

The Plain Brown Rapper

The official newsletter of the International Service Organization of SAA, Inc.

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Editor's Note: The ideas expressed in the literature section of the PBR reflect the opinions of the authors of those articles and do not necessarily represent the opinions of the ISO or of the SAA fellowship as a whole.

"Resistance replaced the willingness I had known when combating alcoholism because I thought it was normal for a young man to have a voracious sex drive. But I had been clinically diagnosed as a sex addict so I kept coming back."

See Page 17

My Needs

By Cynthia T.

How I get my needs met:

1. I identify my needs.
2. I list ways to get each met in a healthy manner.
3. I meet as many needs as I can on my own, with activities, with God, with friends...

FOR ME:

LOVE is met by loving myself, practicing the presence of God (feeling the love around me), spirituality, being in nature and observing the handiwork of God, accepting the gift of love from others, giving love, thinking loving thoughts towards everyone I see, being forgiving, thinking about love, creating a loving environment, caring for myself in a loving, protective manner, having loving people in my life, telling people I love them, calling my family regularly (also I asked my brother and father to call me regularly just to tell me they love me!) ... and I have a lot of "love" type knick-knacks and stuff...

***I give love to receive love. There is no shortage of love. When I give love, I am not depleted—I am filled up—and we both have more.

***As I nurture others, sometimes they are able to respond and love back.

FRIENDS:

I get phone numbers (usually women!) at meetings, and then call people, and try to get to

know them. This takes an effort, and some people respond, while others don't. Then I try to spend time with them. It takes time to develop friendships. I call all the men and women on my cell phone on Father's Day or Mother's Day ... and I try to call some of my "acquaintances" each week. I leave a lot of messages and then I get calls back. I try to take time to nurture the friendships where the other person is responding. If they don't respond (call back), that's okay; after a while maybe I delete the number. Getting involved in another 12-step fellowship was a great way to expand my circle of "winners" and friends with stability in recovery. I go to retreats, dances, potlucks, picnics, bowling, etc. Also, I have stepped out of my group into the mainstream community and made some friends in different organizations: Christian singles activity group (volleyball) and amateur radio (family hobby). I am planning to go hiking with another group sometime soon.

***I try to be a friend to myself: I take myself places and have fun!

ACTIVITIES:

In recovery I have to start to remember what it is I like to do and then get motivated to do those things! Each day we have 24 golden hours—how will I spend them? My life is what I make it. I get out and do something!

My Needs Continued

***I have a list of what I enjoy doing. I try to do something once per week or month...

WORK:

I participate in my chosen field, I try to do a good job, learn and grow...

PLAY:

FUN FUN FUN FUN FUN! I have to let my "inner child" out to play! I go swing on the swings! I ride a bike, skip and hop, run and dance, sing off-key...I'm free to be me! I try to include plenty of fun and play in my life!

FAMILY:

I nurture those relationships and appreciate others while I have them...I send cards, call regularly, take time together...or I practice detachment with love if I need boundaries... I do family of origin work and see how I can heal my wounds and improve the family dysfunction. As I have changed, my family has benefited from my recovery. We are all more loving now. And starting to be able to communicate.

GOD:

It would take too long to describe how I work Step 11 and incorporate God into my life. Every second of every day in every way possible. This is where "it all comes from"... I have read all kinds of "religious"

material and scripture, and I use what works for me. I practice the presence of God by imagining myself in God's loving hands or God sitting next to me... I have been studying a particular course for three years, and probably will continue for my lifetime; it's excellent. I do meditation, prayer, incense/candlelight/music, spend time in nature... I occasionally go to a particular non-denominational church, do yoga... I like Buddhism, Zen, Taoist philosophy. I enjoy inspirational books, sunrises, sunsets, mountains, nature—God is all around and within and throughout everyone. God is love. An energy. I can feel it.

I start my day with meditation readings and coffee...I like to have the door open, breathe in the fresh air and hear the birds singing.

SUPPORT:

I attend a home group so people can get to know me. I work with a sponsor regularly. I have several close, intimate friends who are supportive—men and women with 10-20 years of recovery, who are able to guide me along. I help others. I call people A LOT for help! I reach out. I maintain these relationships by rotating who I call (different people help with different things) so that I don't "wear out my welcome." In 12-Step programs, we are not alone. We help each other. That is how it works. It is rewarding to help others, so my support people get the gift of seeing me grow and being a part of my life.

FOOD, SHELTER:

I provide for myself proper nutrition and a clean environment.

REST:

Plenty of R&R.

EXERCISE:

I try to get some as often as possible! I try to be more active. I have a bike, go to the gym, swim, do yoga, walk, hike...

FUN:

See play above. It's interesting that that is on my list twice!

SEX:

When I wrote my list off the top of my head, I realized that "sex" was at the bottom of my list! I always thought that was my most important need. Turns

out it isn't. If all my needs are being met, I am pretty balanced. And of course, I provide a nurturing, sexual experience for myself on a regular basis. I like candlelight, music, soothing touch (helps me love my body with its imperfections) as well as giving myself pleasure.

Love, being at the top of the list, comes in many forms. Sex can be an expression of love. My current relationship offers me the most wonderful experience I have ever had—sensuality combined with knowing that the man I am with truly cares for me—it is a closeness I cannot put into words. I am grateful for my recovery through the 12 Steps and my support system and the grace of God which has given me this opportunity to experience intimacy with a man. Thank you God. And thank

Reaching Out

By Glenn J.

My name is Glenn and I am a real sex addict. I have spent the past eight years in prison for committing a sex crime.

It was not until I was going through the process of coming to prison that I admitted to my Higher Power and myself that I was a sex addict and that my life was unmanageable.

I first discovered hope at the tables of another 12-step program, but it was not until I attended my first SAA meeting that I really felt at home. However it has taken me a long time to become willing to really work

the program; you see, I like things to be painless and easy. Pride seems always in my way!

A couple of months ago I had my second parole hearing, and in my self-centered mind I thought that I had everything under control. I felt so sure that this interview would be better than the last! But just as I sat down in front of the camera, up popped one of my character defects, "Fear," and I soon became this rambling idiot. The next thing I remember is the parole board member saying "we will consider everything and let

Safe Places Continued

you know in 30 days.”

On the way back to the unit I was so overwhelmed with anger at myself, because I realized that my apprehension had got the best of me. It was like my house of cards, defect of character cards, came tumbling down around me; soon after that I went on a binge of fantasy and masturbation.

