



News from the Web...

By: Bob D.

I recently received some e-mail from a member complaining that we didn't offer any way to help the local meetings publicize their events.

I resisted the urge to send him back a e-mail back and realized that maybe we haven't publicized our "Member Function" area of the web page enough. So here goes:

Yes!!!

We'll be glad to publicize your local event on the SAA web page. Here's all you have to do:

First you have to tell us about it – Write up a description of the activity, workshop, social, or whatever you're doing, the way you want it to appear on the Internet. e-mail it to me. Make sure you include in the description of the event including any registration or other fees involved, along with how to get more information.

Second you must include a statement indicating that the event is sponsored by individual members or a registered SAA group. Sorry, we can't publicize your Boy Scout Troop's cake sale... Also you cannot mention another group outside of SAA in the announcement. (At least without getting the SAA Board's approval, which is a lengthy process.)

Third include in the description. We need a disclaimer that the event is being done independently of ISO of SAA, Inc which merely provides this announcement as a public service.

Complete details on the required form can be found on the SAA web-page page at:

<http://www.saa-recovery.org/fun-rules.htm>

We'll put up your announcement in the Member's Area of the web page. Go take a look there for the link to Member Functions to see examples of how we can help you get the word out to the whole world!

Bob D., SAA Webmaster

"We Lost a Friend"

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"...His spirit of life and positive energy proved to be greater than the darkness that should have been his fate. Though no longer with us, the brightness of his life can never die in those lucky enough to have known him."

We understand there will be some special activities at this years' convention honoring Jeff, and others, who have left our midst.

For those of you who will not be there, take a moment to honor the work of others who have gone before us in building this network of recovering persons.

ANOTHER MEMBERS' STORY

When I first came to an SAA meeting, I found a room full of members who knew more about me than I knew about myself. I didn't know how they knew so much about me!

I told a friend about a behavior I had that I just could not deny, explain, justify, rationalize, understand or ever forget. This friend asked me if I had read Out of the Shadows. I had, and I decided I did *not* want to be one of those persons they were talking about. I came to this fellowship only to learn how to act out all I wanted and not suffer any consequences. I was unable to find any one who knew how to do that.

I kept coming back, not because I believed any of them were really able to stop. I knew I was unable to stop because I had tried so many times and failed. My wife and three children ages 7, 9 and 16 were supportive of me going to meetings.

I started saying about the first grade, "I will never do this again", and continued until I had been in the fellowship for several years. About 36 years of saying "This is the last time" I finally became willing enough to work the Steps.

Only a drowning man is willing to go to any lengths to work the Steps that hard. I Thank God, and I hoped, that I had hit bottom. I pray I will not hit another bottom.

Working the Steps, practicing these principles in all my life, and keep-

ing spiritually fit is the only defense I have against hitting another bottom. Without God, the Program and the fellowship, I would be in prison, working toward mental health, being watched on closed circuit television while in 4 point leather restraints, or all the above.

My family has requested and sought legal action to prevent me from seeing them, writing them, calling them, sending any thing, knowing if they are alive or dead, or being within 200 feet of them. My children are now 18, 20 and 27. I don't know what our children have been doing for the last 11 years.

Today I am grateful that I have only been separated from my wife and three children.

The miracle of this Program is that I have accepted being estranged from my family. Some days better than others. When the grief comes, I embrace it. When happy comes, I embrace it. I have learned through the touchstone of all spiritual growth and pain, not to run from my feelings. I believe that nothing, absolutely nothing happens in God's world by mistake. I would have never believed that I would accept estrangement. I never believed that I would stop acting out. I was correct. I could not do it alone. It took God, the Program and the Fellowship. May God bless us and keep us.

til then. love,
Anonymous

Don't the SAA logo and "Sex Addicts Anonymous" belong to the fellowship?

Perhaps you have heard another SAA member ask a question like, "Doesn't the oval 'From Shame to Grace' logo belong to the SAA fellowship? Why can't we use it?"

Or perhaps it was something like, "What do you mean we can't use the words 'Sex Addicts Anonymous'? After all, we, the fellowship, ARE Sex Addicts Anonymous!"

You yourself might have said or wondered something along those lines. It would not be surprising. These are reasonable questions and statements.

So what's the story? Why are the logo and the words "Sex Addicts Anonymous" owned by the ISO of SAA, Inc.? Why can't SAA groups and intergroups use them? Why were they registered in the first place?

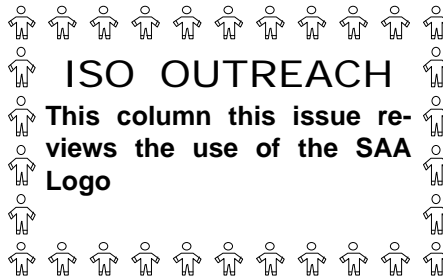
As the office manager for the ISO, I have been involved in this issue from the start. I think it might be of service to the membership for me to write about how things came to be the way they are and about the reasoning behind the ISO's current policies in this regard. My purpose is not to defend or refute any particular view but rather simply to explain where we are and how we got there.

In 1995, two SAA members were in San Diego for an AA convention. While there, they decided to attend a local SAA meeting. They looked up "Sex Addicts Anonymous" in the phone book and called. What they heard was a recording from two "doctors" who were selling a book called "Let's Play Doctor" and videos and who solicited callers to leave name, address, and Visa or MasterCard number. The SAA members were shocked and reported the incident to the ISO Office.

