nothing had happened. When I had to confront the perpetrator, I felt both relief that my own acting out in the past had not been discovered until after I was in recovery, and the fear that my past would have an adverse affect on the law suit.

As I look back on this now, I can see that my own sexual addiction and recovery helped me to be fair, compassionate and responsive to the needs of both parties. I was practicing the principles of the twelve steps in this part of my life even though I was not aware of it at the time.

"J"....



POET'S PAGE

Bill R. sent us many of his poems and they have been printed, are herein printed, and will be printed on each future issue til they are "used up". Thanks for these messages, Bill, they always uplift! Ed.

POEM #4

And since I truly do see addicts as vampires and addiction as a form of evil, I hate to see adolescents seduced by gothic wonder. This is my warning to them.

Wannabe

Wet my hungry, gleaming edge with your tongue.
Your blood shall slip down blade and handle
Drop and drop by drop
Upon my hand.
Shred your swollen fear
Against my sharp lust
And choke on hot confusion and despair.
Did you think that bulging, blood torn eyes
And ravaged flesh would not mar your fragile fantasies?
Does this tearing, gnawing at your throat
Feel like a lover's kiss?
Is this foul spittle hanging in your hair
And this sweet, rancid, spreading stain upon your breast
A token of your precious, longed for 'dark gift?'
You are pathetic in your naivete
Your loosened feces, urine, mucous
And your newborn fear.
Heed me now too late!
Evil is never fanciful or fair.
You have been slaughtered by your ignorance
And meaning now is loss.

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POEM #5

My acting out time remembered once I was in recovery.

Dark Time

Black-limbed trees
And shadow
Dark against the darkness of the night.
I stand alone, Or
Not so much stand
As crouch
Among the wet leaves
And ruin of the day.
Worms will have their way
With this sodden muck,
As much as worms have ways.
And a mean streak of sky
Unlit and bright in its blackness
Hangs over it all
And catches owls
On the night air.
Once ago and long awhen did I
While laying in the stores for dreams to come
Embark on such nocturnal saturnalias.
But when again the black
Came dark and damp against my skin
And sucked my flaccid fancies cold and colder still,
I ran,
And knew no slowing
For the rational defeat of such decay.
But still ...
Light holds no secrets for me now.
And I walk resolutely
Through my caroling days
Unknown and all unknown
To the rest of this company
Of loving strangers

You have, and will see George S.' poems in this and in other PBR Poetry pages. Ed...

From George:

"How many of you have read or heard of Scott Peck's book "The Road Less Traveled"? Well, I have also traveled a road in my life. In fact I really believe we are all on a "road of life". During my active addict days, I referred to mine as:

"THE ROAD TO DESTRUCTION"

Traveling that road with its twists and turns,
Where the fires of hell fiercely rage and burn,
Looking at life through the eyes of a child,
Running each hill like an addict gone wild.

The addictive spirit so proud and carefree,
Not bent and broken at his mother's knee,
The breeze, its freshness, plants kisses so rare,
Longing for the freedom that could never be there.

Then - in an instant life becomes real,
The world closes in and this addict begins to feel.

Gone are the breezes with kisses so rare,
Replaced by the my addiction. This is unfair.

Pain is the feeling, it's there by my side,
I run for cover, there is no where to hide.
That whip and those words sting my uncovered face,
I feel all the hatred of the whole human race.

Ever so slowly this body becomes numb,
The mind with all its feeling quickly follows and becomes
Dead. No longer caring the spirit is gone,
Then ever so slowly my addiction emerges and there's no more fun.

Now I travel alone on my road to destruction,
Where nothing can clear these painful obstructions,
I hold all this pain, keep it close to my heart,
It's the fiber that keeps me in misery's comfort.

(Continued on page 6)

"When I dropped the bottle...there was nothing I could do. I stared at the bottle...rage building. I...screamed at God." You SOB...Ba..! S. head!...I exhausted myself...break down...began to cry like a kid....Then I felt...an actual physical sensation-a hand...comforting me;...I knew it wouldn't be there....I ...dialed the number ...I would someday call;...I knew my problem was not quadriplegia, it was alcoholism;...I was powerless...by John Callahan, from his book: "Dont Worry, He Won't Get Far on Foot", Vintage Books Edition, April, 1990.

(Continued from page 5)

"POETRY PAGE"

George continues on his:
"ROAD TO DESTRUCTION"]

That eternal struggle, it yearns to come out,
I hear the voice but I ignore the shouts,
Then in an instant, reality is near
Bringing me more suffering than this addict
can bear.

This is my road, the path where I go
At time I run quickly at time I run slow.
When troubles abound and I feel I will die
I hear the unanswered questions, and always
ask "why?.."