I tried to hold onto hope, and I did so by picking out the good parts of the interview. At least I was honest and did not deny committing my crime, nor did I blame it upon others or my addiction. But the questions that I could not answer ate away at me, filing me with doubt and fear.

My addiction cried out to me, “I can take away all your fears, anxieties and pain.” Oh, what a terrible deceiving beast is sex addiction, and how it feeds on the weakness of the mind. And I continued to listen to the insanity of my addiction, but I did not find the release or peace promised; only sadness, despair, self-loathing, guilt, and more fear filled my heart and soul.

Did I honestly look to my Higher Power for help, did I get honest in a meeting, did I carry the message of hope to another suffering addict? No, I was bound and determined to go it alone, because I had become so full of guilt, shame and anger that I became too embarrassed to speak about what was going on in my life. I had made a 360-degree turn back to the actor

faking his way through life. I also did not wish to let down those in the group who looked up to me; you see, I also get a rush being the big shot!

Back to the parole board! Thirty days turned into a sixty-day wait in hell, and the anxiety of waiting was like throwing fuel on an out-of-control blaze. Finally an amount arrived, a 12-month flop was the parole board’s decision. I was deeply disappointed, but also greatly relieved, at their decision. I felt as if I could move on with life.

I called a friend, who is also an addict, and his first word is that he was glad that I called. He humbled himself to me and spoke of his trouble with masturbation. A floodgate opened and I shared my struggles over the past 60 days, and I shared how hard-headed I had been towards God and the SAA program. A great weight seemed to be lifted off of me, and I felt apart of something special—“life.”

My friend and I decided that we should both take an inventory concerning our binges, and that we needed to get honest with God and our groups. He also suggested that I should really start working all the steps in my life, and that I should write about each step and mail it to him.

Anyway, since then I have been sober, and I realize that I need God and the SAA program to remain sober. My binge did teach me the meaning of “in all our affairs,” and I received a hell of a lesson in humility. Recovery is a lot harder when I don’t let others in!

A Word of Thanks for the Book

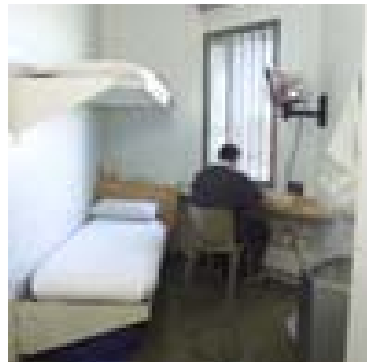
By Harvey A.

I've spent over 20 years in prison as a result of my acting out behavior—more than half of my adult life. The last time I was “headed up the river,” there were SAA meetings in the county jail. Attending those meetings gave me hope that a different life was possible. I had tried psychology and religion before jail but neither worked. Seeing people from outside who had suffered as I did but were living successfully gave me hope. The hope I acquired at those meetings prompted me to seriously attempt a life of recovery while I was inside so I wouldn't need to come back once I got out. But over the years, politicians passed tougher laws and it became clear I wasn't getting out and would have to serve all of my 25-year sentence. The value of practicing a habit of sobriety diminished once freedom was no longer in sight.

Around the same time, there was talk in the PBR about SAA putting together some kind of recovery book. It sounded like a good idea, and I made a modest donation to help with publication but decided against contributing a story for fear it would result in more prosecution. Then the green book was finally finished and I received a copy. Reading the first chapter reminded me I really was an addict and needed recovery. For the first time, I was given a clear idea of how to work the steps in a way that is unique to our program. By the time

I finished reading it, I was reminded of how recovery had personally enriched my life, even in prison, during the years I had embraced it. So I resolved to work through the steps again, this time as they were laid out in the green book. This returned me to a recovery mindset and a little of the hope I once knew.

To all the good people who worked on this book and shared their experience, strength and hope—my thanks. The book has touched my life and I believe it will have a similar effect on others whose lives have become so unmanageable that they were locked in jail. A number of prisoners, depending on the state they live in, receive little or even no monetary compensation for working inside the walls and so are not able to buy this book. The twelfth step work represented by giving this book away free to prisoners will carry the message to those who could benefit from it most.



Life After Treatment, the Second Time

By Rick S.

Stepping out the doors of my five-month temporary home sent chills down my spine. Was I ready to face the world head-on and succeed this time? This day arrived no sooner or later than was deemed by the powers that be and my Higher Power working side by side. You see this was a repeat performance for me. Last summer when I left treatment I “knew” I was on my way to the big show, to the top, never to pass through those doors again, thank you. Think again. Try again. Live again, one more day, one day at a time, so I now tell myself. It is easy to be a flash in the pan (been there, done that), but what I have learned this time around is the staying power of the twelve-step recovery program.

Going into treatment after figuring I had a “problem” with sex, I wanted a quick fix, a pill to take it all away. They kept telling me that no pill was available on the market for this disease. “The answer is in the group,” the therapists would almost chant like a choir every morning during group check-in. But I am the All-American Boy from the nation’s heartland; independence is almost my middle name, I told

them. I made it on my own and I will make it on my own, I told myself daily. Yes, at times I would feed back to the treatment team what they wanted to hear with a smile and nod like a bobble-head doll. OK, I said. I will not act out on my bottom lines. OK, I was convinced that I could not work 70-hour weeks and keep an otherwise balanced schedule. OK, I committed myself to SAA meetings. OK,

OK, OK! I really understood the program phrase, “Fake it ‘til you make it.” Yes, I used sex inappropriately; yes, I did not want to “do” it again. So after I left the first time I went through the motions of the program, and the pain of my first relapse, my second, third, fourth and on up, making the same old promises to myself. Relapses coupled with

meetings brought back even more internal confusion and shame, trying to stop with no ability to do so. “Keep coming back” they said again and again.

So I kept going. “Suit up and show up,” they told me, so I did. Then, as my HP is wont to do, he placed another recovering addict in a meeting so that I could hear his wisdom. He said to me that even though sports was not his thing, “when I walk on the field of addiction, put my helmet on and run



into the opposing line, I get knocked down every time.” The light bulb went on inside my head. Now he was talking my game. Walk off the field, I said to myself, and just keep walking, past the sidelines, the bleachers, the locker room, all my adoring fans (co-addicts and codependents), and walk, one step at a time, away from the field. The game plays on, but this time I chose to suit up and show up for a different kind of action. I walked myself back into treatment.