When the ISO Board asked an attorney about what could be done to stop this "unauthorized" use of our name, he replied with a question: "Have you registered the name?" The answer was no. His told us we could do little except write a letter requesting that the "doctors" stop using "our" name. Even had it been able to track them down, the Board decided it would pose a risk to write them, thereby leading them to check if we indeed owned the name.

What we could do was check for ourselves if the name was available. It was. The question then became, who was to register it?

It had to be the ISO of SAA, Inc. Sex Addicts Anonymous is a twelve-step program of recovery based on the principles of Alcoholics Anonymous. It is a fellowship made up of you and me, sex



ISO OUTREACH

This column this issue reviews the use of the SAA Logo

addicts who have a desire to stop addictive sexual behavior through working the 12 steps and following the 12 traditions of SAA.

Sex Addicts Anonymous is not a legal entity. It existed 13 years before the NSO of SAA, Inc. (now ISO of SAA, Inc.) was established as a Minnesota Corporation in 1990. Before then, whatever legal business had to be conducted for the fellowship was carried out by the Twin Cities Intergroup which itself is incorporated.

In 1988, SAA members from throughout the fellowship gathered in Minneapolis for the first annual business meeting. They established an executive committee to work out the details for a national corporation. In 1989, at the second annual meeting in Houston, the committee reported back to the delegates and it was decided to form the National Service Organization, Inc. In the spring of 1990, incorporation was finalized and began carrying out the business of the fellowship.

Consequently, if the name "Sex Addicts Anonymous" was to be protected from the likes of the two "doctors" and others who might follow, it fell to the ISO to do so by registering it. At the same time, the ISO Board realized that not only the name needed to be protected but the logo, the symbol of Sex Addicts Anonymous, had to be protected as well.

Application was made to the United States Patent and Trademark Office, and the trademarks were approved in 1997.

As you read this, as legal owner of the trademark "Sex Addicts Anonymous," the ISO is engaged in a series of steps to stop what appears to be a pornography business from using two internet domain names that contain the name of our fellowship.

When presented with the need to have our name and logo protected by registration and with the fact that only a legal entity can actu-

ally hold trademarks, most members can see why it is the ISO of SAA, Inc. rather than "the fellowship" that owns them.

It is also easy to see why the trademarks have to be protected from use by outsiders. What is not so easy to see is why they have to be protected from use by member SAA groups. Again, there is that quite reasonable statement: "After all, we, the fellowship, ARE Sex Addicts Anonymous!"

The Board's policy in regard to use of the ISO's trademarks is grounded in the First and Fourth Traditions.

The First Tradition holds that "Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends on S.A.A. unity."

An important component of SAA unity is a unified message, especially when those who are receiving the message are unfamiliar with the program, are seeking help for the first time, or are newcomers. When these people pick up a piece of literature or visit a website and see the words "Sex Addicts Anonymous" prominently displayed or see the logo appearing like a stamp of approval, it is reasonable for them to assume that what they find there represents SAA.

A case in point is literature that is developed at the local level. Our fellowship has benefited from such publications, because most official SAA literature comes from such grassroots efforts. The "Three Circle" pamphlet is a good example. It was developed by the Southern California SAA community. It was just as good a tool when it was offered only locally as it is now that it is being distributed by the ISO. The difference is that before it was submitted by the local fellowship for scrutiny by representatives of SAA as a whole it could not be verified as speaking for SAA as a whole.

If there could be a guarantee that every locally published piece of literature speaks for SAA as a whole, there would be no problem with allowing it to bear the words "Sex Addicts Anonymous" and the logo on its cover. But no guarantee exists. Even the pamphlets and booklets that have become official SAA literature have done so only after first having been sent back to the authors for changes that made them acceptable for final approval.

Some local SAA fellowships develop literature but never submit it for SAA approval. There is nothing wrong with this. It is simply a choice. However, because this literature has never been scrutinized by SAA as a whole, it cannot be presented as speaking for SAA as a whole.

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...SAA Logo and SAA name...
Ownership and use..

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Another example are flyers or brochures for local SAA events such as retreats. Wouldn't it be alright to call a local SAA retreat a "Sex Addicts Anonymous" retreat? But every local event and its promotional material do not represent the entire fellowship.

As an example, consider an event that is billed as being sponsored by a combination of recovery programs, e.g., an SA/SAA/SCA/SLAA/COSA/SANON retreat. There are those in SAA who would say this does not violate the traditions. There are also those who would say it does. Some of those who say it violates the traditions would support the event if it were less inclusive, e.g., limited to just SAA/COSA. But there are many members who could not support this combination either. These latter might say SAA retreats ought be sponsored by SAA only and billed as SAA only.

Who among the foregoing speak for SAA as a whole? The fact is, on this particular subject, there are differing opinions within our fellowship. The only event that the entire fellowship agrees represents SAA as a whole is the annual ISO of SAA Convention. On that basis, the Board has allowed each convention committee to use the words "Sex Addicts Anonymous" and the logo. Moreover, the committee is also accountable to the Board.

One last example, this one in an area much discussed in recent years. How about local websites? First of all, is a "local website" even possible?. If you and I form an SAA group in Powder River, Wyoming, and create a website for Powder River Hope & Recovery, it is out there for the whole world to see.

