

The Outer Circle

The Newsletter of the
International Service Organization of SAA, Inc.

PO Box 70949, Houston, TX 77270

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January - February 2014



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**The following actions were approved by
the Board of Trustees at the
October 19, 2013 Teleconference**

- Motion that the 2014 annual meeting of the ISO Conference be planned for a full day on Friday and an extended half-day (until 1 p.m.) on Saturday.
-

**The following actions were approved by
the Board of Trustees at the
November 16, 2013 Teleconference**

- Motion to approve the ISO of SAA Inc. budget for 2014.
 - Motion that the ISO no longer have the banners from previous Annual Conventions physically hung for presentation during the Saturday Banquet.
-

Conference Charter Committee (CCC) News

The CCC is continuing to solicit and collect feedback on the draft Conference Charter in preparation for presenting the Charter for approval at the 2014 annual meeting of the ISO Conference.

Please read, share, and discuss the Charter with your group.

Updates:

- **Tele-workshops.** The second tele-workshop on the draft Charter for this service year will take place on **Tuesday, January 28, at 8:00 p.m. Central time.** Tele-workshops offer an opportunity to ask questions and share feedback. All SAA members are welcome. Please contact the ISO office at info@saa-recovery.org for call-in information; a flyer with call-in info will also be going out via the ISO email list. Additional workshops will be scheduled for March and April 2014.
- **Draft Charter on the Service website.** The draft Charter is available to all SAA members in the Conference Charter area of the ISO service website at <http://www.saa-iso.org>. This site is password-protected. Please contact the ISO office at info@saa-recovery.org for the password information.
- **Draft Charter revisions.** The CCC Content Work Group is incorporating revisions to the Charter as feedback comes in. As revisions are approved by the CCC, they will be posted to the service website.

- **CCC mailing list and meetings.** Contact the ISO office at info@saa-recovery.org if you would like to be added to the CCC mailing list and receive invitations to monthly CCC meetings. Meetings are held on the third Sunday of every month at 10:00 a.m. Central. All SAA members are welcome at the meetings and all current delegates may vote.
- **Feedback address.** Send feedback on the Charter to the CCC at ccc.feedback@saa-iso.org. Please send feedback as soon as possible so it can be considered before the Conference.

In grateful service,
Conference Charter Committee

CCC Mission Statement

The Conference Charter Committee (CCC) was established as a committee of the ISO Board of Trustees in 2007 and transferred to the ISO conference in 2010. The primary task was to research and draft a charter for the ISO conference. The CCC shall continue to solicit and collect feedback from the fellowship in order to prepare and present to the conference for adoption a final draft that reflects and incorporates our collective wisdom and can serve to guide the conference in the years ahead. In preparing this final draft, the CCC will work closely with other components of the ISO to ensure coordination of the charter with other foundational documents. Upon approval of the charter, the CCC will gratefully disband and pass oversight of the charter to the conference.

LGBT Outreach Subcommittee News

Our projects, as reported in the Nov/Dec 2013 Outer Circle, continue with no substantial updates at this time.

We are still in need of persons willing to respond to specific transgender requests, and to sponsorship requests.

We are also in need of active volunteers to serve on the committee.

For more information or to volunteer for any of the current LGBT Outreach activities, email us at GLBT@saa-recovery.org or attend our monthly teleconference, which is the first Sunday of each month. Contact the ISO Office for call in information.

ISO Literature Committee Guidelines for submission of entries to be considered for the *SAA Meditation Book*

The ISO Literature Committee welcomes submission of entries from the fellowship at large for possible inclusion in the SAA meditation book. The meditation book will consist of 366 entries, one for each day of the calendar year. To ensure consideration, submissions should follow these guidelines:

A short quotation should be taken from SAA publications that are Literature Committee approved or Conference approved (see list at the bottom of the page). The quote must be exact and followed by a citation that includes the name of the publication and page number, using the following style: *Sex Addicts Anonymous*, p. 20. Submissions using quotes from other sources will not be considered.

The main body of the entry should be a thought-provoking expansion of the topic or principle expressed in the quotation, ideally including some fresh perspective on a particular aspect of SAA recovery. What we are looking for is your experience, your strength, your hope, and your voice. ***Please note that we have found that using "I" rather than "we" in the body of the meditation makes for a stronger meditation message.***

At the bottom of the page, a concise statement in the author's own words should summarize the main idea of the meditation or offer a poignant challenge or affirmation. ***Each entry should be a maximum of 275 words including the quotation and the closing affirmation, so that each meditation will fit on a single page.*** Multiple entries may address slightly different aspects of the same subject.

Submissions must include your name and contact information and be accompanied by a signed release. By signing the release, the author grants the ISO of SAA, Inc. sole rights to edit, alter, publish, or reject any submission. A blank release form is available in this newsletter or may be obtained from the ISO office or downloaded and printed from the SAA website.

SAA Approved Literature

<i>Sex Addicts Anonymous (SAA Book)</i>	<i>Abstinence</i>
<i>Abstinence and Boundaries in SAA</i>	<i>The Bubble</i>
<i>First Step to Recovery</i>	<i>Writing to Prisoners</i>
<i>Getting Started in Sex Addicts Anonymous</i>	<i>Group Guide</i>
<i>Sex Addicts Anonymous (SAA Pamphlet)</i>	<i>Intergroup Guide</i>
<i>Sexual Sobriety and the Internet</i>	<i>Three Circles</i>
<i>A Special Welcome to the Woman Newcomer</i>	<i>Tools of Recovery</i>
<i>Recovery from Compulsive Sexual Avoidance</i>	<i>Getting a Sponsor</i>
<i>Safe & Sexually Sober Meetings</i>	
<i>SAA and the Lesbian / Gay / Bisexual / Transgender Sex Addict</i>	

Meditation Book Vision Statement

(approved by the Literature Committee)

“The SAA meditation book carries the message of recovery by collecting into one volume diverse voices of the SAA Fellowship to serve as a resource for meditation and prayer for the addict in recovery and the sex addict who still suffers.”

Send your meditation, contact information, and signed release form to the ISO.

(release form is located on the last page of this newsletter)

Please send a digital copy of your submission (attached as .doc, .docx, .rtf, .txt, or in the body of the e-mail) to [**meditation@saa-recovery.org**](mailto:meditation@saa-recovery.org).