Five months later, I walked out with all the human blessings possible. During it all, I spent time with tears on my cheeks, pain in my heart, anguish in my voice and mournful weeping throughout all my prayers. I thought it would never end, but it did. Slowly the pain subsided as I wrote with rigorous honesty for the first time about my life, my actions and sexual behavior. I started working the steps, one at a time, by listening to my soul and those around me. I listened more than I have ever listened before to anyone, including to myself, other than the voice of

my sexual desires. I listened to more people than I thought I could ever listen to—their voices of challenge and criticism and concern. I heard their stories and learned to weep at their beauty. I learned the roots of humility and the seed was planted in me. Now, in the real world, the world outside of rehab, it is my turn to invite the recovering community to water and tend the vine. At this writing I am just two weeks out of the safe haven of treatment and six months sober. “Safe” because all the other aspects of my life—career, family, bills and friends—were all put on hold. But for my heart and soul, it was nothing but a daily push, pull and twist. Thanks to my HP, I was given this extraordinary gift. This time I will keep walking one day at a time. This time not only am I walking away from the addiction field of play, but I am walking into a life of recovery. The answer *is* in the group as the therapists so beautifully reminded us every day, “inter-dependence, not independence, one day at a time, not instant gratification.” This time out of treatment, slow and steady steps of many kinds guide me along the path of recovery.

A New Kind of Acceptance

By Charles J.

I’ve always wanted to be accepted by everyone and have always felt the need for this acceptance. I have made contact with others by any means necessary,

even if it meant giving my body for sex, my will for someone else’s, my pride for someone else’s, my feelings to help someone else feel better about themselves. It was a belief of mine for a long, long time

A New Kind of Acceptance Continued

that I had been put on this earth only to satisfy the needs of others, and that I had to do whatever they wanted in order for them to like and accept me, and for me to get what I needed, whatever that may have been at the time.

Early on in my teen years, I decided that it was time for others to satisfy me by whatever means necessary. When you didn't satisfy me, or you said something I didn't like, or I felt you were being hateful or hurtful to me, I got even. Sometimes immediately by hurting others through lashing out at them, sexualizing them or whatever else was possible at the time. You had to accept me, no matter what it took.

A former friend once said something sarcastic to me in an attempt to hurt me. Rather than respond in kind, I chose to ignore him, smile and go about my business. Since I am in prison, this is not something easily done, but for me it was the best decision. Had I chosen to lash out, I probably would have seriously hurt him and caused myself more problems. I plan to share this incident with a woman who visits me and who is very special and important to me, as part of my accountability to her and to myself.

I have a lot to be thankful for today. Today I don't have to lash

out at others. Today I don't have to sexualize myself to pretend to feel better about myself when others hurt me. I don't have to turn to porn either, at least not for me, not today.

I've learned a lot about myself, life, my Higher Power and relationships, thanks to SAA, and I plan to learn more and grow as I make more changes each day. I've been introduced to some really great people if only by mail or through the PBR. I count myself among those people because today I know who I am. I no longer have to pretend to be someone else just to be accepted or to make others happy. Today I am thankful for who I am; no longer am I embarrassed by who I am. Sometimes people still make sarcastic remarks to me in an attempt to hurt me, provoke me or get under my skin, but today God is in control; he is the captain of my vessel. No longer do I have to control anything; nor do I have to get even. Thanks again to one and all in SAA. Today I owe all of you a debt of gratitude, not only for the discovery of who Charles J. is, but also for my sobriety today. Today I know a new kind of acceptance and it doesn't involve negative thinking or others. It's totally about me and my Higher Power. God bless you one and all!

Step 7 Worksheet

Submitted by Anonymous

[Editor's Note: The following article represents a method of working Step 7 that has worked for some members of our fellowship.]

Humbly asked God to remove our shortcomings.

Overview: In Step 5 we acknowledged all of our wrongs (defects of character). In Step 6 we become *entirely* ready to let God remove them. Step 7 is the action step of asking God to remove them. (Before starting, read point 6 first.)

1. Humility is not humiliation. Try to list actions of humility. Also try to list acts of humiliation either by you or towards you.
2. Asking God for anything works best if done humbly. Indicate some ways that you can approach your higher power humbly.
3. Do you recall any time when you approached God in humiliation? In Anger? In defeat? In fear? Try to describe the difference of a humble approach.
4. Are there any shortcomings that you feel God has removed?
5. What shortcoming would you still like God to remove?
6. Now, or when you have time, try the 7th Step Prayer:

"My Creator, I am now willing that you should have all of me, good and bad. I pray that you now remove from me every single defect of character which stands in the way of my usefulness to you and my fellows. Grant me strength, as I go out from here, to do your bidding. Amen." (from the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous, page 76)

SAA and the PBR

By DeTron S., Inmate, Texas

To the PBR: Thanks for all of the articles.

Surely, there is a lesson being learned.

Each of you speaks with knowledge of what you have discerned.

I could ask the staff and each volunteer,

"Do y'all really care or is it just a career?"

From what I have perceived, you guys are sincere.

So with dearest words, I must say,

"Thanks, I.S.O. of SAA."

Anger at God

By Carol Ann R.

I am approaching the two-year anniversary of my second and worst suicide attempt. At the time, I had been sober for over seven and a half years in SAA. Through my suicide attempts, my Higher Power allowed me to experience a new and deeper bottom which neces-

sitated joining a co-addiction program for those affected by alcoholism. Shortly after that, I relapsed in my sex addiction. That seemed so unfair! I wanted to believe in a merciful God, but how could God reward my past sobriety with so much new pain? Unfortunately, my resentment towards God didn't stop there. Reaching fur-

ther back, I wondered where was God's alleged mercy when I was being sexually abused or neglected as a kid? And why do I struggle with sex addiction while my sisters, who grew up in the same house with the same parents, apparently do

not? How could God grant them long marriages with beautiful children and not me? Whenever I looked at the world through the lens of a victim, God seemed so cruel.

True, there was pain in some aspects of my past in which I had no part. The neglect, abandon-

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quences.**

ment and abuse I experienced as a kid simply as a result of my birth were not my choice. But were these God's choices? To-day my answer is no. True, both my parents neglected and abandoned me, my cousin and several neighbors sexually abused me. But were they God? No.

