

The Plain Brown Rapper

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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.

"Someone once said that having problems is not the problem; the problem, rather, is expecting that I will not have problems and thinking that having them is the problem.

See Page 7

Commitment

By an SAA Member

About seven years ago, when I had been in SAA for a year or so, I made plans for my first trip away since getting sober, including researching meeting times for another S-fellowship in the city I was going to visit, where there were no SAA meetings. I then proudly told my sponsor that I had done my homework and was thinking about going to a couple of meetings in that fellowship while away. He looked at me and asked in his typically direct manner, "Are you thinking about going, or are you actually going to go?" I was taken aback for just a moment, and then I got it: my old way of living included lots of plans, lots of thinking and lots of intentions. But usually, if those plans involved stretching myself, they would remain plans, and never turn into action. I never really figured out why I so often felt dissatisfied with myself, since I had such good intentions and values. This moment of encounter with my sponsor was a real turning point for me in SAA.

I went from someone who was doing enough to stay sober and get by, to someone who understood the value of commitment, and who began living that way. It was no longer OK for me to promise a call to a program member and not fol-

low through with it because "something came up." I learned to make my word and my intentions primary guideposts for how I was living my life. I also learned not to make promises that I wouldn't be able to follow through on—it was pretty easy to know which ones those were, because I always got a queasy feeling when I was about to make them.

Living by the principles of SAA and working through the 12 steps a number of times have helped me to strengthen that commitment to action. It reminds me of what I have so often heard in meetings about telling the truth: in the old days, lying (conscious or unconscious, overt or covert) was pretty natural to me, and seemed to work well, but it always had the price tag of guilt and pressure (to remember who knew what, which were lies and which were "sort of" lies, etc.). Now, expecting myself to follow through on commitments, whether or not someone else is involved, makes daily participation in life so much smoother. And of course, keeping up a practice of stretching myself to do things that ultimately promote my growth has gotten easier the more I do it.

Member, North Pacific Region,
abstinent from inner circle 8 1/2
years

The Three Circles and Progressive Boundaries

By Jim L.

Aggressive use of the three-circle diagram has proven in my experience to be a valuable tool for identifying events, circumstances, behaviors, and thought patterns that may be stumbling blocks along the path to recovery. When coupled with the setting of progressive boundaries around each item in the middle circle, a powerful relapse prevention plan can be developed and implemented. This approach seems particularly useful for a person who is just beginning the recovery process or who has been in the program for a period of time but is still struggling with overwhelming urges to return to old patterns of behavior. The purpose of this article is to describe a method of using progressive boundaries as a means of increasing the safety zone between the addict and his or her acting out behavior.

Once we admit to being a sex addict, most of us are able to define our inner circle behavior without much difficulty. These are the addictive behaviors that we desire to eliminate from our lives. So toward that end we place in the inner circle only those behaviors that could be easily and unequivocally identified as acting out sexually. For most of us, this circle would include masturbation, sexual intercourse with anyone other than a partner, and sexual play, such as

oral stimulation or arousal from touching another person sexually, even if it stops short of orgasm. Limiting the inner circle to acts that are explicitly sexual keeps the definition of the "bottom line" very clear, avoiding rationalizations or tortuous arguments about whether a particular activity is or is not a breach of sobriety.

Outer circle activities are also relatively easy to define. Although healthy and diversionary activities may be hard to imagine in the early days of the program, we discover that, as we get real with ourselves, our sponsors, and others in our lives, we can think of many opportunities to engage in healthy activities which enhance recovery and divert attention away from addictive behavior.

The real challenge for me and my sponsees has been effective use of the middle circle. Dangerous and obviously borderline activity, such as cruising, viewing pornography, or habitual objectifying, can be readily identified and assigned to the middle circle. Many other activities and thought patterns that are not immediately associated in our minds with sexual content may, in fact, set us on a path that leads eventually to acting out. To address these less obvious, yet very dangerous behaviors, the use of progressive boundaries has been helpful.

For each item placed in the middle circle, the sponsee is asked

to identify the immediately preceding thought pattern, behavior, event, or situation. Of particular importance would be anything that occurs frequently and repeatedly in association with more serious borderline activities. After in-depth, honest examination of this second tier of potentially triggering items, new boundaries are established, increasing the margin of safety between the addict and his or her acting out behavior.

This process is repeated with respect to each newly identified pattern or activity, until each trigger has a series of hedges built around it, increasing the distance between the addict and his or her acting out behavior and increasing the likelihood that patterns can be interrupted before serious breaches of sobri-

ety occur. Is it not logical that we would have greater opportunity to intervene if we come to recognize a troublesome pattern long before we get to the slippery slope of strong triggers and borderline behavior?

These new boundaries then become the basis of a relapse prevention plan (RPP), in which each item in the middle circle is addressed with a highly specific

diversionary plan. A specific action is prescribed and is put into motion as soon as middle circle behavior is recognized. The addict's compliance and failure with respect to the relapse prevention plan then become part of the regular accountability sessions between sponsor and sponsee. In this way the three circles become a dynamic tool for enhancing recovery.

Perhaps a case report, as an illustration of the use of progres-

The real challenge for me and my sponsees has been effective use of the middle circle.

sive boundaries, would be helpful. A sponsee who is an avid reader and history buff reported that, when he went to his favorite bookstore to look for new titles, he eventually found his way to pornographic magazines, which led him to engage in inner circle behavior. He

would then lapse into a spiral of

depression, self-loathing, and further acting out. Our initial plan was simply to avoid the magazine rack at the back of the store, since his honest appraisal of his motivations was that he went to the bookstore for appropriate reasons. That approach quickly failed, however, because once in the bookstore he would begin to feel overwhelming addictive impulses, beginning with curiosity about new magazines and

The Three Circles and Progressive Boundaries Continued

ending at the magazine rack, followed by the usual slide into inner circle behavior.