Include complete contact information and, if possible, a signed scanned release. All submitters must send a release form – one per author – before submissions can be considered.

You can also send your meditation, contact information, and signed release by postal mail to: ISO, PO Box 70949, Houston, TX 77270.

If at all possible, please send your submission in digital form. We will, of course, consider all submissions. You will be sent a confirmation that your submission has been received.

Meditation Writing Tele-Workshops

All those interested in contributing to the meditation book are invited to attend one or more tele-workshops. We will go over the guidelines and process for submission; there will be ample time for writing, and time for sharing as well. Please consider joining us for this unique service opportunity!

All workshops are the **4th Sunday of each month**, at 5:00 p.m. central time, and last until 6:30 p.m.

January 26, 2014

February 23, 2014

March 23, 2014

April 27, 2014

To register, call the ISO at 1-800-477-8191,
or send an e-mail to:

[**meditation@saa-recovery.org**](mailto:meditation@saa-recovery.org)

Personal Story Submissions for *Sex Addicts Anonymous*:

Do you have a personal story to tell?

The ISO Literature Committee continues to accept personal stories for consideration for future editions of the SAA book, *Sex Addicts Anonymous*.

Guidelines for Submission of a Personal Story

Stories in the SAA book, *Sex Addicts Anonymous*, are an intensely personal way to help carry the SAA message to the addict who still suffers. While there are no absolute requirements for the content of a personal story, the Literature Committee recommends that a story describe:

- What it was like before entering SAA;
- What happened to bring you into SAA;
- What happened within SAA;
- What it is like now with the ongoing experience of SAA recovery.

It is recommended that a story emphasize the experience, strength, and hope found in SAA recovery. It is further recommended that the writer disclose his or her length of sobriety (or abstinence from addictive behaviors).

Personal stories are intended to help carry the message to the addict who still suffers. As much as possible, highly explicit descriptions of places, people, or acting out behaviors should be avoided. The best stories provide sobering details of unmanageability contrasted with the hope of recovery from sex addiction.

The preferred format for manuscripts is double-spaced with one-inch margins on all four sides in MS Word (or similar). Each submission must be accompanied by a signed release conveying ownership to the ISO of SAA, Inc. The release form is available on the last page of this newsletter or from the ISO office or SAA website (www.saa-recovery.org).

Submissions and a signed release form may be e-mailed as attachments to the ISO Literature Committee at info@saa-recovery.org.

They may also be sent in hard copy by postal mail to the ISO Literature Committee at ISO of SAA, PO Box 70949, Houston, TX 77270.

IMPORTANT

Please carefully read the following before submitting a personal story for ***Sex Addicts Anonymous***:

Every story submitted for possible inclusion in the SAA book will be thoroughly reviewed and given in-depth consideration by the ISO Literature Committee, which is deeply grateful to every member who takes the time to write and submit a story.

The ISO of SAA, Inc. and the ISO Literature Committee do not guarantee that any particular story will appear in a future edition of the SAA book. Once submitted with a signed release form (located on the last page of this newsletter), the written story becomes the permanent property of the ISO of SAA, Inc., and may be edited or modified as deemed appropriate by the ISO Literature Committee.

Please also note that, while the ISO Literature Committee will acknowledge the initial receipt of a story, the ISO may or may not communicate further with the author about the suitability of the story or the likelihood of publication in *Sex Addicts Anonymous*.

The ISO is pleased to announce the availability of:

***“Sex Addicts Anonymous and the Lesbian / Gay /
Bisexual / Transgender Sex Addict: A Message of
Hope for Sex Addicts in the LGBT Communities”***

which is now available online at the ISO website store:

www.saa-store.org

This new booklet has valuable recovery suggestions and insights that are useful for ***any recovering member or group***, regardless of sexual orientation.

Thank you to all who put so much hard work into producing this addition to our SAA literature!

ISO Income/Expense Summary as of November 30, 2013

	Nov 13	Monthly Avg	Jan - Nov 13
Income			
Sales	14,163.02	17,962.06	197,582.62
Shipping & Handling	1,602.46	1,894.54	20,839.98
Donations	54,762.16	27,693.97	304,633.63
Investment Income	16.97	463.90	5,102.86
Other Income	0.00	97.51	1,072.63
Convention Income	0.00	4,348.50	47,833.54
Delegate Meeting Income	0.00	527.27	5,800.00
Total Income	70,544.61	52,987.75	582,865.26
Total Cost Of Goods Sold	4,838.87	6,742.00	74,161.97
Gross Profit	65,705.74	46,245.75	508,703.29
Expense			
Wages & Benefits	24,073.92	23,100.22	254,102.45
Payroll Taxes	1,583.26	1,546.98	17,016.79
Payroll Expenses	19.18	18.66	205.22
Insurance	0.00	529.15	5,820.70
Financial Charges	1,541.39	1,267.71	13,944.76
Communications	642.67	602.56	6,628.14
Occupancy Expenses	1,176.17	1,417.17	15,588.82
Office Expenses	678.37	1,000.02	11,000.23
The Outer Circle	1,486.92	921.47	10,136.19
Professional Fees	1,035.00	497.45	5,472.00
Depreciation	175.00	175.00	1,925.00
Bad Debts/Refunds	7.30	11.79	129.64
Travel-Related Expenses	0.00	3,461.00	38,070.96
Board/Committee Expenses	903.38	2,318.65	25,505.19
Convention Expenses	0.00	3,575.98	39,335.80
Delegate Meeting Expenses	0.00	1,107.26	12,179.85
Total Expense	33,322.56	41,551.07	457,061.74
Net Income	32,383.18	4,694.69	51,641.55

Financial Results for November 2013

In the month of November our budget showed a surplus of \$32,383.18. We had budgeted for a surplus of \$31,216.03. We exceeded the budgeted surplus estimate by \$1,167.15.

Our sales revenue for the SAA Green Book was under our estimate by \$1,779.94 for November, but has exceeded our estimate by \$11,226.37 for 2013.

Our pamphlet and booklet sales exceeded our estimate by \$1,020.63 for November and have exceeded our estimate by \$12,704.23 for 2013. Our bronze medallion sales were under our estimate by \$180.00 in November, but have exceeded our estimate by \$1,716.48 in 2013. Our chips sales were under our estimate by \$107.91 in November, but have exceeded our estimate by \$1,621.79 in 2013.