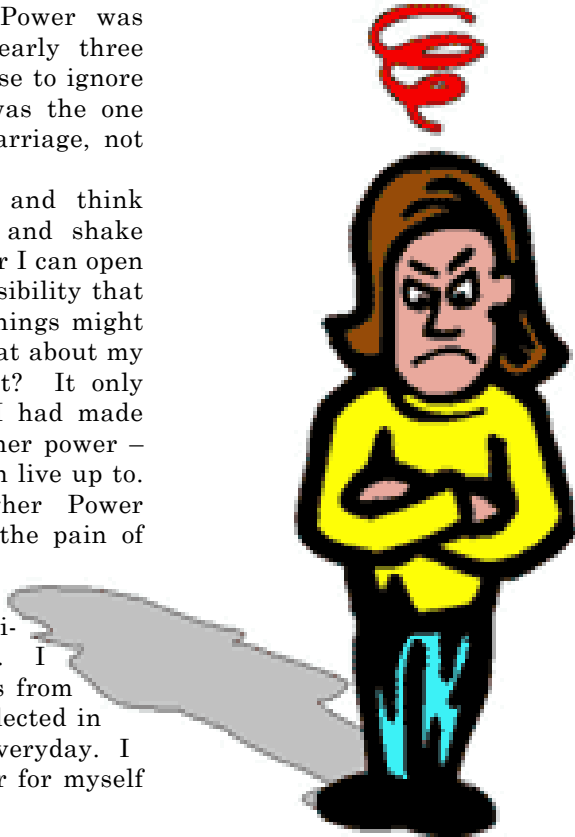
They were humans reenacting abuse histories of their own. To-day I choose to consider the possibility that God may have been speaking to them – trying to intervene on my behalf – and my perpetrators ignored God the same way I later would when I in

turn became a perpetrator.

And there were many more things in which I did have a part. When I start crying "Ain't that awful," I conveniently forget that I came into these rooms for the first time in 1992. I was having the first affair in my marriage, and another member suggested that I stop acting out and be honest with my husband. But I didn't do that - I chose to go back out in search of more consequences. It took another affair, another unplanned pregnancy, and another abortion for me to return in earnest in 1995. Today I know my Higher Power was speaking to me clearly three years earlier. I chose to ignore what I heard. I was the one who trashed my marriage, not God.

Now I can sit and think "Ain't that awful" and shake my fist at the sky, or I can open my mind to the possibility that even very painful things might in fact be gifts. What about my last suicide attempt? It only happened because I had made my partner my higher power - a role no human can live up to. My authentic Higher Power called me through the pain of suicide to change everything - my recovery, my spiritual life, my home. I see recovery lessons from my "awful" past reflected in the mirror almost everyday. I am 16 months sober for myself

- not for a partner. I have a rich, full life. All is well. Today I am grateful to God for that painful, almost fatal time. Today I really, really get that what does not kill me makes me stronger. Gratitude has replaced my anger at God.



Progress Not Perfection

By Bill J.

As I attended an SAA meeting last night I listened to people share and get current. I listened to the shares and it took me back to how it was before I worked the steps. I had been in SAA and other 12-step groups for sexual addiction for five years and was still having S.L.I.P.s. (sobriety lost its priority). I figured that I had worked the steps in other 12-step programs and that the work I did before would keep me sexually sober. I thought that I just had to go to enough SAA meetings and eventually I would get and stay sober. I was wrong. I had to work the steps as they applied to my sexual addiction just like I did in my other 12-step programs.

I began to think of some of the sexual issues (addiction) that had plagued me in the past. I seemed to now be free of most of them and had to contend only with an occasional middle-circle behavior. Before

coming into recovery I had anonymous sexual encounters (sex outside a committed relationship), acquired STDs and was looking out my window with binoculars trying to get sex hits. I also was lusting over teenage girls and fantasizing at night masturbating while looking at porn. Through all this I still blamed my wife for withholding sex and I never even thought of telling the marriage counselor about my double life. It didn't even occur to me to tell the counselor. The compulsion to have affairs and to look out my windows with binoculars went away when I came to SAA but the rest remained.

When I finished working the steps with my sponsor I was divorced for the third time. The compulsion to look at internet porn and fantasize about teenage girls had disappeared as well and I didn't even have to white-



knuckle it. I was able to stop those same behaviors before I worked the steps, but I could never stay stopped and always had that feeling that I still wanted to do them if I could get away with it but now I don't even think about it. The next thing that faded away was the compulsive masturbation. After years of attempts to exert control over this form of self-sex it simply melted away without any effort on my part. After I finished working the steps, my focus has been towards helping others work them, and this has added insurance or what is called "Deposits in my spiritual bank account"; when I need to make a withdrawal the spiritual funds are available. Before I had been spiritually bankrupt.

I have learned that accumulated stress over a long period of time (a month or so) can get me back to thinking about medicating my emotions but I have fail-safes for that. I book-end with my sponsor or another

I thought that I just had to go to enough SAA meetings and eventually I would get and stay sober. I was wrong. I had to work the steps...

member of my support group or go to a meeting and get current. I do journaling, and also I pray and meditate. My program is only as good as my actions, and my actions are the things I do to stay sober. I had to modify my life style somewhat and my sponsor required me to exercise as we worked through the steps. So

now I exercise each morning but I have to keep it simple. I use sit-ups and calisthenics and I meditate while I roller-blade. I have to get up at 5 or 6 a.m., but this is a small price to pay for good health.

I have made excuses my entire life as to why I couldn't exercise, why I couldn't pray and meditate and so on, but

I always had time to act out. I am now concentrating on the solution instead of the problem and it seems that I am progressing in slow but definite steps. This is progress, not perfection. It doesn't happen over night but eventually it gets better. That "it," by the way, is "me."

Me and Myself - A Conversation

By Scotty W.

I slipped again! Oh man! How could this have happened? I'm working my program. This shouldn't have happened. I don't understand.

I'm doing fine. I want to stop being so hard on myself and just give it some time. That's what my sponsor always says. What a wise man.

Perhaps it's something I did WRONG. Perhaps it's something I didn't do RIGHT.

I don't have to know why. I may never know the reason, or even if there was one. This is a process. Different people recover in different fashions and at different speeds.

I'm worthless. This just proves it. I'm a zero, and it looks like I'll always be a zero. I'll never escape this thing.