In brainstorming about this predicament, we decided that being in that particular bookstore at all was a problem for him. It placed him physically in a position that was too proximate to the pornography. We determined that he should avoid that bookstore altogether, and that he could patronize other bookstores in the city where he could find history titles without incurring the risks of being triggered. This seemed like a good plan, but after a few weeks he reported several trips back to the original bookstore and the slips that followed.

Further discussion revealed that his route of travel from work to home took him right by the bookstore that had become his nemesis. Driving past the bookstore twice every day was more temptation than he could resist. At this point we decided to institute an additional boundary to provide another level of safety. We looked at a city map and chose an alternate route home that did not pass the bookstore and was, in fact, shorter. To ensure compliance with this new boundary, we added yet another level of accountability by using bookending as a tool. He called me when leaving work and called again when he got home. Travel

time of more than fifteen minutes required an explanation. Finally, we had arrived at a plan that would provide the greater margin of safety that he needed at that particular time, and these new boundaries worked.

Although at first glance, this approach might seem a bit laborious, it was successful in dealing with a troublesome and persistent series of triggers that led to acting out. By using multiple hedges—progressive boundaries—around each triggering activity, a cushion of protection was achieved. At each point in the process, we searched for antecedent behaviors that might be precursors to entering the addictive cycle. As new boundaries were established, they were farther and farther away from his bottom line. He was able to make healthy decisions long before his mind and judgment were clouded by addictive thoughts.

The thoughtful use of the three circles and progressive boundaries can be helpful adjuncts in our program of recovery, but we need to be ever mindful that the Twelve Steps are the essential core of the program. To achieve the freedom and hope that recovery offers and that we read about in SAA literature, we must conscientiously work the Twelve Steps with a sponsor. Only then will tools, such as the three circles and progressive boundaries, be useful and effective in helping us achieve recovery.

Expectations—Disasters waiting to happen!

By Santi L.

The circumstances of life are ever-changing, as we are daily faced with new challenges and opportunities. Learning to recognize the ebbs and flows, responding to them appropriately, and maintaining a consistency of purpose throughout, brings true peace and contentment, without regard to external conditions.

Someone once said that having problems is not the problem; the problem, rather, is expecting that I will not have problems and thinking that having them is the problem.

Pain is the touchstone to growth. To believe that there will come a time when I have no problems will only lead to disappointment. But once I recognized that there would always be problems to face, and that within those problems lay opportunities for character and spiritual development, only then was I able to develop the ability to examine them and to recognize many growth possibilities.

Whenever I have an expectation (of God, of others, of myself, or of life in general) as a condition for my happiness I set myself up for failure, depression and loss of self esteem. So, I said to myself, I thought I was supposed to have faith? I am . . . but there is a huge difference between faith and ex-

pectations. Faith is the knowledge that whatever happens (be it logical to me or not) things will turn out for the better according to God's will for me and others.

Expectations are quite different. I look for a resolution based on my idea of how things should work out. My expectations always seem rational to me, and therein lies the problem. I am setting the standards, the order of events, the results which will take place if my conditions are met. Sounds like playing God to me! I am back to playing the director and orchestrating all the events, people and situations to receive a desired outcome. All the work is done with a purpose or result in mind. What a sick and horrible way to live. What a waste of physical and spiritual energy.

I had to get to a point where I recognized the need to stay in the here-and-now, whereby I could live for today, stay in the moment, and experience the paradigm shift that convinced me I am not the director but simply a player whose only role in life was to do the right thing, regardless of the circumstances. I am only responsible for the process, not the result. I do the work and the outcome is God's. All He will ever want from me is to "do the right thing"; not think the right thing, but do the right thing.

Step 12 Worksheet

Submitted by Anonymous

[Editor's Note: The following article represents a method of working Step 12 that has worked for some members of our fellowship.]

Step 12

Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to other sex addicts and to practice these principles in our lives.

Step 12 serves to remind us to reach out to those who are still lost in their compulsive sexual behavior.

1. "Spiritual awakening" has been defined as coming to the realization that while we are helpless over our addiction, we are not hopeless; that there is a power that we have come to call upon to deal with our compulsivity. Describe a time you have called on help beyond yourself.
2. One of the paradoxes of the program says that in order to keep the program, we must give it away. Describe some ways that you have or that you know of to give away your program.
3. The Twelfth Step talks about carrying the message to other sex addicts. It does not indicate that this message is carried only to uninitiated non-members of SAA. Describe a time or manner in which you shared experience, strength, or hope with an SAA member in need.
4. The step also says we carry the message—not the addict. Carrying the message does not mean we are there to judge another addict's addiction, to try to heal the other addict, or to force the addict to attend meetings. In light of this, think of a time you tried to carry another addict or an addict tried to carry you. Did it work?
5. The principles of this program are mainly spiritual in nature—yet there are paradoxes, slogans, prayers, steps, traditions, and promises. Think how you may have used any one of these outside the area of your addiction. Do you see yourself turning to the principles of this program when life stresses press in? Describe how you use some of these principles in other areas of your life.

Step 12 is another ongoing step. Describe your spiritual awakening process, your carrying the message, and/or your practicing the principles in your life.