Our total sales for November were below our estimate by \$1,376.98.

Individual donations exceeded our estimate by \$2,468.44 for November and have exceeded our estimate by \$15,298.43 for 2013. Group donations exceeded our estimate by \$630.72 in November and have exceeded our estimate by \$6,371.20 for 2013.

Our product inventory is valued at \$46,003.77.

Our expenses exceeded our estimate by \$1,146.59 in November.

Summary of the annual budget (January 1, 2013 to November 30, 2013):

- Sales have exceeded our estimate by \$25,742.62
- Donations have exceeded our estimate by \$21,669.63
- Expenses have exceeded our estimate by \$3,566.79
- Net surplus has exceeded our estimate by \$16,393.5

Our operational reserve is fully funded.

If you have any questions, please let me know.

In Your Service,

Joe H.

Executive Director

director@saa-iso.org

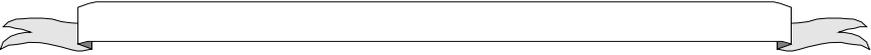
[Editor's Note: The ideas expressed in the literature section of The Outer Circle reflect the opinions of the authors of those articles, and do not necessarily represent the opinions of the ISO or of the SAA fellowship as a whole.]

From the Editor

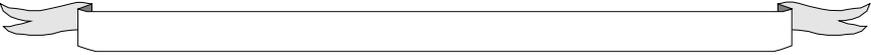
by Mike L.

I'm writing this piece a few days after the Thanksgiving holiday. I hope that all of you had a good one.

I had an interesting experience to begin my holiday. I flew out of town and had to do a layover. Because of an amusing (although it didn't seem so at the time) combination of circumstances, I managed to miss my connecting flight, so a layover of six hours turned into one of about twenty. Fortunately, all turned out well and I still managed to have a nice vacation, although it started a day later than planned. The delay didn't spoil the main point of the trip which was my taking another opportunity to renew yet another acquaintance from a long time back, a goal I have been pursuing of late.



*The topic for the
September/October 2014 issue ...
is "people, places, and things."*



I'm continuing to reprint pieces from older copies of the newsletter, and the pieces this issue come from the years 1998 through 2001. If you had an article appear in an issue in 2002 or later and would be interested in seeing it run again, please drop me a note and let me know which article it was and what issue of the publication it appeared in, as I want to acknowledge the original issue of publication when reprinting the article.

I'm going to keep this piece fairly short because I managed to use up much of my allotted space with a couple of lengthier-than-normal articles this issue. I do want to take a second to introduce the topic for the September/October 2014 issue of The Outer Circle, which is "people, places, and things." This is a fairly open-ended topic. Perhaps you will want to talk about how they have affected your sobriety or serenity, be it in a positive or

a negative way. Or you may find some other way to approach the topic. Also, remember the topic for the May/June issue, which is "The Outer Circle" (not the publication, but rather your experiences with your own Outer Circle).

I hope you are having a wonderful holiday season. I look forward to talking with you again next issue.

The Only Requirement by Jonathan E.

Recently I was at a meeting where the topic was behaviors in our pasts that were indicative that we might be sex addicts, even if we chose to ignore those behaviors at the time. I didn't speak up out of shame, and I instead thought back to a time that I allowed myself to get talked into being sexual with another man late one night on the steps of the capital building of a large state. Because I never repeated that behavior, I didn't think much about it over the coming years, and it had nothing to do with my eventually coming into SAA. I didn't even think about it when I was preparing to give my first step, despite the consequences that I might have had to suffer if I had been caught.

Fast-forwarding a decade or so, I had been active in my bottom-line behaviors for several years before I found SAA. I knew that something was not quite right in the way I was living my life and I figured that I needed to change something. I tried to ignore the possibility that I had any real sexual problems even though my behaviors nagged at me enough that I asked one or two close friends if they thought I was a sex addict (no, of course not), and I read what little general literature was available at the time, all the while subconsciously looking for the differences rather than the similarities.

I finally hit a low enough bottom that I decided I needed to get help. Accordingly, I called the recovery line in my city and got the date and time of a couple of meetings in my area. Those meetings were still a few days away, so I gritted my teeth and held on in the meantime.

By the time I attended that first meeting, I was desperate enough that I was no longer comparing my behaviors to those of others. It took me a few meetings before I had the courage to speak up. When I did, I got an after-the-meeting slap-down from somebody else attending the meeting. He came up to me and told me, almost word for word, that I was probably not a sex addict.

I had been open to the suggestions of others all my life and this situation was no different. I immediately began to question, and this time in earnest,

whether I was really a sex addict, just because somebody else had told me that he didn't think I was. I cut way back on meeting attendance, and my sobriety, which had never been much more than tenuous in my one or two months in the program, became very shaky. It wasn't long before I was back to my old behaviors. An encounter with the police sent me hurtling back to the program, and this time I didn't let anybody else make the decision for me whether or not I belonged there.

The Third Tradition says, "The only requirement for SAA membership is a *desire* to stop addictive sexual behavior." I wasn't versed enough in the Traditions at the time to realize the deep truth of this one: The Tradition does not say that I have to have engaged in particular behaviors, and so, even if I had thought of it, I didn't need to play "can you top this?" by throwing back in that guy's face that I had had sex on the steps of a capital building one time. Neither does the Tradition say that I have to have suffered particular consequences from my addiction or that I need to have lost x number of relationships, y amount of money, or z amount of autonomy, be it from being in the hospital or in prison. All the Tradition asks me to look at is my desire to stop.

Since that time, I have been at meetings where I heard a First Step and wondered, "Why on earth is this person even here?" Conversely, I have heard tales so bizarre that I wondered if I really had a problem since I had never come close to doing anything similar. Needless to say, in both situations I have pinched myself and moved on.

I am grateful that the Tradition reads as it does. My behaviors when I first came into SAA may not have compared to some of what I heard, and Higher Power still led me to realize that I was where I belonged. My experience during the period of time when I was only half-heartedly working the SAA program based on the judgment of another person about my behaviors showed me that I was fully capable of continuing down that slippery slope. I never want to return to such behaviors again, which means that I will always have the desire to stop addictive behaviors, which in turn means that I will always be a member of the SAA fellowship.

This Place

by Mike F.