Things take time. The addiction didn't instantly spring into my life, did it? I've been learning so much since I began going to meetings. So much of my life is more balanced, more peaceful, more—yes, I'll say it—SERENE.

I wonder what my sponsor is gonna say when I tell him I've slipped again. One of these days, he'll probably drop me because I'm still slipping.

My sponsor's been in the fellowship a lot longer than I have, yet he still attends meetings. He even shares about his own slips, remember? And when he shares about a slip, it doesn't seem to devastate him, I've noticed. I'll be there some

day. For today, though, I keep watching my sponsor, and share all I can.

I'm afraid to tell my sponsees; I'm supposed to be the good example, and not have slips, right? What will they think of me?

When I share the good with the bad, I give my sponsees a balanced idea of what they can look forward to during their recovery. If I didn't share about my ups AND downs, they might not expect it when and if they encounter their own downs. I help them when I share. Good and bad, I help them—and myself—when I share.

This is so depressing. I've been doing all this step work, program calls, going to meetings, and I STILL have a slip? This SUCKS!

But I AM getting better. Day after day, just like walking up a flight of stairs. I know my eyes are clearer. My thoughts are less jumbled. I remember those terrible feelings, yet I don't talk about them as much as I used to. I am making progress. I truly am.

That phrase "progress not perfection" sounds so hollow sometimes. I don't want progress, I want to be cured!

I'd love to be "cured" too, whatever that means. But in the meantime, I'll focus on my program for today. I make sure I have literature to read during those anxious, idle moments. I make sure I have the phone list handy, and have my favorite recovery buddies in my speed dial. Sometimes, I just call others in recovery because I like talking to

them! We're all on the same road, and I really respect them for their own recovery efforts. Hey, I just remembered some of them are

getting together for dinner before tonight's meeting. And I've got time. Great! Let me hit that speed dial now!

The Gift of Sharing

By Chris W.

My name is Chris W. and I am a grateful recovering sex addict. My story is very similar to several I have heard in SAA. For many years I acted out in painful isolation and silence, living with the secret shame that comes with our addiction. I buried my fears and guilt with copious amounts of alcohol and even more acting out. This hideous cycle finally led me to the incomprehensible demoralization recovering addicts know so well. I had spiraled out of control for long enough and had finally hit bottom.

Through abstaining from alcohol and going to therapy I came to know the SAA program. Resistance replaced the willingness I had known when combating alcoholism because I thought it was normal for a young man to have a voracious sex drive. But I had been clinically diagnosed as a sex addict so I kept coming back. After sharing and listening at meetings more and more, people began to tell me they identified with what I had said and I, in all honesty, had done likewise. Now that was a real mind-blower! Those feelings of inadequacy, the ones that had always told me that I was different and no one else would ever understand, were being shown to be a lie. Those same feelings lost their power with each meeting and pro-

gram call I made.

So I worked the steps. As I did the step work with a sponsor I was more scared than I had ever been, even of those screaming drill instructors on my first day of basic training. I thought my sponsor would label me a deviant or worse a pervert after we were done. As I shared my history my sponsor never batted an eye; what a wonderful experience! For the first time in my life I had shared my innermost self with another person, and found true healing. I had always run from myself and from others. But now I see it's okay to be who I am and to express my individuality.

Several months have gone by and I have slowly chipped away at the dysfunctional armor I had surrounded myself with while growing up. The more open and honest I make myself at meetings and in program calls, the more healing and sobriety I receive. I now make a point of sharing at meetings. Even if my voice stutters or cracks I'm doing what it takes to heal the inner child and to stay away from that bottom line.

It has been very rewarding at the very least. But miracles do happen. I am actually dating for the first time, which is a reward for working a good program. Now some people call me when they need help!

A Special Time For Giving Thanks The birth of a new tradition?

By Jerry B.

SAA is built on traditions. First and foremost, there are our Twelve Traditions. They live and guide us in the present. They also serve as a bridge between our past and our future. They free us from the limiting and at times frightening confines of individual self, allowing us to stride forward with confidence in the safety of our fellowship. These Twelve we share as a whole.

Locally, SAA groups are likewise built on traditions. These are not the same as the Twelve Traditions, of course. They are traditions in the way families have traditions. The way meetings are opened and closed are a kind of tradition formed over time by group conscience. The basis on which a group gives out medallions or chips could be considered a tradition. There are even specific restaurants where members traditionally gather for fellowship after meetings. In some areas SAA members hold annual retreats. All of these are examples of local traditions.

Such local traditions are important. They act like a glue that bonds newcomers with old

timers. Local traditions help perpetuate the group. They give it the feel of a home.

Sometimes a local tradition is adopted by other geographical areas. Some traditions, like opening a meeting with a moment of silence, take hold fellowship-wide.

The SAA members in the North Pacific Region's Bay Area have begun a new tradition. Perhaps it

is one that will be adopted throughout the fellowship. The tradition had its inception three years ago, when one member took it upon himself to open his home to his SAA brothers and sisters as a place where they

could gather for an afternoon of giving thanks.

Thanks for what? First of all, they could give thanks for their recovery. They could give thanks for their friends in recovery. They could give thanks for the groups to which they belonged. They could give thanks for the program, for the Twelve Steps, and for the Twelve Traditions. When they were invited, they were asked to come prepared to give thanks for SAA and for the international organization and they were asked, if possible, to express their thanks




with a gift.

This first day of giving thanks took place on a Saturday afternoon in November in 2003. The next year, the same member again invited the Bay Area fellowship into his home, once again for the purpose of giving thanks. This year, he was joined by other members who helped spread the word and make preparations for holding the event on the second Saturday in November. Spontaneously, the day received a name: Giving Thanks III. By the time the gathering came to a close, those who had taken part agreed to hold Giving Thanks IV next year, again on the second Saturday of November. (See ISO Financial News for results of Giving Thanks III.)

What if next year SAA members throughout the world gathered together, wherever they are, on the second Saturday in November for Giving Thanks IV? They would be bound spiritually in Giving Thanks. Together they could give thanks for their recovery. They could give thanks for their friends in recovery. They could give thanks for the groups to which they belonged. They could give thanks for the program, for the Twelve Steps, and for the Twelve Traditions. When they were invited, they could be asked to come prepared to give thanks for SAA and for the international organization and, asked, if possible, to express their thanks with a gift.

What if? Why not?