A Question of Tradition

By Truly Seeking

Dear Truly,

Three of us “veterans” have been meeting by ourselves for ten years now without a single slip. But recently a couple of new guys came in and said that just because we are the only SAA meeting for a hundred miles around they think we need to open the group to women. Right now we can out-vote them three to two, but one of the old-timers is starting to cave in.

Tradition One says: “Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon SAA unity.” Aren’t these new guys violating Tradition One by causing trouble here?

Sincerely,
Anonymous

Dear Anonymous,

Well, just because there is a disagreement doesn’t mean that Tradition One is being violated. Ironically, it may mean that Tradition One is alive and well within your group!

On page 78 of the Green Book in the section on Tradition One, we read:

Disagreements are a natural part of any healthy community. The spirit of unity prevents disagreements from turning into quarrels, factions, or destructive personal conflicts. We do this by cultivating tolerance and good will towards other members, holding the welfare of the group above our own personal preferences, desires, or opinions.

To be in integrity with Tradition One, your new members, being in the minority, will have to respect the group conscience vote to keep the meeting closed to women—or else risk forming their own mixed meeting. Staying with the group, although they did not get their way, could be a valuable recovery lesson for them. Of course, if the vote goes the other way in the future, the other half of your group will have the same choice—and the same growth opportunity.

I wish you the best with your recovery journey.

Your sister in recovery,
Truly Seeking

Fellowship Without Sobriety: What Does It Mean?

By Charlie W.

What does it mean when there exists a fellowship of sex addicts who don't seem to be getting sober, or are constantly in relapse? Is it working? Should we keep coming back? Having meetings where most people are continually in relapse is a real dilemma. If a fellowship is just starting out, of course everyone starts at ground zero, but what if the problem persists?

One issue can be "focus." If the primary purpose of a group is to carry the message to the addict who still suffers, then the focus will be on recovery. However, sometimes the focus can shift or become diffused, especially if we are having trouble staying sober. At such times it can be most helpful to let the literature do the talking; to listen and try to apply it to our current situation. Often, I find the act of extending myself to relate to the literature or to someone else's experience naturally changes my own perspective.

I've had the experience of being in sexual addiction recovery in a 12-step fellowship where people weren't getting sober. I don't think we really believed getting sober was possible. In fact, the overriding feeling was that staying sober sexually was akin to walking a tightrope—eventually we were going to relapse, and that belief governed how we treated each other. It was as if each of us had to be

miserable to be a part of the group so none of us would upset the other people. I guess our desire to feel comfortable outweighed our desire to get sober.

So, paradoxically, our fellowship depended on people staying unhappy because any success with sobriety upset the equilibrium, and made everyone else uncomfortable and resentful, because "if I didn't get sober, why should you?" I think it was especially difficult for people who had been in the program for a long time and had status, but no long-term sobriety. Needless to say, this kind of fellowship is not helpful, nor is it sustainable, but it can persist for a long time.

It's tough, however, because I feel like I'm betraying my friends (by choosing to stay sober!) because in a sense, I am deciding that my sobriety is more important than my shame-based connection to them. The best I was able to do was invite them along, and that's what the twelfth step asks me to do—give my sobriety away.

The other day, I found myself saying to a fellow member, "I'm not your friend." What I meant was that it was my responsibility to help him get sober, which meant having to say some things he might not want to hear. I went on to say that he didn't have to impress me or look good; he just needed to be honest and do whatever he needed to stay sober, and I would be there to help. It wasn't a matter of liking

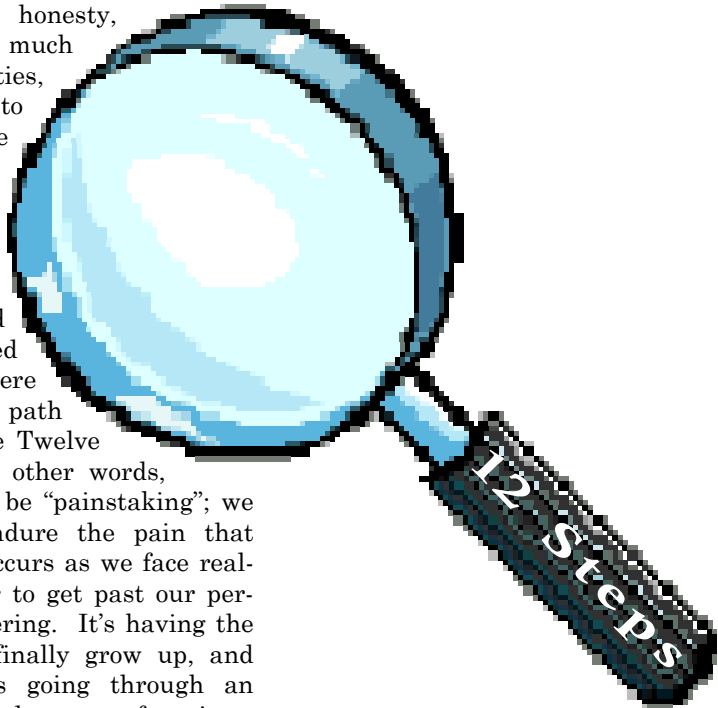
him, or being sociable, it was about practicing love, the same way it was given to me. It's principles before personalities. I am especially grateful for this attitude, considering how warped my personality was when I came in from the cold.

I do have very close friends in the fellowship, and for that I am also grateful. But we have discussed our relationship, and agreed that we would not be fit sponsors or sponsees for each other without giving up the friendship—not a choice any of us would like to make.