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When I was a young child, I needed a safe
place to hide from my abusers. We lived in
an old house that had a large closet in the
kitchen. This closet became my place of
safety. I'll hide in the dark for hours in:

"MY CLOSET"

A place of safety devoid of fears,
A place where a small boy can shed his
tears,
A place not known to grown-ups, you see
My closet is a haven for Georgie and me.

We run and hide when the terrors are near
They seem so terrible, they fill us with fear,
When danger abounds and creeps into our
day,
It destroys the calm of our innocent child's
play.

Why must we endure that horrible harsh
pain?

Why must we suffer again and again?
All trust and love suffer from this here
Inflicted upon us, Please hear our alarm.

Our closet of safety remains hidden and
dark,
No room now for child's play, no swings, no
park.
Our closet is made for us, we know where to
hid,
In the closet of my mind with my inner child
by my side.

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Resistance to Change

by Richard W.

That a person may change can be
reached
As a person, I have many faults.
There are flaws within me
that disappoint many.
These defects I'd like to divorce.

My higher power can lift from me
any or all my shortcomings,
enabling change
allowing rearrange
stymied by my unwillingness.

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Willingness

by Richard W.

Have a true desire from within your
heart
to change
Be teachable
I know examples help, I'll try to set a
good one.

Accept that pain may be a required pre-
requisite.
Jump on the times when willingness
peaks, to take positive action.
Don't pray daily for specific works, just
for God's will.
Steel oneself for the highest tides,
the battle does not need to be uphill.

For if you do, the flowing tides of com-
pulsion will ebb.
You will begin to choose actions that
reduce risk.

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LISTEN !!

By Louis D. 8-13-92

LISTEN

Listen! Listen! Are you listening
to what I'm saying?

This is what I recollect as being
asked time and time again in my
early childhood. From then, and up
to present, I've had the problem of
not listening to what people are
saying to me. I did not understand
why I didn't understand what was
being said. I seem to have had a
block of not listening, because if I
listened I was susceptible to what
was being said.

By not listening, I kept
control of my own space...of my
own power. To actually listen to
someone gave them the power to
control me by what was being said.

Listening makes me angry. I
feel that I have to give up my power
to the speaker. This makes me
vulnerable.

When I am vulnerable to
someone, I am open to seduction.

Being open to seduction makes
me feel that I am a victim.

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Are We Doing Something Right ????

Flash!

Here are the web page access statistics for November
for the PBR section. What happened???

	Aug 98	Oct 98	Nov 98
PBR	419	1108	1196
PBRb0998	273	93	209
PBRc0998	240	149	175
PBRb1198	0	575	4234
PBRc1198	0	601	623

PBR - Access to the descriptive page.
PBRb0998 - The body of the August 98 issue
PBRc0998 - The cover (1st page) of the August 98 issue
PBRc1198 - The body of the October 98 issue. Is that 4200 hits?! Wow. Up
from 575 the month before?

I guess people are beginning to read the thing! Nice work.

Bob D. Webmaster

It's great to see fruit !! Do you know
why? YOUR ARTICLES and LET-
TERS of Experience, Strength, and
Hope. Keep sending them in! And we
hope those who use the downloads will
send a small contribution to the ISO
office for it !! Ed, PBR

**MESSAGES OF
EXPERIENCE,
STRENGTH,
AND HOPE**

dence with XXXX over the years. No, our letters are not always upbeat and cheery, but they are always on time.

your history and feelings. I knew nothing of sexual addiction until the jail psychiatrist told me and recommended Patrick Carnes books and

.....FROM BEHIND THE PRISON WALLS...

Greetings,

Hope this note finds you happy in sobriety.

Please find enclosed a letter I hope you will consider printing in the PBR. It is a direct response to XXXXX's letter about the value of having freeworld people writing those of us locked away behind the wire. XXXX writes me.

Thank yu for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely, Jerry A.

Jerry's letter:

Dear PBR Readers,

Happy days of sobriety! In the Aug/Sept 1998 issue of the PBR, Mike L. wrote encouraging "freeworld" PBR readers to write to us in prison. ["Free... means NOT in prison.."]

Back in 1993 I got my name on an NSO/SAA [ISO now] pen-pal list. XXXX responded. From 1990 [when I got here] til early 1992 I was in SOTP but in May 1992 I transferred off that unit. From then til May of 98 I was pretty much isolated from other SO's/SAA's. A sane inmate doesn't wave a banner saying, "Hey, I'm an SO/SAA" [SO=Sex Offender]. Most SAA's in prison are SO's and vice versa. So XXXX' letters came like a bright light.

Let's put you in a similar position. Say you're on a business trip somewhere [AA's everywhere, SAA is...limited to [certain -Ed] areas, right? So, the deal goes bad and the word "rejection" is ringing like a tom-tom in your head. Know the feeling? Then you see a phone-and "wala, you think of your personal 911; your friend, your sponsor, your "somebody who-cares-and understands." Your bright light. Sorta like the way it is in here.