A graphic with a light blue background and a white rounded rectangle in the center. Inside the rectangle, the text "A Fellowship-wide Invitation to Giving Thanks IV" is written in a black serif font, centered and arranged in four lines.

A Fellowship-wide
Invitation to
Giving Thanks IV

From the Editor

By Mike L.

This being the holiday season, I'm led to think back a little bit on my early days of recovery. I remember, since I engaged in a particularly lonely type of acting out, spending Christmas Eve one year sitting in a particularly isolated place watching and waiting for an opportunity which really hinged on the availability and interest of one individual, whom I ended up not even seeing. And then again, I remember deliberately spending holidays by myself just to prove that I could get by.

In my early days of recovery I realized that I would have to do something different with the holidays rather than spending them by myself. What I eventually came up with was having an open house on Thanksgiving and Christmas. I prepared the main dish and everybody else brought something. There were some large turnouts at my house for these events. Part of the festivities always involved an SAA meeting after dinner. Some folks passed on dinner and just came for the meeting. I remember someone telling me that they were going to be celebrating four months' sobriety on the particular day of the open house and how they wished there were a four-month chip. I knew where to get a four-month chip, thanks to another 12-step fellowship I belonged to, so I surprised this person on the day by producing it as part of our meeting. This was over 10 years ago and the celebrant from that day is still active in the fellowship and acting in several important trusted servant capacities. Only a few weeks ago, somebody told me that whenever they show *Jurassic Park* on cable, he thinks back to the time we watched it at my house during one of these open houses. Eventually others stepped up to host the open houses, and I also moved on to celebrating the holidays with other people in recovery in different venues.

I learned by placing activities in my outer circle that it was important to my recovery that I find activities to replace the ones I had previously engaged in. And forcing myself to spend holidays on my own just to prove that I could do it was at the very least a middle-circle behavior. Fortunately, with the variety of different 12-step groups who put on dinners, card games and the like over the holidays, I never have to even ponder the possibility of spending a Christmas Eve the way I did that one year some 15 years ago.

Recently, just through something I saw by chance on a performing group's website, I've had a chance to do a little singing and acting in public again, something I haven't done in over 30 years. Even though I waited until fairly late in life (I'm 54 now) to go back and fulfill this dream, it would have been impossible even now if I hadn't gotten the tools I have from this and other programs. Also, I knew when I was offered the chances to join this group, that there would be opportunities

for growth involved. And sure enough, my ego has gotten bruised on a couple of occasions, so that is another area where I've been privileged to be able to apply the tools I have.

Anyway, we have a particularly fine selection of articles in this issue of the PBR. I'm especially pleased that folks are writing with their reactions to and gratitude for the SAA book. I can't say it often enough that getting our own book has been a real milestone for the fellowship.

I don't know if it's the book, or my constant begging and pleading, or something else, but the PBR submissions have been on the increase, a most welcome turn of events. Please keep the articles coming. Bear in mind that the emphasis should be on experience, strength and hope; in other words, the solution rather than the problem. You can send your articles online to pbr@saa-recovery.org or you can send them by mail to the ISO, P.O. Box 70949, Houston, TX 77270-0949.

Enjoy this issue of the PBR, have a wonderful holiday season





ISO News



ISO Literature Committee, ISO Board, & Board Committees

ISO Board Minutes

**The Board of Trustees of the ISO of SAA, Inc.,
met by teleconference November 19, 2005.**

The following is a report of significant actions taken.

Approved: A motion to accept the Literature Committee's recommendation to proceed with translation of *Sex Addicts Anonymous* into Spanish.

Approved: A directive to the ISO Website Committee to formulate its rules for conducting business and to submit these rules to both the Board and the Literature Committee for approval by each.

Appointed: Greg B. and Jeanette W. to represent the Board on the ISO Website Committee.

Authorized: The ISO Office to sell the Green Book to reputable distributors and bookstores at the conventional discount.

Approved: The 2006 ISO Convention Budget.

Approved: An agreement to record speakers and workshops at the 2006 ISO Convention.

Approved: The expenditure of up to \$500 to purchase a computer backup system for the ISO Office.

Ratified: SAA members Glenn F. and Rick D. as members of the Office Oversight Committee.

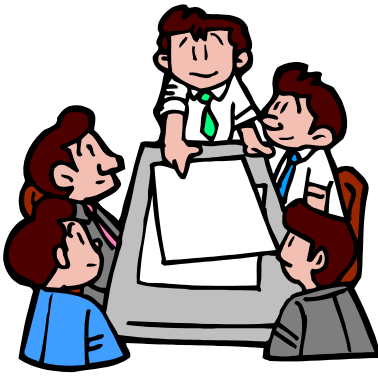
Approved: A motion for Carol Ann R. to provide Board members with the complete SAA Teen Meeting binder so that the Board can consider it for approval for distribution to the fellowship.

Directed: The ISO Office to construct an ISO website for Women's Outreach and submit it to the ISO Website Committee.

Approved: Publication of e-mail addresses for each region's Board representative and alternate.

Ratified: Reimbursement of Gabriela L.'s hotel expense due to circumstances beyond the control of the sponsoring group, said reimbursement being made with the Board noting that this action does not set a precedent.

Approved: A motion that any fund raising at any ISO Convention must have the prior approval of the Board.



**The ISO Literature Committee
met by teleconference on Sunday, November 13, 2005.
The following is a report of significant actions taken.**

Approved: A motion that the Literature Committee recommend to the fellowship that people excerpt whole paragraphs from the SAA book for use to read in meetings to the extent possible, removing individual sentences only when necessary and certainly not adding any of their own original content.

Approved: Motion that the Literature Committee recommend to the Board that we proceed at this time with negotiations for sale of the SAA book through major book distributors.