It's no easy thing to step up and speak my truth when I know it's not going to be well received, but the Big Book has a lot to say about honesty, and not much about niceties, unless it's to the people whom we hurt through our behaviors. As my old sponsor used to say, "There is no gentle path through the Twelve Steps." In other words, we have to be "painstaking"; we have to endure the pain that naturally occurs as we face reality in order to get past our perpetual suffering. It's having the chance to finally grow up, and that means going through an awkward confusing

"adolescence."

It's not enough for sex addicts to come together as a fellowship. In order to be successful we have to be single-minded about our purpose: to get sober, and help the addict who still suffers. The simplest way I have found to do this is to give up on playing therapist and to focus instead on applying the steps to my addiction and life's problems, using them as a sort of lens to re-focus these dilemmas, to allow for grace: an opening in my selfishness, a reprieve, a chance to have that intimate connection with the world and other human beings that makes my life worthwhile and meaningful.



Sponsorship Contracts

By Marilyn S., Nashville, TN group.

Eighteen years ago as a newcomer in a fairly new program where there was still not a lot of long-term sobriety, I saw a number of our group members helping to “sponsor” one another. I had no real guidelines to teach me how to do that. My adventures in sponsorship have led to various iterations of a contractual agreement for the participants.

This agreement has evolved for a number of reasons. I have seen people come to the program and, without structure, never start to work the steps or get a sponsor. I have also seen people who used the sponsor as a sounding board, felt some temporary relief and continued to do the same things over and over. As one of my old-time friends in recovery said, “You can water a plant too much”. The first time I had to tell someone that they had not yet had enough pain, it was very difficult. I let them know that I cared about them, but that they were wasting my time and theirs. I let them know when they were serious about making the needed changes, I would be there for them. I also let them know that their repeated behavior was like watching someone take a cigarette and continue to burn their bodies, except that the scars were on the inside. It was too painful for me to watch. Over the years, I have also seen people get confused about the intimacy that

develops between a sponsor and a sponsee.

I developed the contract as a blueprint for establishing the preliminary framework for the sponsor/sponsee relationship. This contract clearly sets the tone and boundaries by outlining an accountability plan. It teaches the newcomer how to begin the process of recovery by incorporating some of the tools of recovery, and it aids the sponsor in establishing goals. As part of this commitment, both the sponsor and sponsee date and sign it.

My contract follows:

SPONSOR

You can expect from me as your sponsor:

1. Availability to work on your boundaries, fire drills, circles, and steps. We can do this by phone, and/or by meeting in a safe, non-threatening place.
2. Guidance—not friendship or a sexual relationship.
3. Safety—I will stress your well being and safety. If I think you are placing yourself at risk, I will tell you. If I see pitfalls, I will address them.
4. I will talk with you in times of goodness and also in times of distress.
5. Honesty—I will share my own process of recovery as part of the 12th step. (Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps, we try to carry

this message to other sex addicts, and to practice these principles in all our activities.)

6. I will not judge or shame you.
7. I will continue to work my own program.
8. Boundaries—I will be clear in my communications about my limits AND limitations.
7. If you go out of town, get a list of meeting options IN ADVANCE.
8. Start working the steps. Make the commitment to yourself. Start within the first three weeks.
9. I encourage you to share any of our discussions and work sheets with your therapist. I am not your therapist. I am a recovering sex and relationship addict. My role is to help you work this program of recovery which may be an ADJUNCT to your therapy.

SPONSEE

I have several expectations and desired commitments from you as a sponsee:

1. Respect my boundaries.
2. Contact me at least twice a week for the first six weeks. We will renegotiate then.
3. Call at least two other people from the program at least once a week. (This helps expand your network and gets you comfortable with talking with others. This is especially important if you are having a crisis and need to talk during a time I may be unavailable. If you already have some familiarity, you will be more likely to call.)
4. Be truthful.
5. Before becoming involved in a new or old sexual relationship, discuss it with me and/or your therapist.
6. Attend at least two SAA meetings a week, more if you are having difficulty. If you can't get to SAA, attend another 12-step program, one that deals with issues around sex, alcohol, drugs or food.
10. Make contracts with me and/or your therapist for your behavior.
11. Report secret behavior to your therapist and/or sponsor.

This contract is just the beginning point. I start to help them build their program by making suggestions regarding footwork, literature, meditation, service, etc., as the relationship continues. Recovery is a process, and as a sponsor I can help guide them on this journey.

A friend in recovery, Bill W. (permission given to use his name), has used my contract and customized it to suit his style. He added another item to the sponsee commitments. "Find a new sponsor if your current sponsor does not maintain sobriety or violates any of the above commitments, or if doing so will enhance your recovery."

I think by sharing discussions about sponsorship, we can strengthen our own practice by learning from the wisdom and experience of others.

Letting Go of Ego

By James H., CA

[Editor's Note: This article originally appeared in the October / November 1997 issue of the PBR.]

I continue to struggle to feel a real sense of belonging in my SAA home group. I've been in this program for five years, in sexual addiction recovery for eight, and in my home group for four. Unfortunately, I feel less connected to members of this group than I feel to any other meeting I attend. I am writing this essay to get a better understanding of why this is so and perhaps to find the wisdom to change or accept whatever I need to.

There are perhaps three main reasons why I struggle to feel the love and acceptance of my home group. First, my ego and my desire for prestige and respect tend to dominate my view of the world. Second, I have a competitive win-lose attitude toward recovery. Finally, my group is composed mainly of young males with less than one year of sobriety. In the following paragraphs I will take a closer look at each of these reasons.