I have enjoyed my correspon-

Writing to XXXX has helped me to express ideas and thoughts I needed to express, to develop in my recovery.

Sure, you're busy but maybe there's 5 minutes you could squeeze out, huh? It's great 12 step work and really quite safe [I for one, don't bite! Nor do I have the time to do any more evil once I get out of this place; I've got to get my life together]

So, let's give Mike L., Chair of the Prison Outreach Committee, and all the letter writers, a big round of applause! And write soon, too!

[Note: The POC thanks all the letter writers, too! But there is a continuing need. As Jerry A. has expressed, it is of great importance to prisoners, and "great 12 step work", for one's own recovery. To volunteer, drop a snail mail or e-mail to the Prison Outreach Committee [POC] c/o the ISO office. You'll be given the name of someone inside the wall with whom to communicate your ESH!

Ed - PBR

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Kasey writes from inside and responds to the author of:

"God Answered His Prayer"...

Dear Precious Child of God:

Perhaps God answered my prayers when I read your story. I am very grateful for your courage and honesty. it has saved me from suicide when I was in great despair.

I am a xx year old xx male who was sexual with three boys ages 11-13. Much of your story parallels mine - enough for me to identify with

SAA. Ever since, while awaiting my trial, I have devoured the literature and started working the steps. Before arrest, I too, had no place to go but to jail.

To quote you: "God will give me the strength I need to get through". I know this in my heart and many times I have to repeat it. I also, daily, have to say the third step prayer. One of my meditations quoted Hebrews 13:5 and this has brought me solace.

Now I await the unknown: trial, prison, and years ahead. I've never been to or through a jail; it's all so very frightening. I'm learning to take one day at a time. I'm so new at this it seems like an emotional roller coaster. If there is anyway you could write me and share your experience, strength, and hope through what you faced that I'm preparing to face, I would very much appreciate it.

Let me say again that I am grateful, deeply, for your story!

Yours in Recovery,

Kasey S.

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MORE FROM PRISON COMMUNITY ON PAGE 8.....

LitCom looking for translators.... YOU ?

Dear SAA Members,
The Literature Committee of SAA is looking for information and contacts for translating our written message into other languages. If you speak a language besides English, are willing to volunteer your time to help translate conference approved literature into other languages, are in need of SAA literature in an other language than English, or have ideas regarding the translation of SAA literature into other languages we would like to hear from you.

Please send your correspondence to: ISO of SAA
c/o Translations
PO Box 70949
Houston, TX 77270

Or email: <<info@SAA-recovery.org>>

MORE..... *Messages of ESH from behind the Prison Walls.....*

Dear Readers of the PBR,

I am an inmate in a special program unit at the XXX Dept of Corrections/Diagnostic unit at XXX,XX. I am a repeat sex offender who is now living a relatively normal life, under the circumstances! In the past I have been involved in, or accused of, everything from homosexual activity to attempted rape! On September 9, 1994 I was sentenced to prison for 10 years and a \$10,000 fine for First Degree Sexual Abuse. I had only touched an adult woman's nipple, but thank God I finally got what I deserved and got help whether I like it or not!

I finished a repeat sexual violator program call RSVP last December, here at Diagnostic and things look good for me to be released from here in 4-5 months and go to mental health treatment center in XXX, XX, just 20 miles from my home... XXX X. of XXX, XX and I have been pen pals for about two years now. I enjoy writing him and receiving his letters even though I get to call home and write to family. No problem as some other inmates have.

I look forward to receiving the Plain Brown Rapper every two months!

Phil B.

[Ed.. Thanks, Phil, for your letter!]

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PBR Editor.

Plain Brown Rapper Submission
Dear Sir:

Enclosed please find an article I hope you will find suitable for publication in the PBR. I am giving you an unconditional release to use this material as you see fit...

I correspond regularly with XXX X...and sure appreciate his support. Someday I too hope to be able to be as active with prison outreach as he has been once I am paroled and off paper.

Keep up the good work. I appreciate all of your efforts.

Sincerely, John R.

John R.'s Article:

Recovery is facing the issues in my life and successfully overcoming them. Knowing what happened, when, and to whom I try to tell it like it is except when to do so would injure them or others as saying what people want to hear is a form of denial and cover up perpetuating the lie that does not solve anything. If my talk is looking for a pat on the back or personal gain I am fooling myself and avoiding the real gut level issues.

Telling myself the truths about misbeliefs [the lies I tell myself]..."If they only knew...it would be devastating...I just could not go on..." is how I counter negative thinking.

"Life really does go on in spite of what I tell myself..."

The misbelief here being that although I tell myself it is devastating the truth is that I have a much better chance of not succumbing to my weaknesses if another person knows about them. Life really does go on in spite of what I tell myself.