Suppose we call our site the Sex Addicts Anonymous website of Powder River Hope & Recovery. We also include the logo as a nice graphic and tell our visitors that "Sexual addiction is a destructive disease that probably wrecks more lives than even alcohol. It is the secret disease that society does not want to acknowledge or talk about... But there is hope. Through the 12-step program of Sex Addicts Anonymous, many of us have found not only freedom from our disease but a path to healthy sexuality and nurturing relationships..." Is this the message of Sex Addicts Anonymous?

If those seeking help or information encounter websites that appear to represent Sex Addicts Anonymous yet carry different messages or different interpretations of a message or additional messages, what message have we carried? One of confusion. Our unity has been weakened.

The Fourth Tradition reminds us that "Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or S.A.A. as a whole."

Much of what I have written about SAA unity also applies to affecting SAA as a whole, particularly when applied to local activities such as websites. The need for autonomy, too, has influenced the Board's policies on the use of ISO trademarks.

This aspect is well illustrated by a friend's objection to how closely the Board protects the trademarks. Paraphrasing him, he asked, "How is it that McDonald's has no problem allowing its franchisees to use its trademarks all over the place, yet the ISO won't let SAA groups and intergroups do the same thing?"

Yes, McDonald's and other franchisers do allow their franchisees to use their trademarks, but they allow them to do so only after the franchisees have signed agreements that spell out the terms and conditions of their relationship. Among other things, the franchisees must agree to follow guidelines and directives that cover everything from the structure of the building to the quality of the napkins. Product, service and the use of trademarks are matters for strict regulation.

The ISO is not a franchiser and SAA groups and intergroups are not franchisees. An SAA group is autonomous. The ISO cannot tell it how to run its meetings. The ISO can suggest and offer guidelines. It ought to follow and enforce as best it can the bylaws of the corporation. It is responsible for protecting the assets of the corporation, including its trademarks. But the ISO cannot truly regulate local SAA groups and intergroups the way a franchiser can its franchisees nor should it be able to.

This is not to say that the Board cannot review and amend its policies. This is only to say that thought has gone into the existing policies in regard to ISO trademarks. Not everyone will agree with the policies or with the reasoning behind them, but it is good that as many as possible know about both.

Jerry B.

12th Annual Puget Sound SAA Retreat AUGUST 23-24-25-26, 2001

A CLOSED retreat
OPEN to all SAA members,
adult family, and friends in recovery

"From Self Will
To a
Higher Power"

At [Deleted for Web copy]
Contact Eric: 253-939-2720
Call the ISO Office: 800-477-8191

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA SAA RETREATS FOR 2001 AND 2002

Plan now to attend !!!

Retreat dates for the years 2001-2002 have been set for **Southern California**. In addition to this notice, the **SAA Website** will contain the listings.

The Dates:

- ♦ September 21-23, 2001
- ♦ April 5-7, 2002

Open to all SAA members.

Enrich your recovery with a weekend of fellowship, workshops and recreation.

Location:

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Lodging:

11 double rooms (\$145)
8 single rooms (\$165)
30 persons maximum.

Price includes lodging, meals and snacks. Participants and speakers are SAA Members.

Retreats begin with dinner on Friday, ending with lunch on Sunday. First-come, first-served so please reserve early

For more info or for registration, contact Roark W. at 626-797-6213 or email: lastsafari1@earthlink.net

From Roark W.

POET'S PAGE



Many Minneapolis groups are mourning the loss of a brother, Jeff F. Jeff attended several meetings in Minneapolis, and one of them was the one I attend. His death moved me in many different ways, one of which was to write this short poem which I submit to you for publication.

Jeff did his time
His story was a lot like mine
And he seemed fine

Legions of friends
Speak of his courage without
end
And love they send

Free man, wild man
Jeff lived his life the best one
can
Worked his program

Inner demons
Thrilling torment, spirit's
treason
Beyond reason

And when he died
Empty, frightened, saddened, I
cried
I'm scared inside

For there, but for the grace of
God, go I

Don S.
Minneapolis, MN

SPONSORSHIP CORNER

My experiences with sponsorship have been varied, and sponsorship and the steps have been the keys to my program. I generally tell my story through my relationships with my sponsors - and the steps they helped me work. What worked for me may not work for you or anyone else. This is my experience - take what you like and leave the rest.

Before I begin, I think it is important to share a little about my program. I have been in SAA for a little over eight years (AI-Anon six years) and have had nine official sponsors (seven SAA, two AI-Anon.) I currently sponsor four men in SAA. Although I'm still working through some 9th step amends from my first journey through the steps (186 people on my 8th step), I have worked through all of the steps three times in written form, and have been doing nightly written 10th steps for over three years. For those who focus on sobriety, I began getting seriously sober about four years ago. I have had two short binges and one slip since then, with my last slip 12/5/99. My bottom lines (inner circle) are:

1. Any sex outside of my marriage including all masturbation and all sexual fantasy.
2. Any sex within my marriage if I am not completely present or if I am using it to avoid feelings.
3. Looking for, or at, pornography (primarily on internet.)