It is dangerous, and not uncommon, for a sex addict to have a large

ego. The AA book *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* (Twelve and Twelve) states that "... all of AA's twelve steps ask us to go contrary to our natural desires ... they all deflate our egos" (p. 55). The AA Big Book says our egos are fed by self-centered fear and selfishness (p. 62). At first this was hard for me to understand. I've been a good member. I've been of service, involved in Inter-group and literature. Isn't that what recovery is all about ... service?

Then I realized it isn't that being of service is a problem. It's just that I need to have the proper attitude toward service. I therefore decided to look toward Traditions One and Twelve for some guidance. Tradition One encourages us to put our group welfare ahead of our own because without the group we shall all



almost certainly fail to recover. Tradition Twelve outlines the principle of anonymity that we are to be of humble service as “trusted servants” asking for no recognition, so “that our great blessings shall never spoil us (Twelve and Twelve, p. 192). Studying and reflecting upon these traditions is helping me to improve my attitude toward my home group.

A selfish attitude is not the only by-product of my overgrown ego. My competitive attitude toward recovery also causes me to constantly view the success of others as my failure. I’ve been going to meetings and trying to work the program to the best of my ability for quite a while, but long-term abstinence continues to elude me. My ego continues to bristle when I hear someone saying how they have “worked the program” successfully. I feel like their success only punctuates my failure.

Looking at the traditions, I can see that this is a losing attitude. We are in this thing together. We all suffer from the same malady, and we all need God and each other to find a way out. If I keep reminding myself of this truth and praying for the sanity to believe it in my heart, a warm affection toward my home group may finally be allowed to blossom.

My last reason for having difficulty with my home group has to do with its make-up. Most of us are young, between the ages of 21 and 40. Being addicts, we are naturally self-centered and tend to want more recognition or prestige than is healthy. Being young men,

we tend to be takers, not givers, doers, not nurturers. Maybe that’s why I rarely am approached by another member to ask me how I’ve been, how is my job, how is my marriage, how is my daughter, etc. Sometimes I prefer the company of older men and women because they seem to be more willing to give me the attention and nurturing I crave. Here I must stop myself and ask the question: OK, so maybe this is true, but can I change others or should I be asking for the courage to change? Without even consulting my sponsor, I realize that the latter is undoubtedly the better answer. I therefore decide to look at the prayer of St. Francis of Assisi, and the final section in particular:

Lord, grant that I may seek rather to comfort than to be comforted—to understand, than to be understood—to love, than to be loved. For it is by self-forgetting that one finds. It is by forgiving that one is forgiven. It is by dying that one awakens to Eternal Life. Amen. (12&12, p. 99)

This insightful prayer directs me to stop worrying over how I am neglected and unloved in the meeting and start trying to give to other members without expecting anything in return—not money, not recognition, not even a simple thanks. Surely this will lead me in a better direction than silent, lonely sulking. God bless the program of SAA for showing me the way.

Hard Enough to Deal With... But by SUICIDE?

By ????

[Editor's Note: This article originally appeared in the August / September 1998 issue of the PBR. The author's name appears to have been inadvertently omitted in that issue.]

Butch was buried not long ago. He was a local business owner like myself—married, a father of two. He just missed his daughter's birthday. About five months ago he had started attending the men's group I've been in for the past four and a half years. His story was similar to my own—one of dishonesty, compulsive acting out, repeated infidelity. He told it in an arrogant manner that also seemed awfully familiar to me. I told him my history of sexual addiction, my bottoming out (twice, so far), my divorce and my recovery via the Twelve Step program of Sex Addicts Anonymous. He listened, and seemed to see glimmers of his own life, and yet never came to an SAA meeting. The concept of "attraction, not promotion" does not console me here. He was never quite able to label himself a sex addict. It was not for me to decide.

During the last men's group he attended, he was quiet, deferring to others including myself any work to be done in group that night. My divorce and its financial repercussions were among the issues we discussed. The following day, Butch's wife asked him again for a divorce. The next morning, in her presence, he fatally shot himself in the head. I was shocked, not expecting this action at all.

Was I to blame somehow? Was there some action I could have taken to prevent this horrible act? Should I have been more insistent that he go to SAA? I was angry at him for taking the coward's way out. He left behind a loving family and grieving friends. I was frightened. When I relapse, will I ever spiral down to a point so low I would take my own life? I am sad, having lost a new friend with the human potential for growth and sobriety and peace.

I attended Butch's visitation knowing few that were there. I met and spoke briefly with his widow at his casket. She told me Butch enjoyed the men's group, and felt he was making new friendships. His family blamed her and "therapy" for his decision to kill himself. Two weeks later, she came and spoke with us in a session of the men's group. This was new ground, and a very powerful moment for me. The mutual support we shared that night was surely God's will.

I remain convinced that my disease, sexual addiction, is a killer. People die from the consequences of this addiction. I know I cannot make another person recover; my options for their life are limited. My options for myself are limitless. As Butch went, there but for the grace of God go I.

The Prisoner Outreach Experience

By Bruce M.

What an unexpected surprise! I am new to prisoner outreach, but in getting started with my prisoner I have experienced a situation that amazes me. For in each of the letters he has written to me, he has included the most remarkable blessings. That is to say, he has written out in so many words his blessings on my self and on all those I know. Here's what he writes:

"First and foremost, this prisoner can still afford to pray that he keep in His most tender/loving grace and keep His hands on all of your brothers and sisters in whomever God you serve, family, friends, and loved ones."

This is really wonderful to me. Here I thought that I was going to be the one conferring benefits on him. But I have to smile. For he himself has given me out-right that

greatest of all gifts one human can give another: God's blessing.

I also realize how much more easy it may be to work the Steps with this man, for he has already surrendered to a God of his understanding. He doesn't sound at all as though he is going to have any trouble with the concept of Higher Power.