Being in recovery is not worrying about what others think of me, it is sharing my strengths, experiences, and hopes including accepting each person, place, thing, or situation as being exactly the way it is supposed to be at that moment. My walk allows me to stand up to adversity and rejection for my past actions as I keep learning how to use my past to deal with the present while giving it away to keep it.

If I dwell only on the physical aspects of recovery I find myself ignoring emotional sobriety. Physical abstinence is the beginning, but it's emotional and mental growth that allows me to overcome stinking thinking. Being incarcerated forced me to apply the 12-steps to each situation of anger, lust, envy, pride, sloth, gluttony, and greed, [which all contribute to fear], as they relate to

my sexual addictions in addition to my alcoholism. Previous AA inventories would ask: "What character defects are being tempted? What steps can I use? How important is it?" SAA inventories add: "What will I [or the recipient of my actions] feel? What are the consequences? Growth has enable me to be a lot more concerned about the welfare of others.

Twenty four years in AA has been combined with three years in SAA. Together these programs allow me to be in recovery from all of my addictions. The message here being that success in recovery depends upon my commitment to deal with everything in my life.

John R.

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From Harvey A.

Ed. comment: Harvey wrote us some time ago volunteering to do some work for the LitCom. At the recent meeting of the LitCom, there wasn't time to get to the specifics of Harvey's offer and how to handle it, since he is behind walls and snail mail is about the only way. It may take a while since this may be a first. Harvey wrote again about his address change and another program which we find to fall into the area of Tradition 10, having to do with an "outside issue". We can't even place a notice on what might be a worthy project. Sorry about that Harvey. He inquires about eh status of the SAA "Large Book". This may double as a report on that also. The wheels of progress grind slowly, even with the "Large Book", but it is on the move, and we can only report that what we had hoped for by year end, will be now be ready for inspection by '99 convention time.

Harvey also asked for a current book list and order form. Jerry, did you send it?

Harvey, we hope to get back to you soon!!! Thanks for writing! Ed.

(Continued on page 9)

(Continued from page 8)

From Michael R.
Another request....

[This is a letter from Michael which is another request for something we can't honor for the same reason that was given in commenting on Harvey's letter Ed.]

Michael begins his letter telling us about the problems of life for sex offenders after release from prison. Having had it on good authority from those now on the outside who still maintain recovery by doing the work of Step 12 and Tradition 5, it is apparent that this is a difficult trail.

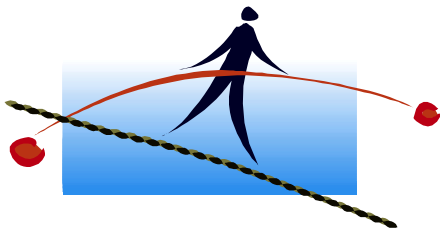
Michael does know about the Step 10 situation and mentions it in his letter. He does say, in a part of his letter, "...We must learn to stop viewing ourselves as victims; learn to be assertive and defend our rights. Our guilt, feelings of helplessness and hopelessness have allowed us to give up and gave power to our addiction and insanity. Through working the 12 steps we are able to return to sanity but we must always be aware that our higher power helps those who help themselves...."

....Thank you for taking the time.
Sincerely,

Michael R.

[Thanks, Michael, for your letter. It is important to the future of all we addicts who search for a healthy life. Ed]

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"In individuals, insanity is rare; but in groups, parties, nations and epochs, it is the rule"

-Friedrich Nietzsche,
German Philosopher[1844-1900]

Ed question: For those of us who are insane with this disease, are "families" included with "groups" above???