One of the first things to figure out is how to pick a sponsor. I learned some valuable things from each of my sponsors. When I moved from sponsor to sponsor, it was generally with the recognition that my needs had changed and I needed someone who was better equipped to meet them. My first sponsor had not worked beyond the 1st step, so I needed to find someone who had worked the next couple of steps to guide me. My second sponsor didn't have enough time for me, so I had to find someone who was willing to put more time into the relationship. I might still have my third sponsor if I hadn't moved across the country. In choosing a sponsor at that time, experience with the steps wasn't really needed; I thought I knew the steps pretty well by then. My

fear was that I'd give up (since I was still slipping regularly) and drop out of the program. I chose someone who had lots of experience staying with the program in spite of periodic slips. We became good friends, but eventually his time became short and I had increasing difficulty with his drinking. It drove me into AI-Anon (which I needed desperately for a number of reasons) and eventually to seek another sponsor. This time I picked someone with lots of continuous sobriety, but found that it was difficult to relate to him; he had never acted out since coming into the program and had a very difficult time relating to my slips. I found myself comparing my program to his and finding myself wanting - regardless of how well I was doing. I began to dread our meetings, and eventually broke it off. My next sponsor was another person with lots of continuous sobriety, but his rule was that the sponsee was fired if a slip occurred; I had a slip. At the time, I resented it, but I see now that he was taking care of himself - He found that his program improved if he spent time around sober people, and that the opposite was true as well. I respect people who make healthy choices.

For the next three and a half years, I was without an SAA sponsor. I had begun working the AI-Anon program in earnest and after speaking to the few experienced AI-Anon men, found I was unable to work with any of them. Instead, I chose a much older woman who spent about a year and a half guiding me through a new process of working the steps. Although I was honest about my sexual addiction, (I told her my whole story), I only had one slip during that time, so there was not much to own in that area. I think things might have been more problematic if I had not been more sober. I chose her because she had worked the steps hard, and because she was very accepting - I knew that she would not shame me regardless of my poor choices. Eventually, her family needed more of her time, so I moved on to another sponsor. I picked him primarily because I felt led to by my Higher Power. He was in SA and AI-Anon, so although I used him for AI-Anon stuff only, at least I didn't need to explain sex

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addition stuff to him. We just never hit it off, and when I realized that again, I was dreading our meetings, I let him go as well. I went without a sponsor for another year and a half until my first sponsor in this area became active in our local SAA meetings again. I am glad to have him back. I had gotten bogged down with my 9th step because I feared making additional amends without a sponsor's input. I tried using other experienced program people, but I was unable to maintain momentum without the sponsorship commitment.

Based on my experience, I make a list of exactly what I want from a sponsor and share it with him/her as we consider such an arrangement. I have a similar list that I use in discussions with those who want me to sponsor them. Some of you out there might find them useful. Keep in mind that the lists have changed over the years depending on what I needed at each particular time.

What I want in an SAA sponsor:

1. He must meet with me for at least an hour at a set time once each week.
2. He must be honest and open with me about what is going on in his own life.
3. He must have been in SAA at least one year.

Old requirements:

He must have had (at one time since joining the program) more continuous sobriety than I have.

He must have worked all the steps at least once in an S-group fellowship.

Implied in these criteria is that I am looking for a male sponsor, and one that follows the traditions of 12 step programs including not giving advice.

Those that I sponsor need to do three things:

1. Work the steps. By this I mean written work on a weekly basis.
2. Listen to me. By this I mean listen, not obey. I don't believe in giving advice because I do not know what is best for you (or anyone). From time to time, I may see things that you may miss. Its tough for anyone to be objective about himself/herself, so part of my job is to

WHAT I WANT IN AN SAA SPONSOR....

"...the lists have changed over the years, depending on what I needed at each particular time."

alert you to trends I see. It is my job to help you see your options before making program or other major decisions. Implicit in this requirement is that you:

- discuss with me the difficulties you face in all areas of your life (work, relationships, etc.)
 - discuss significant choices with me prior to making major decisions
 - be rigorously honest with me
3. Meet with me (alone) for a meal once a week to discuss your progress with the steps and what's going on for you.

Some other sponsorship thoughts:

I used to have a limit of two sponsees at a time, but after looking closely at my service work, I decided that I got more out of sponsorship than out of all the other service work I was doing. As a result, I gave the keys, treasuries, online work, retreats, etc. away to others and allowed two more sponsees. If you have been reading closely, you will realize what that means - five one hour meetings each week (one sponsor, four sponsees) on top of three 12 step meetings. This is the best way for me to give back today, plus I am always around people who are actively working (and discussing) the steps.

I have heard other experienced sponsors say that when they had a slip, they dropped all of their sponsees. I have had two acting out experiences while I was an active sponsor, and although my sponsees are always welcome to move on, none did so. I found that it not only kept me focused on the program, it also showed them that a slip did not mean starting over. It meant a poor choice, but didn't negate any of my experience, strength or hope. They now have a good model for recovering from a slip - they know that it need not lead into a binge or isolation from the program.

I find, as a sponsor, I can only deliver two things - a solid, healthy, friendship, and guidance in working the 12 steps. Sometimes I can remind them

of their past decisions or experiences; sometimes I can help them see options that they have missed. Sometimes I can introduce them to a Power greater than themselves. I cannot keep them sober, and I don't know what is best for them. I can and do share my own ES&H as it seems appropriate, but I know from experience that what worked for me does not always work for my sponsees. We seek peace through written step work, with sobriety as a by-product only. Those seeking advice, or sobriety for its own sake, choose different sponsors.