Prisoner Outreach is proving to be a fascinating adventure in recovery.

Bruce M.



From the Editor

By Mike L.

A famous philosopher once said, "A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step." And in that regard I'd like to share a story from my own life.

I have been feeding the neighborhood cats almost since I moved into my house back in 1991. About 1998, the cat population exploded, the neighbors started complaining, and I was at a loss as to what to do about it. Even the neighbors who were griping the loudest were opposed to my discontinuing my daily ritual of feeding the cats. After several false starts at a solution, I learned of a process whereby I could humanely trap the cats, have them neutered and bring them back. I watched a video or two about this procedure and knew a place where I could take the cats without a prior appointment. So while I felt a lot of hope on the one hand, on the other hand I felt some despair that I could never take this project to completion. What I did not yet realize was that all I had to do was my part in taking up the food on Friday morning, setting the traps on Friday night, and checking on Saturday morning to see whether I had had any luck. There were times when I caught a cat each week and other times when it seemed as though months passed without my catching any. So it has indeed taken several years, and now the

process is almost complete. There is still one unneutered cat who occasionally shows up for breakfast in the morning, and the last I heard, one cat couldn't produce offspring by itself.

This story reminds me so much of many things in my life. There have been many times where I had a goal and where I knew the process would be drawn out and maybe even arduous. Still, all I had to do was my little part each day or week, and eventually I would start to see results. When I was getting sober from sexual addiction, it looked like an impossible task at first. And basically it was just a question of doing my circles and then living my life in accordance with those circles one day at a time. Over time the urges went away and have not returned. That is this week's lesson from the cats.

I think it's high time I paid special homage to the unsung heroes of the PBR, and those are the members of the PBR Oversight Committee. Each issue, the members of this committee review the articles that have been submitted for that particular issue and take the time to make their comments about each article. The comments can be quite specific, as in the placement or the striking of a comma, or they can be much more general. They are always useful, and over time I have gotten to the point where I never (well, hardly ever) revert back to my "I can do it

myself" syndrome, and am now truly grateful for these comments and for the help.

With this issue of the PBR, we come to the conclusion of a series on the twelve steps that has been running in, well, the last twelve issues. This series has created a fair amount of controversy. While there have been those who decidedly did not like the articles, I have also gotten a fair amount of positive feedback on these articles. In fact members of the fellowship who have come on board since we started this series have written me and asked for the back issues that cover the previous steps. All of this reminds me of one of the best keynote talks I ever heard in this fellowship, at a convention some three or four years ago.

The speaker was talking about how on occasion he had been present for a talk from somebody else that he got almost nothing out of, only to have the person next to him say at the end of the talk, "Wasn't that the best talk you ever heard?" Different things in our fellowship speak to different people.

Well, this is the point where I come to you to remind you that I'm always looking for

articles for the PBR. I think we have a particularly good batch of thought-provoking articles this issue, and I can always use more. As always, I'm looking for articles that emphasize the solution rather than the problem. So please send your articles to me at pbr@saa-recovery.org or c/o ISO, P.O. Box 70949, Houston, TX 77270-0949.

And remember that we will soon be picking a new name for the Plain Brown Rapper, to be presented to the delegates at the next convention. If you have a suggestion for a name, please send it to me by January 31 at either the e-mail or the regular mail address listed above.

So enjoy this issue of the PBR and I look forward to talking with you again next issue.





ISO News



ISO Board

The Board of Trustees of the ISO of SAA, Inc.,
met by teleconference August 12, 2006.

The following is a report of significant actions taken.

The Board Chair called an ad hoc committee be formed with the endorsement of the Literature Committee to prepare a proposal ready for recommendation to the Board in time for their November 2006 teleconference.

Approved: All of the 2007 convention committee fundraising plans.

Approved: The 2008 convention hotel contract.

Approved: Renewal of the D&O Liability Insurance.

Approved: Designation of the Director of Fellowship Services as an ISO corporate officer to be known as the Recording Secretary.

Approved: Updating of the current signatories on ISO accounts.

Approved: Authorization of the ISO office, under the supervision of the Office Oversight Committee (OOC) to negotiate with the authors to exempt the Spanish edition of *Sex Addicts Anonymous* from payment of royalties.

Accepted: Increase Klaus P.'s rate of pay by thirty-eight cents an hour on September 11, 2006.

Approved: Waiving the requirement that the Administrative Assistant, Tim D., be a member of SAA which would allow him to be hired permanently.

Approved: Task the ISO staff with researching the cost of making pamphlets downloadable.

Approved: Give the master account user name and password for the ISO run websites to four people, these people being the Board chair, the Website Committee

chair, the Director of Fellowship Services, and an ISO staff member designated by the Director of Fellowship Services; keep the username and password in the ISO safe deposit box; and change the password quarterly.

Approved: Task the office to send a letter drafted by the International Development Committee to all the international groups.

Approved: Change the name of Prison Outreach to Prisoner Outreach.

Approved: A list of 22 corrections to be incorporated into the teen meeting binder.

Approved: Task the Website Committee with replacing the current women's outreach page on the SAA website as its highest priority.

The Board of Trustees of the ISO of SAA, Inc.,
met by electronic mail August 14-16, 2006.

The following is a report of significant actions taken.

Approved: Appoint Jim A., Board Alternate from the North Central Region, to represent the Board a member of the Website Committee.

ISO Literature Committee

The Literature Committee of the ISO of SAA, Inc.,
met by teleconference August 20, 2006.

The following is a report of significant actions taken.