ISO Financial News

(This report does not include designated income which is earmarked to be spent on specific projects)

ISO Income/Expense

Daily Operations - October & Year To Date

		Monthly	Year
Operating Income	October	Average	To Date
Net Sales	8,220	8,604	86,039
Undesignated Donations	8,105	9,443	94,434
General	5,320	6,524	65,242
LifeLine Partner	2,785	2,919	29,192
Miscellaneous Income	0	20	199
Total Operating Income	16,325	18,067	180,672
Operating Expenses			
Wages/Benefits/Taxes	13,262	8,982	89,818
Wages - Outreach Related	2,647	1,881	18,807
Wages - Other	7,891	5,042	50,424
Benefits	1,818	1,456	14,560
Taxes	906	603	6,027
Insurance	146	201	2,010
Board/Committee Expense	822	1,015	10,147
Postage	195	128	1,276
Communications	253	272	2,722
Rent/Utilities	1,330	1,175	11,748
Office Related	383	593	5,925
Financial	862	786	7,860
Plain Brown Rapper	531	896	8,962
Translations	0	122	975
Total Operating Expenses	17,784	14,144	141,443
Operating Surplus/Shortfall	5,755	3,923	39,229
Convention Surplus/Shortfall			4,686
Delegate Meeting Surplus/Shortfall			-2,367
Board/LitCom/Staff Travel Expense			-15,560
Net Surplus//Shortfall			25,988

As this report is being readied for print, the ISO has sold more than 7,000 copies of *Sex Addicts Anonymous*. Soft cover copies are being bought at a rate of about four for each hard cover. The cash flow from these sales has enabled the ISO to fully fund its three-month prudent reserve at \$42,392, to build up its reserve for translating the book to \$14,800, and to pay up front the printing cost for the 6,500 books that were delivered just before Thanksgiving. During the first six months, when the book was still in its introductory phase, *Sex Addicts Anonymous* sold at rate much higher than can be expected over the long run. More typical perhaps have been the months of September and October, when sales leveled off to an average of \$8,789. This was down from the \$15,667 average from April through August.

While sales, bolstered by availability of the Green Book, have been good, donations have been on a downward curve since May. From that month, when total donations were \$14,663, they have declined to \$14,235 in June, \$13,500 in July, \$9,403 in August, \$8,098 in September, and \$8,135 in October. The most noticeable drop off over the summer and into the fall has been in individual donations other than those received through the LifeLine Partners program. Gifts from LifeLine Partners held steady, averaging \$2,960 per month, but gifts from other individuals have diminished from a high of \$6,227 in May to \$5,339 in June, \$4,033 in July, \$2,594 in August, \$821 in September, and \$630 in October. Fortunately, this trend will stop in November, just as it has for the past two years, thanks to the generosity of the North Pacific Region's Bay Area membership.

In 2003, SAA members from the Bay Area set aside a Saturday in November as a special time for giving thanks. They came together for fellowship and also to raise money in support of the ISO. They raised \$3,500, which perhaps not coincidentally was the amount of money it took to move the ISO Office to a new and larger location. They gathered again on a November Saturday in 2004. On this occasion they raised more than \$11,000 in support of the ISO. This year, calling the event Giving Thanks III, they met on the second Saturday of November. Amazingly, this year they raised more than \$16,500, with the final total not yet known because a few donations are still being collected at this writing.

How do they do it? Actually, the formula is simple. One member offers his home for use as an open house, which is held from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. A small committee works diligently talking up the event at every meeting in the Bay Area, handing out flyers to anybody who will take them, and distributing even more flyers by e-mail. And the people come, drawn by the enthusiasm of their hosts, the promise of a modest buffet, the love they hold for each other, their deep gratitude for the program, and their high regard for the Traditions, specifically in this case the Fifth and the Seventh. (For more about this new Bay Area tradition, see Page 18.)



ISO News
Continued



Prison Outreach Committee

Prison Outreach

Prison Outreach Notes

by Mike L., Prison Outreach Chair

It has been a year since the last time I wrote an article for the PBR about Prison Outreach. Between being out of town for 4 1/2 months this year for my job and then struggling to get caught up with the mail that came in during that time (thanks to all of my correspondents for their patience), I have not made the time to write an article. Now that things are back to being semi-normal, I hope for the Prison Outreach Notes to become a regular feature once again.

I was not at the convention in New Orleans this year because of being out of town, and so I didn't give my usual pep talk at the delegate meeting this year. Normally when I do give the talk, part of what I say is that interest in SAA is up among prisoners and down among SAA members on the outside. Well, that trend appears to be changing. I have received a number of inquiries about Prison Outreach in the



last few months and have had more opportunities to send out the unofficial Prison Outreach information sheet than I have in quite some time. I recently received an e-mail from overseas asking for information as well.

Since I have stepped down from serving as Prison Outreach Coordinator for the South Central Region, I'm not as aware of how much mail is coming into that region as I formerly was. The prisoners I have been writing to are certainly still enthusiastic.

By far, the best new tool we have to offer men and women behind the walls is the SAA Book that came out at the convention. We have received numerous requests for the book from prisoners and the office has been sending soft cover copies to all who have requested them. We have gotten some very positive response from the book, and elsewhere

in this issue of the PBR there is an article from a prisoner specifically about the book. I have also heard from prisoners who have shared the book with others in their unit. So *Sex Addicts Anonymous* is having an outreach beyond those who are receiving it directly from us. The blessings of our Green Book continue.

As usual, I have a number of requests from prisoners. If you can help fill any of these needs, please contact me through the ISO office at P.O. Box 70949, Houston, TX 77270-0949 or directly at PrisonOutreachChair@saa-recovery.org. These are all male prisoners, by the way.

A prisoner in Beaumont, TX, is looking for someone to come visit him or give him some time to listen and help.

A prisoner in Tehachapi, CA, is looking for a volunteer or volunteers to come start a group at a unit there.

Men in the Atlanta, GA, and San Francisco, CA, are looking for sponsors.

And finally, pen pals are sought in the following areas: Indianapolis, IN, Bakersfield, CA, Los Angeles, CA, San Bernardino, CA, and Las Vegas, NV. Please get in touch with me if you are able to help any of these prisoners.

Have a great holiday season, and I look forward to writing again next issue.

Mike L.





The 2006 ISO Convention website is now operational. Contact the ISO for the web address, user ID and password needed to log on to this site. Once there, members can register online or use the registration information to register by phone (800-477-8191). For those who prefer to register by mail, the registration form can be downloaded. A special convention mailing went out in September. This was sent to all groups and individual members on the ISO mailing list. If needed, addition registration forms can be obtained from the ISO Office.

Speakers and Workshop Presenters Needed

Now is the time to be thinking about serving the fellowship as a speaker or workshop presenter.