When I was at a national convention about five years ago, I went to a sponsorship seminar. In it I heard lots of good stuff, but one thing really amazed me. The presenter, and several other old-timers in the discussion, said that

"...after looking at my service work, I decided that I got more out of sponsorship than out of all the other service work I was doing. As a result, I gave the keys, treasuries, online work, retreats, etc. away to others and allowed two more sponsees." "...that means - five one hour meetings each week [one sponsor, four sponsees], on top of three 12 step meetings.

they would never have gotten even 6 months sober if they had not started sponsoring others before reaching that mark. (They did emphasize that the sponsor needs to be at least one step ahead of the sponsee, and I don't encourage my sponsees to start sponsoring others until they have finished step 5 and have at least 30 days sober.) As a result of this discussion, I kept my eye out for people that I thought I could work well with, and offered my services as sponsor to people when appropriate. Although I had sponsored others, I had never been intentional about who I chose or what I required, and as a result, they had not proved rewarding for me or for my sponsees. Immediately after choosing my first sponsee (I had about 30 days sober) I had my longest run of continuous sobriety - 16 months. That was about three and a half years ago and I remain his sponsor. Before that time, I was unable to break the 6 month mark.

Bruce B.

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ACCEPTANCE AND GRATITUDE

Sometimes when I see my friends in the program struggling, or when I struggle myself, I feel an almost overwhelming sadness.

Our disease causes so much grief and destruction. It's entirely appropriate, I think, to mourn the losses that sex addiction has caused. An important aspect of Step One for me is just this recognition of how serious this disease really is. If I minimize its effects, I can easily rationalize acting out. So I need to keep the deadly nature of my addiction in mind. I need not only to remember that I am a sex addict, but to be fully aware of what that means.

I think it's safe to say that many of us have been baffled by the persistence of acting out behaviors even after we have recognized that we have this disease. "Why do I keep doing this?" In agony I have asked this question many times. On some level I believed that knowing the answer would help me. But I don't think so any more.

It seems fairly evident that there are, in a certain sense, rewards that we gain from compulsive sexual behavior. Acting out was my way of dealing with emotions, numbing the pain, going to a different place where I didn't have to be present. But this self-knowledge hasn't really helped me stay sober. There is a simple reason for this. Addiction has a life of its own which is independent of whatever causes may have engendered it. Therefore, although understanding ourselves and our past can be beneficial in terms of healing and growth, it is not sufficient in terms of getting and staying sober.

When I came to this fellowship I had no idea of the depth of surrender that was going to be required of me. Sexuality is an integral part of my identity. The drug abuse analogy didn't work for me. To stop taking a chemical - a material sub-

stance outside of me - is one thing. My compulsive sexual behavior is essentially subjective because it's about my relationship, or lack of, with myself. Let me say that I do consider all addictions to be one disease. It is just that in order to stay sober in SAA it wasn't enough to attempt to abstain from certain behaviors - as brave as that attempt might be. I have had to turn my attention on a daily basis to a Power greater than myself.

I have had to surrender plans and worries about the future, ideas about the past, cherished conceptions about myself. I have had to accept that my habitual ways of regarding this life and this world are inherently limited and will lead to acting out. Sobriety requires being open to the possibility of new ways of seeing - not just different actions, but different thoughts, different feelings and perceptions.

Serenity is available to me at any moment. But certainly there are periods when my heart is turned away from my higher power and is consumed with habit. I need to stay sober during those times as well - through a simple blind faith that God's way is happier and fuller than the way I knew before. By reaching out to others in the fellowship, by going to meetings, by doing service, I can keep going through blind faith even when my disease is knocking on the door every day. Yet blind faith will only last so long. Working the steps, consciously and with the knowledge that they are a gift to me, is the way to restore a sense of serenity today.

Acceptance is a word that can often be taken in a superficial way. If something bad happens, or we're going through a difficult process of some kind, we are supposed to accept "life on life's terms." This is valid, of course, but there are deeper levels. I am in a place right now where I am accepting the permanence of my condition as a sex addict. Accepting this means that I am giving up the attitude

by **Chris D.**

of self-condemnation which has always accompanied my disease. Instead of something which I am striving to change so I can feel better, it is just something that is inescapably there, and always will be. What a relief! The paradox is that this acceptance of a permanent condition, which removes all hope that it will go away, also removes all hope that acting out will provide relief. The depth of my surrender to the fact of my disease results directly, without having to think about, in a Second Step belief and a Third Step decision.

Someone I knew used to say that the First Step was the only one that we had to work perfectly. Like so many program sayings, it is strange and yet true. As long as I'm making resolutions and promises to myself to get my behavior "under control," I just haven't gotten it. Yes, this is so much easier said (and written) than realized in the heart. I share it just as much for myself to hear as for you. I am so grateful today for the steps, and for the fellowship which always welcomes me into its rooms. Gratitude is a practice which you taught me. It keeps me above disappointment, above resentment, above the "should be" and "if only" realms which keep me enslaved to the idea of control. Acceptance is my safe haven.

Gratitude is my discipline. Through gratitude I remember to love, no matter what, to never condemn or give up on you, or myself.

I hope that something of the truth can come through these feeble words and light a spark somewhere. I write with a joyful feeling, in the knowledge that recovery is present and possible for us.

Chris D.



Pursuers and Gatekeepers

Most recovering sex addicts talk a lot about wanting more sex in their relationships. It's almost a cliché. The sex addict is the pursuer and his/her partner is cast in the role of gatekeeper. The resulting power struggle can put an enormous strain on a relationship. So how does it feel to be the pursuer, the one who is always asking for sex and mostly getting no for an answer? Feeling hurt, ashamed, powerless, rejected, hopeless, weak, lonely, angry ... have I missed anything? The question is "Who gave your partner the power to make you feel so badly about this?" The answer of course is you did. Your frustration about this flows from your reaction to the word no and all it symbolizes for you. I believe that for me, the only acceptable reaction to no is disappointment. Disappointment is not a terrible thing. It does not entitle me to be angry, vindictive and generally pissy to my partner. If I am to find sobriety and grace in recovery I have to reduce the power of disappointment about sexual frequency in my life. The solution to the problem of wanting more sex is not more sex, any more than the solution to wanting more alcohol is more alcohol.