THE COMPLETE [?] LIST OF SAA SAYINGS. WITH THANKS TO SEVERAL CONTRIBUTORS AND IN NO PARTICULAR ORDER

- * Keep coming back, it works if you work it.
- * Sit down, shut up and listen.
- * If you think the program is too simple, go out and act out some more.
- * By the time you get back you'll be simple enough for the program.
- * First things first
- * Keep it simple, stupid (K.I.S.S.)
- * What step are you on.
- * Does anyone have a burning desire.
- * We got a chair here with your name on it.
- * It's always easier to take somebody else's inventory.
- * I'm really grateful to be here.
- * I thank my HP for my sobriety.
- * I don't know where I'd be without my sponsor.
- * Get a sponsor.
- * Don't act out and go to meetings.
- * My ass was on fire.
- * If acting out doesn't bring you to your knees, sobriety will.
- * When you sober up a horse thief, all you have is a sober horse thief
- * Easy does it
- * One day at a time
- * If you fly with crows, you get shot at
- * GOD: Good, Orderly Direction
- * HALT: Hungry, Angry, Lonely, Tired
- * I got sick and tired of being sick and tired
- * It's easy to talk the talk, but you have to walk the walk
- * Gratitude is an attitude
- * You have to give it away in order to keep it
- * Fake it til you make it
- * It's a selfish program
- * Stick with the winners
- * Keep coming back
- * Just for today
- * I've been here a few 24 hours
- * HIT: Hang In There
- * Under every dress there's a slip
- * FEAR: False Expectations Appearing Real
- * FEAR : Face Everything And Recover!
- * Let go and let God
- * EGO: Edging God Out!
- * We came, we came to, we came to believe
- * Daniel didn't go back to the lion's den to get his hat
- * If you stick with the bunch, you'll get peeled
- * It gets better
- * The doors swing both ways
- * It's the engine that kills you, not the caboose
- * You have to put in the time
- * Try it for 90 days, and if you don't like it, we'll gladly refund your misery
- * Don't act out, and go to meetings
- * Some people drink normally, and I normally drink
- * I'm glad to be here, and glad to be sober
- * The person with the most sobriety is the one who got up earliest this morning
- * A slip is a premeditated drunk
- * Keep your (c-c-c) out of SAA
- * SAA **IS** the easier, softer way
- * Go to meetings when you want to, and go to meetings when you don't want to
- * It's been a good meeting so far
- * I've heard a lot of good things said at this meeting
- * My worst day sober was better than my best day acting out
- * We have a disease that tells us we don't have a disease
- * We have a living problem, not a Sex problem
- * We have a thinking problem, not a Sex problem
- * Thank you for my sobriety
- * There are no elevators in SAA, only steps
- * If you don't want to slip, stay away from slippery places
- * The mind is like a parachute, it works better when it's open
- * Sex Addicts are more sensitive than average
- * Sex Addicts work harder than average
- * Sex Addicts are more intelligent than average
- * There's no gain without pain
- * Thank you for sharing my pain
- * Pain is the touchstone of progress
- * My daily sobriety is contingent on my spiritual condition
- * Yesterday is a cancelled cheque, to morrow is a promissory note, only today is cash in the bank.

Thanks to Carl Y. for this list via e-mail. Suggest copying for daily use! [Ed]

Peter B. at Convention '98...[Part 1 of 2 Parts]

The following is from Peter B., sent to the PBR
Dear Robert

Here's a little something culled from my journal (with all the whining and inventory taking removed to make me look better). Please feel absolutely free to edit it any way you see fit.

Hope to see you in the not too distant future.
Happy editing! Peter B. (back in NYC)

Ed comment: There is very little edited from Peter's journal. Yes, some. For there are those readers who do not know Peter, and may find some writings inconsistent with their level of recovery, for whatever reasons. And for those who have sensitivities close to surface feelings, you may find parts somewhat distressing. For those who do know this motorcycling vagabond member of the SAA Fellowship, you may see his humor and his recovery reflected here. Along with his willingness to serve. The next segment of his journal will appear next issue.

5/19/98 Hampton, VA; 10:00pm

Here for the ISO/SAA convention. I'm the delegate for the Thursday Noon meeting in LA, and the alternate Bd Rep for the Pacific Region. It was a good ride. Seems like a long time since I was last on the road. As always, traveling by motorcycle took longer than I planned. So I arrived late and missed the "meeting before the meeting" dinner w/ the Board and here I am, having "the usual" at the local Waffle House.

1:00am

I found Patty & Susan and they're letting me camp out on the balcony of their room (which, strangely enough faces inwards towards the courtyard). Actually, they offered to share the room, but I think I'll be more comfortable out here. This is a new camping experience. It's kind of like setting up a tent in the living room.

5/20/98

Board meeting today. All day. As an alternate, I don't vote, but I seem to make a difference with my input. As a matter of fact, I never seem to shut up! Every once in awhile, I catch myself talking and think to myself: "Peter, shut up! You're not even on the board. Nobody wants to hear what you think!" But they listen and nobody's given me any dirty looks yet. While I'm not mouthing off, I make myself useful doing xeroxes, getting water, etc. The day started with a check in. One person shared how they had ventured into their middle circle after the dinner last night. It was a sobering moment. It made me realize that while service might help my recovery, it doesn't immunize me from the disease. It also reminded me of why we're here.

5/21/98

Board meeting again. Susan showed up around noon and we took the bike and went

to Kinkos (hey, we don't do anything unless it's got a kink in it!) to xerox LA meeting lists and group registration forms. Susan had to set up & print color xerox cover sheets for the Keystones to Freedom bid packets we were presenting later. While I was doing the meeting lists, the copier quit in the middle of a job and I asked a technician to help. While he was putting the original into the feeder, he saw the list and out came the inevitable: "SAA... What's that?" So I took a deep breath and dove in.