I worked the steps and did my time,
In meetings, with some friends of mine.
I struggled when the stress was high,
And called a sponsor or texted a guy.

I worked at staying sober,
But in the end God was the lover
Who kept me out of trouble
And helped me pop the bubble.

I talked a lot in tiny rooms
And watched men grow, and watched them bloom.
I changed, too, after some time,
And a little sweat and grime.

It wasn't easy but it was plain,
That anyone with half a brain
Could do this program and let it work
To turn them from being a first-class jerk.

We got sober
And we knew that this
Was the right way to do life as an adult
And not blame others, or find fault.

And the best gift of this crazy spree
Is the knowledge that we can live free
If we will meet and greet the new guys
And stay wise when it comes to roving eyes.

Freedom is the best gift we can get.
It means we don't live life with everyone upset –
If we work the steps and are very sure
To make a meeting once a week or more.

And tell a sponsor
When our heart is torn,
Or lost, or scared, or worn,
From too much doubt or scorn.

And believe that we can be fine, one day at a time,
With the help of our Higher Power
And the friends I find,
In this place that gives me peace of mind.

Dear Grace

Submitted by SAA Women's Outreach Subcommittee

Statement of Purpose for Dear Grace: *To reach out to all women with a desire to stop addictive sexual behavior through this printed medium and share with the fellowship the types of questions the Grace e-mail receives. *Names have been changed to protect anonymity**

Dear Grace,

Isolation is something I struggle with all the time. I use tools like phone calls, and outer circle activities, but inevitably I end up in isolation before I even know I am there. For me, I can isolate when surrounded by others just by not sharing my truth. What do you do to stay out of emotional isolation? How do you keep connecting with others on an emotional level?

—Isolated

Dear Isolated,

There are many tools you can use and some you have already listed. Most often we have to act our way into different thinking, not think our way into different acting.

For some of us this means sharing where we are on a daily basis with at least three people, checking in on how we are feeling and what is going on. If we commit to doing this, eventually it becomes habit and second nature to NOT isolate.

Others use the tool of service, getting involved in the fellowship and being a part of it, to help keep from isolating. However, some of us have found we can use service as a way of not talking about ourselves and our feelings.

Some of us have outer circle activities that get us involved in sharing with others on a regular basis. These can be based around exercise, food, art, hobbies, and community. Having a home group, a meeting that we commit to attending every week, helps others get to know us and expect us to be there. When we become a part of the fellowship, it becomes easier to interact with others and that feeling of isolation and loneliness slips away.

—The WOSC “Grace” workgroup, known collectively as “Grace”

Disclaimer: We cannot guarantee that this advice will be equally applicable to every woman, although it is our hope that such will be the case.

—SAA Women's Outreach Subcommittee

Relationships and Tradition Four by Freeman P.

[Editor's Note: This is the fourth part of a twelve-part series called "Relationships and the Twelve Traditions."]

Tradition Four: Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or SAA as a whole. (Sex Addicts Anonymous, p. 82)

au-ton-o-mous: adj., independent; self-governing (*Webster's New Pocket Dictionary, 2007*)

By following Tradition Four each group is autonomous, which means independent, yet united to SAA as a whole. The Green Book tells us, "Our basic and most important vehicle for recovery is the SAA group" (*Sex Addicts Anonymous*, pp. 82-83). Each group is like a limb on a tree. Each limb is connected to the tree trunk in order to remain healthy. Each individual member is a leaf on a limb. Without connection to the limb, the leaf withers and dies. If the limb becomes diseased, an arborist—tree surgeon—cuts the limb away so it won't affect or infect the rest of the tree. I have heard similar analogies: the tree and its branches, the root and the vine. I think these analogies go well with Tradition Four.

As we read further, we learn that all SAA "groups are self-governing . . . we do it ourselves," and that "[a]utonomy goes hand in hand with self-respect and a new sense of freedom" (*Sex Addicts Anonymous*, p. 83). As a child I vividly remember tying my shoe for the first time. The sense of pride for the accomplishment was great. My new-found independence created new responsibility which I now call "suit up and show up." As an individual I am responsible for the health of my home group—the limb. My home group is responsible for itself. This, as we learned from Tradition Two, is determined through group conscience. ". . . [E]ach group has the freedom to make mistakes . . ." (*Sex Addicts Anonymous*, p. 83). I can't recall how many knots I tied in my shoe strings, or how many shoe strings had to be cut, tied together, and then replaced. In the end, I learned from the mistakes, just as the group learns from its mistakes.

For myself, I am learning what is right and what hinders my recovery. In group, I am cautious not to insist that my way is the right way. There are many different ways in which a group can be run. There are speaker meetings, topic meetings, twelve-step meetings, and tradition meetings, to name a few. There are specialized groups that focus on certain segments of our community to foster a greater sense of safety and camaraderie, such as groups for men, for women, for gays, for professionals, even for convicted felons. As long as each group follows the spiritual principles laid out in the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, they will grow, thereby carrying the message to other sex addicts who still suffer.

As independent—autonomous—groups, we must consider the welfare of SAA as a whole. Just as my life—my way of living—is an example to others who know I am in my SAA home group, so too is my home group an example of SAA as a whole. Just as a diseased branch may affect the entire tree, one member or one group can give a poor reputation to SAA.

I as a member, and we as a group, must remember that our behavior represents SAA for good or ill. Through right living, I carry the message and make tools available for the addict who still suffers. Sobriety is our only objective.

Tradition Four (Relationship Form): Each of us should be autonomous except in matters affecting the other, our family, or our community as a whole.

When we enter into relationships, we come with a past (baggage). We have families and are members of organizations in the community. Perhaps we are church members. Perhaps we work for businesses or are self-employed. As I reflect on Tradition Four, I realize I am part of something greater than myself. In my relationships, my behavior and decisions affect my spouse, our children, our parents, our grandparents, and our extended families. So I behave in a way that brings pride and a sense of honor; this way my commitment to the relationship cannot be questioned or doubted.

Part of my personal growth within relationships has been to overcome selfishness. I learn to become *unselfish*. I think of others first to make our relationships work, a form of self-less-ness. Selflessness does not mean I sacrifice myself, or lose myself in another. For me, it means that as God helps me work on removing the selfishness, I think of myself less.