I have had to examine the symbolic meaning of sex for me. I quickly realized that one core belief that I, and many other sex addicts have, is "Having sex (frequently) means that there is hope for this relationship". For most of our partners the corresponding core belief is "To feel sexual desire for my partner, I have to know that there is long term hope for our relationship." This is a powerful set up for holy deadlock. Someone has to change their thinking, right? So who's thinking do I

have the power to change? Who's thinking [about sexuality] do we go to meetings every week to bring into alignment with sanity and serenity? Let us take a moment now, say the serenity prayer, and take full responsibility for what is ours.

Another core belief we addicts have is that getting someone to agree to be sexual with us is a kind of cosmic validation of ourselves as a man or woman. Conversely, "no" is some kind of giant put down. We believe that "yes" is a million volt affirmation of our acceptability, desirability, loveability, sexiness, attractiveness, ... have I missed anything?

Meanwhile we usually have low self esteem or self doubt at least in the area of our sexuality. That sets us up to seek validation by getting someone to be sexual with us. And it's the very first time that we are sexual with a new partner that is the ultra-extreme validation isn't it? Subsequent sex acts with the same partner are somehow less of a personal victory. After the first time the sexual relationship is established and sex seems obligatory. That sets us up for multiple affairs doesn't it? This explains the constant need for new partners. Let's examine this idea for a moment. There are approximately 6 billion people on planet earth. About half of them are your gender of preference. If you are an unusually picky sex addict you may be willing to be sexual with only about one billion of the people alive today. How big an achievement is it to get one of those billion to say "Ok, I am not going to get a better offer tonight so lets get it on"? Doesn't rank very high relative to discovering a cure for AIDS - or teaching a child to tie his shoes for that matter - does it? So we have to

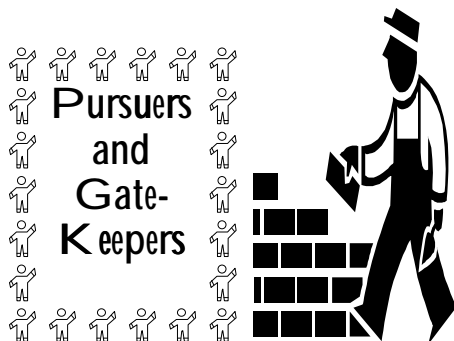
find some other way to work on our self esteem. Find a creative outlet for our talents. Do some service work. Help a child. Be nice to someone. If we can build up our self esteem through some healthy activity, we may find that our compulsions to find a new sex partner will diminish.

Then there is the "I am not getting my needs met" argument. Sex addicts see sex as their most important need. Having a need justifies almost anything to get it satisfied doesn't it? See how our addict wants us to see sex as a need?

What is the price we will have to pay if we are going to go to any length to get our sexual "needs" met? How big a price have we already paid? I claim that the fact we are alive to read this means that up to now, all our needs have been met. Our most urgent need is air. Five minutes without air kills most of us. In Minnesota, where this is being written on a cold March afternoon, exposure to the weather without proper clothing will kill us in a few hours. Then comes water (3 to 4 days) and food (a month for most people, two months for those of us who are carrying a lot of extra weight). Since we are alive, all our needs have been met up to now. Everything else is just a want. Perhaps a very strongly desired want, but only a want. All our needs will be met by our loving God, and our own best efforts. Take a moment now to be grateful that all our needs are being met by our higher power[s].

My partner is very good at multi-tasking. She can cook meals, talk on the phone, plan a trip, take care of the dog, write a letter, all at the same time. I on the other hand can do only one thing at a time. I can hardly drive a car and talk at the same time. Being able to multi-task is a great gift mostly but it can get in the way of being sexual. If your partner is a good a multi-tasker, when you are trying to be sexual

(Continued on page 9)



(Continued from page 8)

with him/her, he/she is likely thinking about lots of other things. While you are deep in single minded addict determination to be sexual, you partner is filled with other thoughts and ideas. If your relationship has not been good lately, you can put that out of your mind and focus on sex. Your partner may not be able to do so. If you have been unfaithful long ago, you can put it aside, but your partner may be triggered by your sexual desire and relive those past hurts. If you are both stressed out by jobs, money, kids, etc you can push it all out of your way but your partner may be consumed with it. As a sex addict, I have always used sex to get away from anything bad in my life. My partner perhaps, cannot do that. Be grateful that our partners do not have our affliction. This means we have to work on serenity in the rest of our lives together before our sex life is going to go the way we want it to. If we have overloaded sex with all kinds of symbolic meaning and power, can we see why it's so difficult for our partners to be relaxed with us sexually? If we want our partners to say "yes" more often, we must get better at accepting "no." Take the pressure off so your multi-tasking partner has less distraction to worry about. It's not hopeless at all, but there are no quick fixes. The path to a better partnered sex life is through steady, one day at a time improvement of every aspect of our lives together.

Jeff H.

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>>>> A D i s a b l i n g A d d i c t i o n <<<<

Imagine for a moment that you are driving or walking somewhere when suddenly a car hits you. Out of the blue you find yourself in the hospital, and the doctors are telling you that you may never walk again. Soon you come to understand that it will take some years of ongoing physical therapy. Even then you will probably always need to use a cane to walk.