"Well.... You know how AA is for drinking? Well SAA is kind of like that.... Only for sex." Oh great Peter! Why not send that into the Literature Committee as a new Preamble!

He got very quiet and I thought he'd had the normal 'Sorry I asked' reaction, but a minute later a light bulb goes off and he turns around and says:

"Wait a minute.. You mean it's for people who have too much sex?!!!"

"We'll... Kind of.."

After a moment: "Wow... Now me, I'm working on just having enough!" I finished the job and was folding the lists when he came back-

"So... How do you know if you've had too much?"....

"Well...A lot of times, someone will tell you. Like your arresting officer, or a judge. Sometimes, it's when your wife finds that number in your suit or a phone bill for \$900, and she'll tell you, but mostly it's a feeling you get, like you've turned into something you don't want to be, and you want to stop, but you can't. Then, if you're lucky, you start looking for solutions, and SAA is one of the few solutions that doesn't kill you. So, when you look at the alternatives, it's the easy way out, really." I was amazed at his interest and that he didn't back off from asking questions.

We got back during the LA bid for the 1999 Convention. The big question: Did we understand that we were working for the Board? Affirmative. The judges went into intense deliberation. And the winner is... (not too difficult when there's no competition): **The Keystones to Freedom Convention in Los Angeles in 1999!!!** Me, I'm calling it Stone Free: LA-99! Later in the afternoon, the Literature Committee made a presentation and afterwards, one of the Litcom folks made an amends and started crying, then one of the amendees responded and started crying. Well, by now, everyone in the room is looking a little dewey-eyed and once again, the business of recovery came to a screeching halt and the **process** of recovery took over and, once again, we were all reminded of why we were **really** here in Hampton Virginia.

11:00pm

Steve L. approached me with a motion he wanted to present to the delegates tomorrow, that would take all non ISO-approved literature off the order form. At first I wasn't inter-

ested, but in his usual hard sell fashion (and the fact that I think he's right), he convinced me to join his little band of rag-tag revolutionaries. Patty, Susan, John B. & the Pacific Litcom Rep were the co-conspirators. I wound up at 2am at Kinkos (again) xeroxing 100 copies of the motion. Steve gets so hopped up and his excitement is contagious.

3:30am

So here I am at an International Sex Addicts Anonymous Convention, camping on the terrace, overlooking an indoor pool in a motel. It's great except the balcony light stays on all night and the people noise starts around 5am. But the price is right **and** it makes me feel like I'm getting away with something (even though I'm not).

5/22/98

What a day! Delegate meeting all day. By 6pm I was fried. During the focus groups, I took over for Octavio with International Outreach. It was just me & a guy from England. So we went over to the Outreach Committee. Patty was chairing and at one point went running out of the room. I asked her if she was OK & she said "No". Something was up with her but I didn't pursue it (or her). Later in the room, she said she was burnt out with everybody wanting something from her. I hugged her and told her how incredibly great she is and how much I love her and that she's not fat. I think she's better.

8:30pm

I just wandered into the "Ice Breaker". Dumb party games. Dumb mostly because they're scary. The room got separated into groups. Everybody was disdainful till we started, then we were totally into it. We were presented with a problem:

A coat is spattered with an indelible purple stain. Though it is winter and the owner has no other coat, she is overjoyed. A life might even have been saved. What's going on? Our group mulled it over. All the drunks were sure the stain was wine. Then someone asked: "Is the coat alive?". And that tipped us. The answer?: A baby seal has been sprayed with dye by a GreenPeacer so it won't get clubbed to death. Our group won! For our prize we got little golden crab paper weights. So I guess the joke is: The Ice Breaker at the Sex Addicts Anonymous Convention was so successful, our group got the crabs! It would make a great T-shirt.

Later, I wound up with the LA Crew, watching TV & trying to retrieve my notes that had crashed into DOS. It was nice, just hanging around with the guys. The weird guys. And I'm am proud and honored to be a part of that grouping. When you stop to think about it, this is an extreme grouping of people. I'm more aware this conference of the normies in the hotel. Like, what if the whole truth about all of us came out at once, what their reaction would be. Later, Steve & I were talking about the varieties of programs and circles and how in time, most circles start to get similar. It's as if we are all on a journey, headed to the same destination, but coming from lots of very different (yet similar) starting points. Again, I am struck by how much I love these strange people that I am one of. **[Cont next issue]**

ALONE ?by Bill M.

ISO Board Keeps Moving forward on issues of the FELLOWSHIP !

The day had begun with early spring sunshine, and had ended with a late winter snowstorm.

The weather in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia can change like that. By nightfall, I could no longer see the Monastery from the retreat house, because the snow was blowing so hard. The temperature had dropped dramatically, and it seemed a real blizzard was blowing.