As individuals in a relationship, we are autonomous. As such, I am free to live my life as I see fit and allow my spouse and friends to live their lives as they see fit. I choose my own spiritual/religious practices, how often I exercise, and what my political views are. The list is endless because I am free and self-governing. I am responsible for myself.

Only I am responsible for my thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. I accept the consequences of my choices and stand out of the way, allowing my spouse to experience the consequences of choices, trusting God to help each of us learn and grow.

As autonomous individuals we keep our own schedules. Since I have chosen to be in a relationship, I synchronize my own clock with my spouse's so I won't disregard what we have planned together. We are each free to do whatever we want, as long as it doesn't harm the other. We are a unit. We have both agreed to go to any length to make our relationship work. We leave the past in the past; we forget past mistakes. To paraphrase page 84 of *Alcoholics Anonymous*, forgiveness and

tolerance are our creed.

At time I find myself becoming jealous as I see the independence of my mate, and my mate's having friends to go places with. I now recognize that my jealousy is about selfishness. Jealousy is self-love and has little to do with true, that is selfless, love. My jealousy is based on fear and scarcity, as I fear being abandoned and hurt. To overcome this, I focus on love and abundance, and I use positive affirmations to raise my self-esteem and self-respect. This conquers not only jealousy but all negative feelings. Paraphrasing the last sentence concerning Tradition Four from our Green Book, I can say that my friends/spouse and I serve each other in vital and diverse ways.

Electronic Formats Available!

SAA e-Book

The ISO is pleased to announce the availability of the SAA Green Book, *Sex Addicts Anonymous*, in downloadable electronic format.

The eBook can be purchased from the ISO office, or online from the SAA Store at www.saa-store.org/book/.

After online purchase is complete, you will receive an e-mail with a link to download a zip file that contains both the mobi (Kindle) and ePUB (Nook) versions of the book. One of these formats can be read on most e-readers available today.

mp3 Audio Downloads

The ISO is pleased to announce the availability of mp3 format downloads of our convention workshop and speaker recordings.

The files are in mp3 format, which may be played on almost any portable music device or computer.

Currently, the mp3 files are available for convention years 2004 through 2013, and can be purchased from the SAA store at www.saa-store.org/audio.

We will be uploading the remaining past convention years as we get them formatted.

Dear Will

Submitted by the Men's Outreach Committee

Dear Will,

I live in a small town, and we only have one SAA meeting a week here. I went to the meeting one time and liked it, but I am afraid to go back out of fear that somebody might recognize my car and know that I was going to a meeting of sex addicts. Any suggestions how I can minimize my fear?

—Scared

Dear Scared,

Will could ask you if you ever used your car to go to an acting-out place and were you afraid that somebody else would see it there. But he will assume that you did not. Fortunately, you have some other options that do not require you to go out and buy a new car.

Just a thought to begin with: Do you have the option of taking public transportation to the meeting, or riding with somebody else? Many of the meetings listed on the SAA website also list contact persons; just click on the link that says "For local contacts, click here." You may find somebody who can help you arrange a way to the meeting.

Another possibility is to go to meetings in other towns. Will occasionally has reason to look at the lists of meetings for one state or another on the website. Some of those states have meetings in cities that Will has not once ever heard of. And if you live near a state border, remember to check the state next to you, as there may be meetings in that state that are actually closer to you than some meetings in your own state.

Will has known people who were willing to travel several hundred miles one way once a week just to go to a meeting. He used to think this was pretty incredible, well insane actually, until one day he asked himself, "How far, Will, were you willing to drive to act out?" Taking that into consideration, Will could easily find himself driving into the next state to go to a meeting, and he does not even live anywhere close to a border.

Will would close his diatribe here, but he knows people in the fellowship who would come after him if he didn't mention this one other possibility: telephone and electronic meetings. These can also be easily found on the website: From the home page, click on "Meetings," then "Electronic Meetings (Telephone and Web based)." From there, just scroll down the page; you will see listings for "Telemeetings" (these are the vast majority of the meetings), "WebCall," and "Online Text." Will is kind of Neanderthal

when it comes to any sort of post-1970s technology (the first time he tried using a mouse, he was convinced that it was broken until his partner showed him that it doesn't operate the same way as a remote control), so he sticks with the telemeetings. There are, however, contact persons listed for many of the other kinds of meetings as well, if you have trouble signing into one. Will heard it said at a convention workshop once that the telemeetings are just like face-to-face meetings, and they have the advantage of being available at many times of the day and even into the late evening hours.

With all of these meetings available, you now have all the tools you need to start doing a ninety-in-ninety. The sponsor you will find at one of these meetings or through the men's outreach list (contact the ISO office about this list) can give you further instructions on what a ninety-in-ninety is.

—Will

The ISO is pleased to announce the approval of our **newest** piece of SAA literature:

“Getting a Sponsor”

is now available online at the ISO website store:

www.saa-store.org

This pamphlet addresses many questions SAA members may have about sponsorship, including the importance of having a sponsor, how to find one, what to expect from a sponsor, and much more.

Thank you so much to all who put so much hard work into producing and approving this important new addition to our SAA Literature.

Volunteer Services Needed

Want to be of service to the Fellowship that supports you?

Not sure where to get started?

Contact the ISO!

or go to **www.saa-iso.org/**

and select “Volunteer” to fill out a volunteer form.

Another Member's Story

by Anonymous

[Editor's Note: The following article originally appeared in the April/May 2001 issue of the SAA newsletter, which was then called The Plain Brown Rapper]

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

I told a friend about a behavior I had that I just could not deny, explain, rationalize, justify, understand, or ever forget. This friend asked me if I had read a particular book on recovery from sexual addiction. I had, and I had decided I did *not* want to be one of those people talked about in the book. I came to this fellowship only to learn how to act out as much as I wanted and not suffer any consequences. I was unable to find anyone who knew how to do that.

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

I started saying almost immediately after coming into the program, "I will never do this again," and continued until I had been in the fellowship for several years. After I finally got tired of saying, "This is the last time," I became willing enough to work the Steps.

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

Working the Steps, practicing the principles in all my life, and keeping spiritually fit are the only defense I have against hitting another bottom. Without God, the program, and the fellowship, I would be in prison, working toward mental health, being watched on closed circuit television while in four-point restraints, or all of the above.

My family has taken legal action to prevent me from seeing them, writing them, calling them, sending anything to them, or being within two hundred feet of them. My children are now eighteen, twenty, and twenty-seven; I don't know what they have been doing for the last eleven years. Today I am grateful that I have only been separated from my wife and three children.