I use this analogy to help me cope with my sexual addiction in a variety of ways. I see a lot of parallels between disability and addiction, particularly how we accept and live with them.

It helps me to consider my addiction as a disability. Dictionaries say this about words related to "disabled": restricted; disadvantaged; difficulty in learning basic skills because of a disorder; inability to pursue goals due to impairment; incapacitated by injury or wounds.

My addiction causes me to struggle with things in my life, things that many other people can handle with less effort. I simply need to look at my list of triggers to realize this. My addiction also prevents me from having certain things I feel I want, usually due to consequences or boundaries. Just those similarities help me to accept my addiction as a part of who I am.

It does no good for me to compare myself against others. Others struggle too, usually with different issues, and sometimes even in ways I can't see. Physical disabilities are sometimes more visible. But we all struggle.

Comparing myself with others also avoids the real issue: accepting my reality. If I were diabetic or paraplegic, I have little choice but to accept the reality of my physical limitations. As an addict, however,

it's easier to deny my disease. That denial makes it much harder for me to accept my limitations and make healthy choices. I must accept who I am today, and do the best I can with what I have.

The accident analogy I started with also helps me deal with the question of "Why am I like this?". I could demand answers: Was the person who hit me drunk? Did the car brakes fail? Did the traffic light malfunction?

But will the answer to those questions change the fact that I am now disabled? Will those answers eliminate my need to learn a new way to live within my limitations? Or will they instead change my focus from what I can do FOR myself to what I can do AGAINST someone else?

I feel fortunate to have let go of my need for an answer to the question of "Why?". Some people know some of those answers for themselves. However, I'm likely to never know exactly why. But I cannot let that stop me from making the most of my life, starting today. I can be sober today, with or without those answers -- it's my choice. In fact, I believe I am more likely to find and deal with those answers through sobriety and serenity.

If you have a physical or mental disability, I hope you are not offended by my analogy here. I certainly don't mean to minimize the pain, suffering, and struggle in your life. My point is only that I believe we have even more in common than we might realize.

I feel we can learn from each other about how to accept our situations, maintain hope, and live healthy, productive lives. And isn't that what recovery is all about?

Mike C7

Board actions at meeting 3-25-01

1. Approved allowing workshops for female SAA members only or for male SAA members only at the 2001 ISO convention, with a policy for future conventions to be placed on the Board's May agenda.

2. The Board accepted the following progress report from one of the co-authors who is working on the second draft of the Basic Text manuscript:

"I have begun to write in earnest. I got a later start than I had expected because I was finishing my application and essay for graduate school.

"I am gaining a clearer sense of the structure and the message, in particular, the relationship between the Twelve Steps, the fellowship, and the tools of the program. For now, that's where I'm starting. I need to get that structure clear so that I know how to rewrite and what new material is needed for the section (formerly?) called Recovery.

"There isn't much to report. I began writing a section called We found a solution. I have learned that this book can't take a voice of authority and preach directly at the reader. Therefore, the chapter There is a Solution becomes We Found a Solution, reflecting our experience.

"I just wanted to give you a taste of what I've been working on. I can't really say if or where this section will be. Sometimes I write that way, I write essays and see where they lead me.

"I'm concerned that I won't have anything to show the Literature Committee at the convention because I will be rewriting such integral material that it won't be wise to read it out of context. I can't really allow myself to make giving the committee something to review because I need to follow the direction the book needs to be written in.

"I'll have more to report in May. By then, I'll have a sense of what there will be for you to see.

"As for forwarding the stories, I will send copies of what I have along to [the Lit-Com member who is working on them]. Please don't expect them quickly; it will take time to compile them and my top priority is to maintain my writing momentum. Those may not seem in conflict but it will take many hours to compile the stories and I only get a couple per day."

3. In regard to correcting the problem that had been encountered in reconciling the ISO's bank statements and its check register, the Board voted to authorize an expenditure of \$30 per hour, with the provision that the Office Oversight Committee (OOC) will contact the Board chair if the expenditure reaches a limit of \$1,000, to enable the Audit Committee to select and hire an experienced bookkeeper to reconcile the bank statements by April 30, 2001;

This person is to be recommended by someone in the fellowship who can vouch for the capabilities and integrity of the person selected;

Have two members of the OOC meet with that person when the April 2001 statement is reconciled during the first part of May 2001;

That the Audit Team be requested to be at the convention to present the results of the audit to the delegates;

Have the person who reconciled the bank statements, or someone equally qualified, to continue to reconcile bank statements on a monthly or quarterly basis;

That the financial reports for January and February, 2001, not be presented for approval by the Board until after the bank statements are reconciled.

4. With last year's Outreach Endowment Fund earnings totaling only \$357.60, the Board voted to forgo annual distribution to the ISO. These earnings will be retained and added to 2001 earnings to be distributed next year.

5. In regard to the unauthorized use of the name "Sex Addicts Anonymous" as part of two internet domain names, the Board authorized the SAA member attorney to take the next steps he sees as necessary.

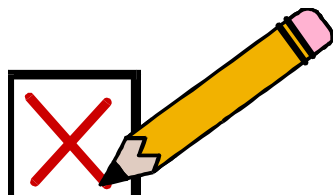
6. Bob D. and Jerry B. were directed to bring to the Board in May a final proposal for a policy on providing links from the SAA website to local SAA websites which, if approved by the Board, will be presented as Additional Business to the 2001 delegates.