The Convention Committee is looking for SAA members to share their recovery stories with SAA Convention participants and their guests. Speakers are needed for the opening and closing ceremonies, for the Saturday night banquet, and for the Sunday lunch. The ISO Board has established the following speaker requirements:

- ✓Two+ years abstinence from inner circle.
- ✓Ongoing participation in SAA.
- ✓At least one SAA meeting per week attendance.
- ✓Completed Twelve Steps with sponsor.
- ✓Service at some level (meeting, sponsorship, intergroup, international).
- ✓Endorsement by sponsor or group.
- ✓Use standard "what it was like, what happened, etc." format.
- ✓No speaking from the level of "professional/expert."

A special committee will interview each potential speaker by telephone.

There are also inspiring, and knowledgeable SAA members in every region who are too modest to promote themselves as international speakers. Please help find them! (Please get their permission before you nominate them.)

Speaker forms can be downloaded from the convention website or obtained by calling or e-mailing the ISO Office.

Workshop presenters are needed as well. Topics should relate to the Twelve Steps or to elements of the SAA program, e.g., sponsorship, sobriety, tools, etc. For workshop presenters, the ISO Board has established one-year of continuous sobriety as a suggested guideline. Again, the form needed to apply as a workshop presenter can be downloaded from the convention website or obtained from the ISO Office.



Hotel Reservations

For those who are certain they will attend next year's convention, it is advisable to make hotel reservations early. One of the pluses of the hotel is that it is small, making *Healing at the Crossroads* the only event being hosted. However, the size also means the number of rooms is limited. There are enough for the number of participants past conventions have drawn, but only enough. Log on to the convention web site or contact the ISO office at 800-477-8191 for hotel information.

Notices and News Bits

Communicate Directly with Your Region's Board Representative

In an effort to enhance communications within the SAA fellowship, the Board has arranged for e-mail addresses that will go directly to each region's Board member and alternate. Below are the addresses for each region:

Great Lakes Region: BoardRepGL@saa-recovery.org
 Intermountain Region: BoardRepIM@saa-recovery.org
 North Central Region: BoardRepNC@saa-recovery.org
 Northeast Region: BoardRepNE@saa-recovery.org
 North Pacific Region: BoardRepNP@saa-recovery.org
 South Central Region: BoardRepSC@saa-recovery.org
 Southeastern Region: BoardRepSE@saa-recovery.org
 Southern Pacific Region: BoardRepSP@saa-recovery.org
 At Large Board Member: BoardRepAtLarge@saa-recovery.org

The back cover of the PBR lists the names of all Board members and Alternates, plus the At Large member.

Those who are not sure in which region they belong may call the ISO office at 800-477-8191 or email at info@saa-recovery.org

Our new basic text, *Sex Addicts Anonymous*, is the culmination of the efforts of many in the fellowship, whose collective experience has given us a new way to carry the message of recovery.

The ISO Literature Committee of SAA respectfully requests feedback about this new book. Please forward any comments, suggestions, or criticisms to:

ISO of SAA, Inc., P.O. Box 70949
 Houston, TX 77270-0949
 e-mail: info@saa-recovery.org

Important Notice With Regard To Excerpting Quotes From *Sex Addicts Anonymous*

Since publication of the SAA basic text, several group representatives have called the ISO Office asking for guidance in excerpting parts of *Sex Addicts Anonymous* to be used for readings during meetings. The following information will be helpful to those having similar questions.

During its meeting held on November 13, 2005, the ISO Literature Committee passed the following motion: to recommend to the fellowship that people excerpt whole paragraphs from the SAA book for use to read in meetings to the extent possible, removing individual sentences only when necessary and certainly not adding any of their own original content.

How to Submit a PBR Article

First:

Write from your experience, strength, and hope. Others may need to hear exactly what you have to say.

Second:

Send your article by e-mail to:

PBR@saa-recovery.org

or mail to:

ISO

P. O. Box 70949

Houston, TX 77270

Third:

Send the **Article Release Form** below. Download an extra from the SAA website if needed or feel free to make copies.

"Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these Steps, we tried to carry this message to other sex addicts..." Step 12

Submission deadlines:

Dec. 1, Feb. 1, April 1, June 1, Aug. 1, Oct. 1

Release Form: I hereby give this newsletter, its successors, assignees, and those acting on its authority permission to copyright and/or publish any articles, poems, other written material, or art work pertaining to my personal story of recovery from addiction and my personal experience with or opinions about the SAA fellowship or program. I understand that additions may be made to my written material and that it may be changed or edited. I further understand that every effort will be made to assure my anonymity. I possess full legal capacity to exercise this authorization and hereby release the ISO newsletter from any claim by myself or my successors.

SIGNED: _____ **DATE:** _____

WITNESS: _____ **DATE:** _____

Mail to: ISO, P.O. Box 70949, Houston, TX 77270

3890-D North Freeway
Houston, TX 77022

Phone: 713-869-4902
Toll Free: 800-477-8191

web: <http://www.saa-recovery.org>
Office e-mail: info@saa-recovery.org
PBR e-mail: PBR@saa-recovery.org

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Jerry B.
ISO News
Jonathan C.
Layout Editor

Sex Addicts Anonymous is a twelve-step program of recovery based on the principles of Alcoholics Anonymous. Our primary purpose is to stop our addictive sexual behavior and to help others recover from their sexual addiction. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop addictive sexual behavior. Our fellowship is open to women and men regardless of religion, race, ethnic background, marital status, sexual orientation, or profession. Our members define their own sexual boundaries with the guidance of their sponsors and other group members. We encourage our members to discover and explore what healthy sexuality means to them.

<u>Region</u>	<u>Board Members</u>	<u>Board Alternate</u>	<u>Literature Committee</u>	<u>Lit. Com. Alternate</u>
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Great Lakes	Ken S. <i>Chair</i>	Ted M.	Elizabeth S. <i>Chair</i>	Vacant
Intermountain	Shelley K. <i>Secretary</i>	Jeanette W.	Dolores F.	Vacant
North Central	Greg B.	Jim A.	Tim L.	Thea D.
Northeast	Gary C.	Bill J.	Tom K.	Chris J.
North Pacific	Tim E.	Mary Joy S.	Jeff W. <i>2nd Chair</i>	Lawrence S.
South Central	Judy N.	Darryl H.	Carol Ann R.	Jeff H.
Southeast	Francie E.	Carla P.	Jim L.	Mark S.
Southern Pacific	Ed B.	Mark S.	Thom C.	Cliff N.
At Large	Don K. <i>Treasurer</i>		Mike L. <i>Secretary (PBR Editor)</i>	