The miracle of this program is that I have accepted being estranged from my family. Some days are better than others. When grief comes, I embrace it; when happy comes, I embrace it. I have learned through the

touchstone of all spiritual growth and pain not to run from my feelings. I believe that nothing, absolutely nothing, happens in God's world by mistake. I never would have believed that I would accept estrangement. I never believed that I would stop acting out. In a sense, I was correct; I could not do it alone. It took God, the program, and the fellowship. May God bless us and keep us. Until then, love.

***“Safe and Sexually Sober Meetings;
Helping Women Feel Welcome in Your Meeting”***

is now available online at the ISO website store:

www.saa-store.org

In addition to providing many helpful suggestions for “Helping Women Feel Welcome in Your Meeting,” the pamphlet has valuable recovery suggestions and insights that are useful for ***any recovering member or group***, even if a group does not have women members.

Thank you to all who put so much hard work into producing this new addition to our SAA literature!

**Audio Version of SAA Green Book
Available for the Visually Impaired**

The National Library Service has produced an audio version of our SAA Green Book (*Sex Addicts Anonymous*). This audio book was produced by the government and is not available for sale by or use by the ISO of SAA, Inc. However, those who qualify for eligibility under the government guidelines may receive the SAA audio book from the National Library Service.

The website address for the National Library Service is:

www.loc.gov/nls/

***If you know of someone who could benefit from this service,
please let them know about this available format.***

Walking in Beauty

by Jason H.

Just one bad choice led me on the journey on which I currently find myself; but if I took a closer look I would see that there was a series of poor choices that led me to that day that altered not only my life, but the lives of those that I victimized and of those I love.

On March 2, 2006, I was arrested and charged with a sex crime; seven months later I was sentenced to be incarcerated. I have been in the system for seven years and five months, and have seen and learned a lot. At times I fail to put what I have learned into practice, which causes crises and chaos in my life. This has never been truer in my life than in the past few months. I am not going to focus on the problem because when I do so, this is all I can see. I develop tunnel vision and this brings me down. So, I want to focus on the solution to living life on life's terms.

I entitled this article "Walking in Beauty" because I was recently sent a book that deals with those teachings that are part of the spiritual path that I choose to follow in developing a conscious contact with a power greater than myself. The author gives examples of how he walks in beauty with life. I hope that I can share what the Great Spirit has shared with me.

It has been postulated that life is ten percent what happens to one and ninety percent how one responds to life. I tend to agree with this belief, especially considering my life of late.

I was involved in a relationship that was not healthy. The unit was experiencing major changes, always a recipe for disaster, and I was also experiencing the stress of being incarcerated. All of this was affecting me mentally, emotionally, spiritually, and physically. I chose to allow it to affect me in a negative way.

I slipped into my favorite activist/rescuer role. I was trying to rescue a relationship where the other person didn't see that there was a problem. I was attempting to rescue staff and inmates from imploding and exploding. I was informing prison rights groups and newspapers about policies the new administration was enacting and how they were endangering those at the unit and the community around the unit. The effect that this was having on me was put on the back burner. I was upset and playing the martyr because people were not seeing my suffering.

I made enemies with staff, administration and offenders. Disciplinary cases started to stack up. The pressures started taking effect on my health. I suffered my first heart attack. My relationship ended. Everything was coming to a head. In April 2013 my body succumbed to the stressors I had continued to place on it. I was diagnosed with cancer and my auto-immune disorder began to flare up. I received treatment at the prison hospital for my medical condition.

One would think that this decline in my medical condition would have grabbed my attention and had me flying right. Then again, one would believe that the Creator would have had my attention when I was sentenced to confinement for twenty-five years. Sometimes I have to keep getting burned by the flames of the stove until I have had enough. I have that bottom that I must hit before I get some act right in my life, and apparently these two were not enough to wake me up because I continued to take on what I felt was a battle between good and evil.

I have been fighting this fight since at the age of five when I was battling my stepfather for mother's attention and because of his abusiveness. This battle has been a raging theme played out in different scenarios. I am currently fighting the system. I have made enemies with some of the medical and security staff over this battle of right and wrong, and my care physically and mentally/emotionally has been affected by my unproductive persistence.

I was talking with a mental health provider who made a profound statement. She said that my persistence in always being right has been and will continue to be my Achilles' heel until I decide that sometimes I have to eat crow and wait for another day to win the battle.

I have not physically or mentally slipped into my inner behavior patterns enough for me to say that I have relapsed, but certainly I have been on a "dry drunk" as far as the depth of my recovery program in thinking and practicing the principles of the Twelve Steps is concerned. After rereading the book I mentioned and engaging in prayer, meditation and deep introspection, I could see that my behavior pattern is not conducive to my rehabilitation. In fact, it is counterproductive.

I am engaged in a struggle for control and power. As a convicted felon, I am viewed by society as wrong and deserving of inferior treatment. On the other hand, I see the staff as viewing itself as superior because of working with "low lives" like me. Basically, my fight is on their stomping grounds, so the deck is stacked in their favor. I have to change my game plan.

As I was in this deep state of introspection after praying and meditation, I had an "A-ha moment." The light bulb finally lit up. One of my favorite poets once wrote that when we know better, we do better. I not only have to know but I have to incorporate this new-found knowledge into my way of thinking; then it will manifest in the way I behave.

As a sex addict, I did a lot of talking the talk but little walking the walk. The solution to the problem is that I must learn to walk in beauty or in balance with life. As I have heard from my mentor and many others who have come into my life, there is no reality, just perception. I alone am responsible for assigning a meaning to an event that is occurring in my life. No one else can make me feel a certain way. When I come to this realization and practice this principle, I am refusing to play the victim role.

So I have to look at how I am interpreting the power struggle that is transpiring at this time. I have to do an appraisal of what part I play in this power struggle. If I remove myself from the equation, the problem is solved. Sometimes, due to my faulty perception system, I take things a little too personally. I make things into a power struggle, as I have done since I was five years old. This behavior pattern helped give birth to all of the addictive/self-medicating behavior I have used to cope with the effects this behavioral pattern has had on me.