I had come to the Monastery on a personal retreat, struggling to find answers. I wanted to connect with the Higher Power of my understanding, as taught by my twelve-step recovery program. I was involved in an addictive relationship, and I could not seem to let go. Frazzled and worn out, I was looking for peace, quiet and a chance to listen to whatever voices were in me, and what they might have to say. So, even though I no longer call myself a Christian, I came to a Trappist Monastery next to the Shenandoah River to listen.

As night fell, I tried to sleep, but couldn't. I had listened, and I had heard two messages. The first message was, "Don't be afraid." I wasn't sure, but I believed that meant to not be afraid to be in the world, to live my life. Much of my life had been spent being afraid--afraid to do or say something, afraid to be whoever I am--because I felt so "not good enough". As soon as I was discovered, I felt, I would be ashamed, unwanted, left out, or just left. And I would feel stupid, ugly and unwanted. This message seemed to be saying not to live that way any more.

The second message was more disturbing. It was about letting go, specifically of the relationship I was in. I had tried to let go of it before, without success. I couldn't seem to do it, yet somehow I knew that I would have to, in order for my recovery program to work, and for me to get to a place I want to be-- happy, joyous and free. I did not want to hear it, because I did not want to let go of this woman, and I had been struggling with it all day, as I watched the storm.

At three AM, I decided to go up to the Monastery for the early morning prayers with the Monks. Dressed as

warmly as I could in my hooded sweat-shirt, I ventured out into the night. Feeling very alone and full of fear about what letting go might mean for me, I quickly felt even more afraid as I left the retreat house and walked through the snow drifts. I was sure that I was totally alone. It seemed to me that no one, not even Higher Power was out in this night. As I got further along the road from the retreat house, I grew afraid that I would lose my way, get off the path. Then what would I do?

Just as all of this fear seemed to be overwhelming me, I stopped for some reason, and looked up. I do not know why I did this. I couldn't really see anything up, since I was looking down so hard to try to stay on the path. When I looked up, however, I saw a beautiful sky, clear and full of stars. The snow had stopped, the night was still, and it was very peaceful. Without thinking, I said out loud, "God! It's beautiful!!" I stayed there for a few moments, between the comfort of the retreat center and the unknown path ahead, just feeling the beauty of that night. Then, I started on. I had gone only a short distance more when I suddenly noticed a set of footprints in the snow that came from the other end of the retreat center, and led toward the path to the Monastery. I wasn't alone, after all!! Someone else was out here in this night with me, and they were going on the same path!

I wish I could say that the feeling of being alone left me that night. It hasn't. However, I have learned that for me, recovery is a process, not an event. Each step, each experience, takes me closer to that place that I want to be.

I have let go of the relationship that I was struggling with so hard that night. I still miss it, and I still want that woman to make me whole. But, as I live each day in recovery, I find myself slowly becoming less afraid, and feeling less alone. Though I still often feel "not good enough," I now actually feel OK about myself at times. I seem to spend far less time acting out of a fear of being "found out". I believe that I got a clear message that night, and it was about more than feeling alone. I won't forget it.

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The actions of the ISO Board at its Nov14'98 teleconference will be greatly abbreviated due to the other volume of superb letters, stories, and articles found in this issue. We hope no one minds.

To go on the mid-winter agenda is the consideration of a "Maximum Annual Individual Donation" proposal, perhaps raising the level.

The ISO will hold its annual delegate conference and convention in May of 1999 on the West Coast. Registration is open to recovering sex addicts only. Call ISO office for details.

A template has been approved for use on the SAA Web Page by SAA groups for locally sponsored events. For groups wishing to use the ISO Web Page for such announcements, they should contact the ISO office for the format and/or other information concerning such announcement.

A detailed report on the "Interfellowship Conference" will be given at the mid-winter meeting by Penney K., Chair, who, with Harry S., attended the conference.

The proposal for establishing an Outreach Trust Fund has been worked on for some time by the OOC, and Claude E. will present the proposal at the mid-winter meeting.

Jerry B. is to gather information about the cost of using an 800 number.

There have been web sites created by groups and intergroups within SAA. The Board approved disclaimers to be reviewed at the mid winter meeting along with a policy for group/intergroup use as they create their own sites. Jerry B. and Rob V. are to make draft of the proposed policy.

The OOC is again actively pursuing the establishment of an ISO merchant credit card account so as to be able to more readily accept payment for purchases as well as for donations.

The Colorado SLAA requested permission to adapt the "Women's Pamphlet". Permission was NOT granted.

Revised Guidelines for international Service were approved and will be place before the 1999 convention delegates. [Will be printed here next issue]

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[Staffed] 10:00 AM - 6:00 PM

[Phone calls taken in Person]

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LITCOM STILL

CONNECTED AT THE EARS

Sunday, Nov 15th: Check ins complete, Subcommittees reported on activity.