7. The Board authorized the expenditure of \$270 to hire a professional working translator to check the Literature Committee's Spanish translation of the *Sex Addicts Anonymous* pamphlet.

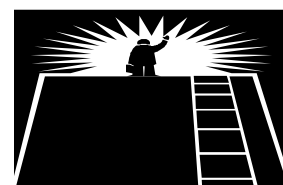
8. A decision on whether or not to consider a fellowship member's request for *The Sermon on the Mount* by Emmett Fox to be added to the list of non-SAA Literature was postponed until May in order to give Board members the opportunity to read the book.



SAA 14th Annual Convention May 25-26-27-28, 2001



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PBR....



Convention Highlights

'The International Convention attracts SAA members from all over die world! Your SAA friends from Southeast Texas hope you will soon join us for a weekend of sharing, workshops, and entertainment!

Friday May 25

Convention Opening Celebration
Ice Breaker
Keynote Speaker

Saturday May 26

Workshops
Banquet with Speaker
Dance & other entertainment

Sunday May 27

Workshops
Talent Show
Buffet
Speaker and Closing Ceremony

Monday May 28

Brunch
Speaker and Closing Ceremony

Other Convention Amenities

24—hour meditation room
24—hour Marathon meetings
Hospitality Suite
ISO Bookstore

Spacious accommodations featuring large work desk, executive chair, lamp, phones, voicemail, in room coffee, TV, iron and board, hair dryer, smoke detector.

TV channel—blocking available upon request at time of check—in.

Hotel restaurant offers breakfast buffet, lunch buffet, and dinner. Hotel facilities include indoor pool, outdoor sun deck, whirlpool, sauna, and fitness center.

Free hotel shuttle to locations within 1 mile of the hotel.

Make your hotel reservations by May 4

Rates: Single-Quadruple, \$79+tax per night. These rates increase after May 4. Be sure to mention "Sharing the Promises" conference for these special hotel rates.

Travel

Most major airlines service [Deleted for Web Copy...of the PBR] Airport Ground transportation is available. Fares for hotel shuttle service are typically \$17 and \$12 (one way). [Some parts of the above deleted for Web Copy of the PBR...]

Registration Plans

There are many ways to participate in the Convention! Each plan includes the meals and activities indicated in the Highlights for those days covered by the plan. The fee is per person and does NOT include hotel accomodations. There will be "open events" to which you can invite non-SAA members as shown below.

Register Early and Save!

	Postmarked by:		
	Mar	Apr	At the Door
	31	30	
<i>Plans for SAA Members Only</i>			
Four [4] Day	\$110	\$120	\$130
Two [2] Day	\$ 90	\$100	\$110
One [1] Day	\$ 75	\$ 85	\$ 95
<i>Meals included: Saturday Banquet, Sunday Buffet, Monday Brunch.</i>			
<i>Your Invited Guest</i>			
Saturday Banquet	\$35	\$40	\$45
Sunday Buffet	\$30	\$35	\$40
Monday Brunch	\$30	\$35	\$40

Registration Services

You can register by postal mail or by phone. If you register by mail, you must include payment by check. If you register by phone, you can pay by credit card.

When you register early you'll receive a registration confirmation packet with a personal phone contact and email address.

ISO INFORMATION

BOARD - LITERATURE COMMITTEE - OFFICE - STAFF - WEB - EMAIL

Area	Board Member	Liason Function	Board Alternate	Liason Function	Litcom Member	LitCom Alternate
Great Lakes	Roger B[chr]	Intergroup Communications	Ken S.	Intergroup Communications	Elizabeth S	Vic K.
South Pacific	Peter B[Sec]	International Development	Bill S.		Susan W.	Thom C.
At Large	Leo H.[Treas]	Oversight/Fund Raising	none		none	none
Inter-Mountain	Carolyn L.	Internet Serv/Internat. Dev.	Steve H.		Chris D	Kenton J.
North Central	Dave B.	Outreach	Lonnie S.		Jerry A	vacant
South East	Francie E.	Interfellowship Relations	Bruce B.	Fund Raising	Joseph T	David G.
North Pacific	Frank B.	Outreach	Joel D.		John H.	Tom B.
South Central	Judy N.	Literature	Claude E.		Greg G.	Mike L.
North East	Peter M.	Prison Outreach	vacant		Tony Z.	vacant
					Robert S	n/a
					PBR	

Staff

Jerry B. Office Manager
Klaus P. Asst Office Manager

Office Hours [Central time]

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

Phone answered at all times except when staff is on the phone. Leave Message; call will be returned, usually within the hour.

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PBR: PBR@saa-recovery.org

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 full time/one half time, 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. **YOU** are the answer to total Outreach! Thanks !!

Special Board Announcement

"Use - of - SAA - Name..."
Member Reviews Requested....

The ISO Board of Trustees wants to announce to the SAA membership that it has given permission to use the name "Sex Addicts Anonymous" during a movie titled "Lies,

Sex, and Obsessions" and to list the Sex Addicts Anonymous name and the ISO Office number at the conclusion of the movie. For members who wish to review the appropriate-

ness of the Board's action, the first showing of the movie is tentatively scheduled for May 7 on the Lifetime Channel. The time was not available in time for publication in the PBR, please, check local listings.

Now!!

You can order materials and make donations, using your VISA, MC, Discovery or AMEX !!!!