Approved To change the name from the Office Oversight Committee to another name to be determined by the committee formerly known as the Office Oversight subcommittee.

Approved To set a December 31 deadline for submissions of feedback and that we communicate the deadline to the fellowship via the PBR.

Approved That pp. 1-2, 14-15, 20-21 and at least one story be sent to the voice talent to make the demonstration recordings.

ISO Board Committees

The Board committees called for in Phase III that have met since the 2006 convention are working actively on the following tasks:

General Outreach: Developing guidelines for the establishment of a public information or speaker's bureau that are rooted in an examination of each of SAA's Traditions as written in our basic text.

Interfellowship Relations: Preparing to host this year's Interfellowship Forum (IFF) in New Orleans, LA in November.

Intergroup Communications: Writing a mission statement and starting the process of developing an intergroup guide.

International Development: Awaiting replies from a letter to all international groups asking what support would be most helpful to them in carrying the SAA message.

Prisoner Outreach: Changing the committee name to better reflect the focus of the committee, and developing a pamphlet describing prisoner outreach service.

Women's Outreach: Developing guidelines for the trusted servants who respond to inquiries at the newly created women's outreach central email address, grace@saa-women.org, and updating the content on the women's page of the SAA website.

Women's Outreach Committee Update!

"Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to other sex addicts and practice these principles in our lives" – step 12

We are delighted to announce a central email address for women in SAA.

GRACE@SAA-WOMEN.ORG

We, the Women's Outreach Committee, are pleased to announce we have been continuing the work of making the connection of woman to woman in our program seamless and easy.

We are now in the process of getting a women's web page up and running.

We also have an email address that any woman can write to so she can receive a list of other female sex addicts who have chosen to participate in this line of communication. Grace@saa-women.org is for asking questions and providing women newcomers with more female contact as they approach the rooms of SAA.

We also have received feedback from men wanting easier ways to help women to connect with other women in SAA recovery...

This email list has been updated and a new one should be in your email if you are on the list.

If you would like to be added and/or make changes, please email Grace@saa-women.org.

We would also like to remind all the women in the fellowship that we are all welcome to share our experience, strength and hope in the PBR. Have you experienced a fabulous day in recovery, a great sponsor or sponsee story or a spiritual awakening? How about telling us how you are working your steps. This is the place to share all of our stories. Write it and send it to PBR@saa-recovery.org to share with us all!

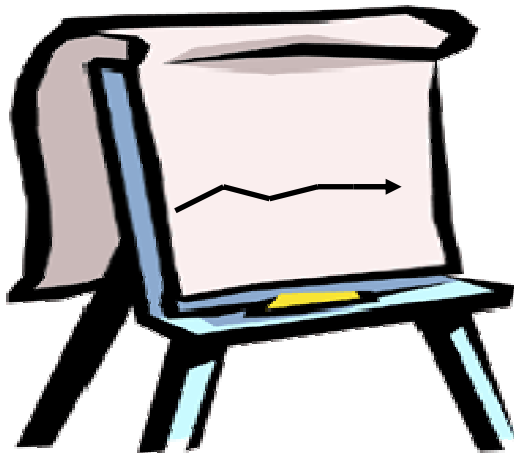
ISO Income/Expense Summary

As Of August 31, 2006

	August	Monthly Average	Year To Date
NET OPERATING INCOME			
Net Sales	7,683	7,328	58,620
Donations	15,904	10,370	82,959
General Donations	11,910	6,910	55,278
LifeLine Partners	3,655	2,981	23,848
Designated Donations	339	479	3,833
Miscellaneous Income	23	911	7,285
TOTAL NET OPERATING INCOME	23,610	18,609	148,864
OPERATING EXPENSES			
Wages/Benefits/Taxes	14,698	11,828	94,623
Outreach Related	3,916	3,193	25,545
Wages - Other	7,840	6,294	50,354
Benefits	2,119	1,547	12,378
Taxes	823	793	6,346
Insurance	213	286	2,286
Depreciation	191	192	1,536
Postage	195	177	1,416
Communications	167	258	2,061
Rent/Utilities	1,312	1,179	9,443
Office Related	614	812	6,492
Financial	708	850	6,797
Plain Brown Rapper	806	564	4,513
Translations	0	1,324	10,590
Outreach Expenses	2,165	1,219	9,748
Total Operating Expenses	21,069	18,688	149,505
TOTAL NET OPERATING SURPLUS	2,541	-80	-641
NONOPERATIONAL INCOME			
2006 ISO Convention	0		46,813
Delegate Fees	0		3,815
TOTAL NONOPERATIONAL INCOME	0		50,628
NONOPERATIONAL EXPENSES			
2006 ISO Convention	0		29,094
Delegate Meeting	0		3,702
Board/LitCom/Staff Travel	0		14,318
TOTAL NONOPERATIONAL EXPENSES	0		47,114
TOTAL NONOPERATIONAL SURPLUS	0		3,514
ISO SURPLUS – ALL INCOME/EXPENSES	2,541		2,873

Financially, August was both pivotal and positive. It was pivotal because it was the first month that included the payroll for the expanded Phase III staff. It was positive simply because it showed a surplus after several months in which expenses exceeded income. While Green Book sales still lagged behind expectations, the margin of shortfall was lower than it was previously. The real difference was in contributions, especially from individual members. General donations from individuals were \$2,356 above this year's monthly average of \$1,160. In addition, the number of LifeLine Partners reached a high of 105, a marked improvement on the low point of 77 recorded in January and February. LifeLine Partners gave \$3,655 compared to a pre-convention average of \$2,844. Still, although 27 new LifeLine Partners have been added since May, there is yet a long way to go to reach the goal of 100. Experience shows that the best way to enroll new members is through one-on-one appeals made by existing LifeLine Partners. Enrollment cards are available through the ISO Office in any quantity desired.