Many mentors have told me that practicing acceptance in my program of recovery is about balance, especially with my tendency to engage in codependent/rescuing behavior. I have been encouraged and shown through action that the way I stay in balance with acceptance is through daily and constant contact with a power greater than myself, a power I choose to call the Great Spirit, and with people who have a solid foundation in recovery. So at times I have to let go and let the Great Spirit, and at other times I have to speak up and advocate for fair treatment. This is the solution for me. I now have to put that solution into action.

While reflecting on walking in beauty, I began to think how do I do it or, better yet, do I know how to. I have been in and out of Twelve-Step programs since 1992; these seven years are my longest time clean. I have seriously worked the Twelve Steps at least four times, once in each of my programs, which has given me the tools to walk in balance and beauty.

The cofounders of AA laid out the Twelve Steps. These Twelve Steps were based on spiritual principles that assist me in living in harmony with my Creator, myself, and my fellow humans. I practice these Steps, focusing on the last three, on a daily basis. If I do this to the best of my ability, I see amazing results. If I don't, then I live from crisis to crisis, creating chaos in others' lives and in my life. This takes away the inner peace that I seek. The choice is up to me. Having identified the solution, I get busy practicing the Ninth Step.

It is my prayer that the experience, strength, and hope that I have shared in this article will be of benefit to others in their journey. The Steps contain healing powers and with these healing powers I can overcome addictive behaviors. As a man in "white," I especially see this program as one of the tools I can use to rehabilitate myself.

I send out healing prayers that others may find peace in their minds and hearts. These two entities make up my soul; this is where the Creator lives. When I have peace in these areas, I am at one with my Creator. A-ho (so be it).

The Power to Carry That Out

by Chris D.

[Editor's Note: The following article originally appeared in the February/March 1999 issue of The Plain Brown Rapper]

Recently I shared at a meeting that I believed that, once we had been sober for a while, we all had a choice whether to act out, and that we only lost that choice once we did act out.

I have a tendency to say these “we” statements instead of “I” ones, which gets me into some trouble. Another member of long standing shared that she had recently relapsed, and that it didn't feel like it was a choice. After the meeting she told me: “I am powerless over this disease. I can't forget that. The only thing I can do is surrender to God. I'm not in control.”

The truth of what she said hit home to me when I reflected on the Eleventh Step. It says that we asked only for knowledge of God's will for us “and the power to carry that out.” In other words, not only do I need knowledge of God's will for me in order to live a sober life, but I need God's power to carry that will out, because my will won't be able to!

It's a profound surrender that is outlined in our Steps. Even my ideas about “choice,” insofar as they came from an idea of my own will being able to direct my recovery, were misguided because true recovery only comes through the direct working of a Power greater than myself.

This is not to say that choice is not involved—and in fact I was speaking more to myself than to anyone else to remind me that in the moment when I am about to act out, there are other options I can take, such as calling someone or going to a meeting or turning to my Higher Power for help. But on a deeper level, it is exactly as my fellow member said: I can only surrender to God.

This is not a doctrine of hopelessness or an excuse to act out. It is simply a recognition that the miracle of recovery is not up to me and my will power; it happens through a letting go which is more radical than words can express. When I truly let that Power carry out its will, I get out of the way and let recovery work in my life.

Sobriety? A Bunch of “Thou Shalt Nots”?

by Carol T.

[Editor's Note: The following article originally appeared in the August/September 1998 issue of The Plain Brown Rapper]

Sobriety? Isn't that what we all hope, pray and strive for in our programs of recovery? I was in SAA for over two years before I could put together any length of sobriety. By “any length,” I mean even an initial twenty-four hour period of time. There is no secret formula. I found a sponsor, had enough pain, was scared enough to try something different and continued to choose sobriety on a daily basis.

Initially in getting sober that sobriety seemed to be an absence of things in my life. It was a list of all of the bottom line behaviors I was abstaining from. It was a list of people I could no longer associate with, and it was a list of places I could not go. It seemed to be a lot of “thou shalt nots”.

As I continue to choose sobriety, there has been a change. I no longer think much about the “nots” because slowly, without my even working towards it, the empty spaces left by the absence of my bottom line behaviors have begun to fill in. All my life there has been a big empty hole inside of me and I have tried many things to fill it up: religion, relationships, compulsive sexual behaviors, compulsive spending, compulsive overeating, alcohol, and using various foods to try just to numb myself so I didn't have to feel that hole any more. As I quit acting out and continued to lay down my drugs, I was scared because I would feel that terrible emptiness inside of me. No matter what I tried to fill it with, it was never enough to last for any length of time. I didn't know what would go into that space and early in sobriety I asked my sponsor about it. He told me to trust God. I didn't make a list of all the things I would like to have in my life but God must truly know what I need because I have more often felt “filled up.” It was an emotional feeling of wholeness. It was a feeling of completeness that caused me to feel joy.

Recently my sister gave me a journal and she told me to record the things I am grateful for. (Had I been sounding *ungrateful*?) Each night that list often includes my sobriety, my sponsor, my family, and each of the program brothers and sisters whose lives have touched mine sometime during that day. I have begun to feel gratitude for such simple things. The hug a child gives me at work or a letter in the mail that I did not expect or a rose that bloomed on a bush that I had given up on.

Over this past weekend my elderly aunt and uncle went to a local strawberry field and picked berries. This is quite a chore for them. When they get down they can hardly rise again. My uncle had a hip replaced last winter and has Parkinson's, so it is a chore for him to steady his hand enough to pick a strawberry. They cleaned a big bowl of them and gave

them to me, ready to eat! Because I no longer choose to eat sugar, they have been very respectful and supportive of my efforts to eat foods that nurture my body instead of numbing it.

I took the berries home and sat outside to munch on them with my lunch. It was a perfect summer day: blue skies, cool breeze, moderate temperatures and no bugs! I bit into one of the berries; it was the sweetest, juiciest strawberry I can ever remember tasting. I looked down and the noon sun was shining on the strawberry juice and causing it to glisten. My strawberry was sparking! I felt this wave of gratitude come over me as I connected with my Higher Power, who had created this berry, and provided it for me through people who loved me. Zing! There it was, that filled-up feeling!

Along with a gratitude list, I also record several of the things that have happened during my day that I did not expect. Things that I didn't know would be a part of my day upon waking. Each morning I pray my Eleventh-Step Prayer and ask God for His Will and the strength and, often, the willingness to carry that out. His will for my day is usually far different from what I would have chosen for myself.