Shame to Grace book: Feedback has been positive. Formatting and layout needs work. Hope to be ready for presentation at Convention '99 for Conference action.

Exploring Health Sexuality: Recommend the pamphlet be pulled from printing schedule until an appropriate version be produced. No timetable, tabled for now.

Women's pamphlet receiving good feed-back. {see ISO Board, pg 11}

Minor changes in wording for the Abstinence Pamphlet.

Sponsorship: Tabled.

Guide to 12 Steps: Returned to author for further work.

Internet Pamphlet: No action; Norman new SubCom Chair.'

"Questions and Answers for Professionals": Returned to Houston Inter-group; not acceptable in present form.

PBR: Web site hits increasing [see page 6]. Always needs articles, letters. Production and delivery schedules have been maintained since March '97.

Large Book: Work continues; material expected for LitCom review in early '99 before Convention.

Translations: LitCom has been given a \$300 budget by the ISO Board for expenses to provide volunteer efforts to move ahead with Spanish and other translations.

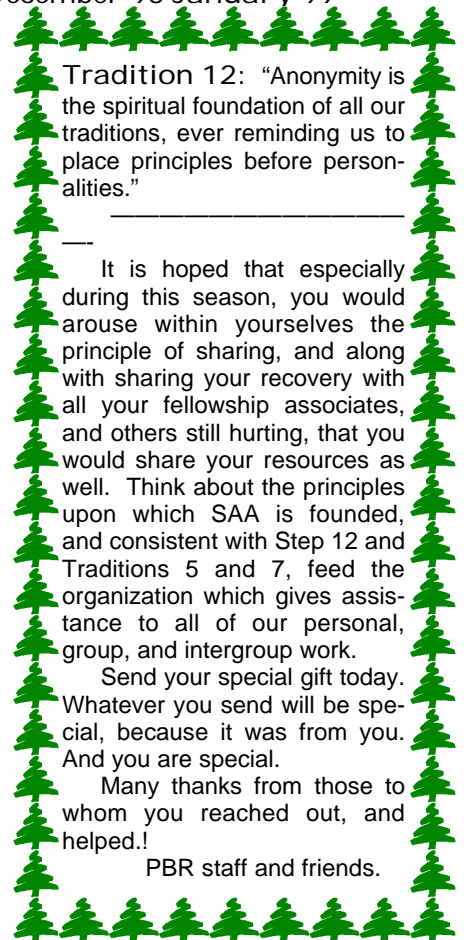
Work continues on guidelines for submissions for SAA Literature including articles for the PBR. A complete Literature Committee Manual is also being considered.

Due to volume of immediate work being done the LitCom will meet again in Dec.

Input from the Fellowship on all items being produced is not only welcome, but encouraged. From individual members, groups, or intergroups.

Be sure to attend the '99 Convention and contribute to the effort of the LitCom and the whole Fellowship of SAA.

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Tradition 12: "Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities."

It is hoped that especially during this season, you would arouse within yourselves the principle of sharing, and along with sharing your recovery with all your fellowship associates, and others still hurting, that you would share your resources as well. Think about the principles upon which SAA is founded, and consistent with Step 12 and Traditions 5 and 7, feed the organization which gives assistance to all of our personal, group, and intergroup work.

Send your special gift today.

Whatever you send will be special, because it was from you. And you are special.

Many thanks from those to whom you reached out, and helped!

PBR staff and friends.

HE MOVED - I'LL MISS HIM

I met him about 5 years ago when I came to town. We were of different races, and raised in different cultures. We no doubt had some similar dynamics in our respective families over the years of life that were, if not the same, similar. We both had problems of addiction.

Since there was no SAA group, I attended another "S" meeting for a time. If no one else came, Hap was always there. About a year ago he began attending our SAA group that had formed since our meeting. There is much of our association I omit here, to add to in the next issue, but suffice to say, he was my [our] friend and fellow supporter.

We had a party for him, a cake, a small pair of gifts, and we shared. He brought his mother's table and chairs here for safekeeping. We're hoping that will bring him back. He stayed his last night here with us.

As he crosses the borders of 4 states to get to the big Pacific, I hope many of you out there will meet him. Make him welcome, he is a treasure to be sure! ...an aging friend from Dakota

WILL YOU PLEASE? Remember the needs of the SAA Fellowship at the international level? This newsletter was provided for you by those doing their own Step Twelve and Tradition Five work. And by one, yes only one, paid staff member. There are important programs of outreach, many of which are represented in this publication. Outreach of all kinds, prison and all other. Materials are provided free to those who cannot afford them; i.e., prisoners. It costs dollars to maintain the central facility through which our efforts are maintained. For you who downloaded this, or have received it via "snail mail", we hope you will strongly consider sending your periodic contributions to the ISO office. Especially at this holiday time of year. Thanks !!