On the spending side of the ledger, August saw a 100% increase in outreach related expenses. This reflects the activities of the various Board committees, which Phase III made a top priority in the ISO's efforts to increase communications within the organization and outreach to the addict who still suffers. Thirteen committees or subcommittees are now meeting regularly to work on the tasks assigned them as well as on new tasks that have been generated by some of the committees themselves. Unlike in years past, even three months removed from the convention, momentum has not flagged. Increased involvement at the grass roots level is providing another benefit as well: more members are being exposed to international service which in turn will translate into a larger pool of trusted servants with ISO experience.



Part-Time ISO Position Available

The ISO of SAA, Inc. is accepting applications for the part-time position of Business Services Assistant. Twenty-four hours per week, three days per week are offered at an hourly pay range of \$8.00 to \$11.00. Work can begin as early as October 1, 2006. Candidate need not be an SAA member.

Job requirements include a verifiable job history showing stability and dependability. The employee must be able to lift boxes weighing up to forty pounds, must have or obtain a valid Texas driver's license and have an insured vehicle. A background check will be conducted to insure applicant is free of incidents of theft and dishonesty. Experience in business related tasks is desirable.

Required skills include working knowledge of business machines and computers, with experience in using office related software; ability to learn new software programs and office/accounting related tasks; ability to make simple mathematical calculations; being detail oriented, able to work with a minimum of supervision, and possessing time management skills.

Responsibilities will include filling literature orders and maintaining literature inventory; preparing outgoing regular and bulk mail; collecting and sorting incoming mail; processing credit cards and orders, preparing and making deposits, and writing checks; maintaining cleanliness and orderliness of the ISO Business Services work areas; and carrying out errands within an area that is reasonably close to the ISO Office.

**Applicants can apply by sending a resume to the ISO at
business@saa-recovery.org**

or

**to: ISO, Attention: Business Director
P.O. Box 70949
Houston, TX 77270.**

Any questions can be directed to Jerry B. at 800-477-8191/713-869-4902 or at business@saa-recovery.org

Feedback on Green Book!!

The ISO Literature Committee respectfully requests that SAA fellowship members send any comments and feedback on our book "Sex Addicts Anonymous" to the ISO office by December 31, 2006 for consideration in the revised Second Edition.

The Second Edition (with revisions) will be presented for Conference approval at the Delegates Meeting in Minneapolis in May 2007.

Please send all feedback and correspondence related to the "Green Book" to:

ISO e-mail address: info@saa-recovery.org

or ISO mailing address:

ISO of SAA
PO Box 70949
Houston, TX 77270
USA

Yours sincerely,
ISO of SAA Literature
Committee



SAA Basic Text Now Available in Spanish!

The Spanish translation of the SAA basic text, *Sexo Adictos Anónimos*, is now available through the ISO office. Orders from members in California and Puerto Rico have already been fulfilled.

The Spanish translation is currently available only in soft cover, and the price (\$14.00 US) is the same as its English counterpart.

To order, members can go to the SAA Store on the ISO website at www.saa-recovery.org, by mail at the following address:

ISO of SAA
P.O. Box 70949
Houston, TX 77270
USA

or by phone (US and Canada) at 800-477-8191. To call the ISO office from outside the US and Canada, members can use the alternate number 001-713-869-4902. The ISO can ship literature to anywhere in the world.

Please note that the international shipping fee is double that of the US First Class domestic rate. All checks and money orders must be in US dollars.

¡El texto básico de SAA ya disponible en español!

La traducción al castellano del texto básico de SAA, *Sexo Adictos Anónimos*, ya es disponible de la Organización Internacional de Servicios (ISO). Los pedidos del libro de nuestros miembros de California y de Puerto Rico ya se han cumplido.

Actualmente, la traducción castellana es sólo disponible en rústica, y el precio (U.\$14.00) es el mismo que el de la versión inglesa.

Para pedir el libro, los miembros pueden visitar la tienda de SAA en el web-site www.saa-recovery.org; si se quiere pedirlo por correo, se debe usar la dirección siguiente:

ISO of SAA
P.O. Box 70949
Houston, TX 77270
EEUU

o se puede llamar la oficina (desde los EEUU y de Canadá) a 800-477-8191. Para llamar la ISO desde afuera de los EEUU o de Canadá, los miembros pueden usar el número alternativo 001-713-869-4902. La ISO puede enviar literatura a cualquier parte del mundo.

Favor de anotar que el precio para enviar libros a direcciones internacionales es doble del precio doméstico Primera Clase de los EEUU. Todo cheque y giro postal debe ser en dólares estadounidenses.

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>
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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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Intermountain	Shelley K. <i>Secretary</i>	George D.	Dolores F.	Vacant
North Central	Greg B.	Jim A.	Thea D.	Shira R.
Northeast	Gary C.	Mike D.	Tom K.	Chris J.
North Pacific	Tim E.	Mary Joy S.	Jeff W. <i>Chair</i>	Lawrence S.
South Central	Don K. <i>Treasurer</i>	John L.	Jim L.	Randy E.
Southeast	Carla P.	Santi L.	Jim L. <i>2nd Chair</i>	Mark S.
Southern Pacific	Ed B.	DeJon M.	Larry C.	Mitch G.
At Large	Jeff B.		Chris D.	
PBR Editor			Mike L. <i>Secretary</i>	