For instance, last week one of my former acting-out partners called. I had not talked with him since getting sober. He wanted to fly his plane 1500 miles to take me to dinner. After I hung up, I remembered that going back into any kind of a relationship with him, even a simple dinner, could cost me my sobriety. The last two encounters with him have left me wanting to die from the shame. This conversation or thoughts of this man were not on my agenda for the day but they were on God's. My sponsor reminded me that, yes, even this was part of God's plan for my day. He did give me what I needed to feel all of the intense rush of feelings and yet provided what I needed to stay sober.

Recently my son who is an amputee called to tell me he is going to lose more of his leg. He will lose his knee and be in a wheelchair for an indefinite period of time. Because of this, he wanted very much to walk his grandparents down the aisle and seat them at his sister's wedding. It certainly wasn't what I had planned for my day, but instead of trying to stuff my feelings down or try to numb them, I could feel the sadness and be grateful for my son's courage.

I sense more and more as I am able to feel my true emotions on a daily basis that the emptiness is being filled up with parts of myself that were always there just waiting for me to find them. More gifts of sobriety. I am so grateful to have more sobriety than I ever had in all areas of my life. I can feel my feelings, maybe for the first time in my whole life. I can feel a wholeness growing within me. I am so very grateful.

Some Thought on Step Work as It Relates to My Life and Recovery

by Jim H.

[Editor's Note: The following article originally appeared in the August/September 2000 issue of The Plain Brown Rapper]

I have been in recovery since July 23, 1987, and have had more than a passing familiarity with the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. One thing I have found over the years is that it is good to work the Steps but, perhaps more importantly, it is good to live the Steps. By working the Steps over the years with my various sponsors and friends in recovery I have been able to wake up my true spirit enough to stay sober and abstinent. Sometimes it even comes natural to me; I do it automatically. But most of the time I have to get in real emotional pain before I make an effort to follow the path laid by the Steps.

Recently I did have an opportunity to work Step Nine in a small way. For some reason, memories of one of the girls I had victimized started tugging at the corners of my mind. It wasn't an overwhelming sense of guilt, just a clearer sense of the hurt I had caused and a stronger-than-normal desire to make amends for my actions. I could have just tucked the thought away, rationalizing that I had already worked Step Nine. Instead, I wrote a little note to myself that said "write amends letter."

Later that week I was eating lunch with my sponsor (eating lunch with a sponsor is "working the Steps" in and of itself!). Right before we left, I shared my realization about this particular woman-child victim, and he was inspired to encourage me to write a letter and send it to a shelter for homeless children. He believes that maybe they will read it to someone who has been victimized by someone like me, and perhaps that person will find healing in my words of remorse and apology.

I was really starting to get in touch with my feelings, which come from the recovering part of me who was also victimized and who knows what it is like to have his dignity violated many times over many years.

That part of me weeps and connects with all those who suffer from this disease, both addicts and victims. That part of me wants to keep growing toward the light as outlined in the Twelve Steps. It wants to let the damaged part heal by maintaining boundaries, practicing the principles of the Twelve Steps in all areas of my life, and by grieving for those I have hurt and trying to make amends to them in any way I can.

As an additional more concrete amends, I also sent some money to the shelter and said a prayer for all who have ever had to stay there. By God's grace and my efforts to keep the Steps alive in my life, I will never again have to victimize anyone, one day at a time.

Practicing Letting Go

by Paul P.

Letting go is a process I have learned in recovery that was critical to my success.

As Step Three indicates, “[we] made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood God.” This step implies a willingness and also an admission that I no longer have control. In my addiction I tried to control and predict outcomes. I was manipulative, deceptive, and cunning in my quest for that control.

Yet in recovery, I learn that “surrender” means giving up this sense of control and abandoning my own selfish will. After all, my own will is what got me into all the unmanageability (consequences).

In early recovery, a sponsor told me an easy way to relate to letting go and a simple practice method. He said, “Picture the heaviest thing you could possibly carry. Now picture releasing it and continuing on. How does this make you feel?” he asked. I replied, “Totally free.”

I practiced this technique when I had to get a bicycle repaired. I had to carry the bike on my shoulders for three miles because of a bad wheel and chain. I arrived at the bicycle store and was met with much disdain and disapproval. Not only could the owner not guarantee that he could fix the bike, but he was also unpleasant, rude, and discourteous to me. I left his shop remembering what I felt like carrying the bike all the way there. My shoulders both ached and my back hurt. I felt I was a victim and that somehow I was wronged and taken advantage of.

As I started to forgive and turn my thoughts over, I felt a release and utter relief. I walked home without carrying the heavy bicycle (the burdens of resentment) and a newfound sense of surrender was realized.

This story conveys an important lesson to me: If I let go of a heavy burden in my mind, I am freed from the holds of resentment which can also lead to acting out. I can crave pornography and anonymous sex, but I can let go in my mind and I feel the heaviness lifted. I can obsess about the fantasy and be pulled toward the addiction; yet I can ask God to intervene. Surrendering is indeed a challenging task in my recovery; however, if I am going to progress and grow, I must practice it every chance I get.

E-mail Addresses

The following is a list of Board E-mail addresses and the LitCom e-mail addresses for the various regions, and the ISO staff E-mail addresses. The Board, LitCom, and the staff are always happy to hear from the fellowship.

The Chair of the Board of Trustees also receives a copy of e-mail to the service addresses of regional Board representatives.

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

First: Write from your experience, strength, and hope. Others may need to hear exactly what you have to say. Suggested Topics are listed below.

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Submission Deadlines & Suggested Topics		
Next Issues	Deadline	Suggested Topics
May-Jun 2014	Mar 5, 2014	Steps & Traditions 5 & 6, and “ <i>The Outer Circle</i> ”
Jul-Aug 2014	May 5, 2014	Steps & Traditions 7 & 8, and “ <i>Meditation</i> ”
Sep-Oct 2014	July 5, 2014	Steps & Traditions 9 & 10, and “ <i>People, Places, and Things</i> ”
Nov-Dec 2014	Sep 5, 2014	Steps & Traditions 11 & 12
Jan-Feb 2015	Nov 5, 2014	Steps & Traditions 1 & 2
Mar-Apr 2015	Jan 5, 2015	Steps & Traditions 3 & 4

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