

# The Outer Circle

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

PO Box 70949, Houston, TX 77270

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## **The following actions were approved by the Board of Trustees in February 2014**

- Approved revised mission statement: “The ISO serves member groups by helping carry the SAA message of recovery to the sex addict who still suffers.”
- Approved vision statement: “Our vision is to be a premier global resource for recovery in support of SAA and the sex addict who still suffers.”

## **The following actions were approved by the Board of Trustees in March 2014**

- That the implementation schedule stated in the proviso of the motion to change the composition and method of election of the ISO Board of Trustees and the ISO Literature Committee be extended by one year.
- Approved MATF Committee recommendation to send a letter to all registered member groups and intergroups.
- That the Policy Internal Standing Committee be approved to make substantive changes to the contents of the Board Manual with the understanding that the members of the Board will be afforded an opportunity for input and discussion throughout the process.
- That the ISO provide the Chair of the Conference Charter Committee reimbursement of expenses in an amount not to exceed \$600.00 to attend the 2014 annual meeting of the Conference.
- Approved the hotel contract for the 2015 International Convention.

### **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/](http://www.saa-iso.org/)

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

## ISO Structure Committee Prepares for the Upcoming 2014 Conference

The ISO Structure Committee (ISO-S) is in the process of finalizing its plans for the annual meeting of the upcoming 2014 Conference. This year, ISO-S will be sponsoring four motions for consideration by the delegates.

The two Bylaws amendments passed by the delegates in Summerlin last year will come up for ratification. To give this year's delegates one last chance to ask questions and make comments about the proposed changes, the ISO-S will hold an open workshop on Thursday evening before the annual meeting starts on Friday.

It is anticipated that, if both of the Bylaws amendments are ratified by the delegates, the recommendations for implementation of a nominating process and an area formation process will be presented for initial informal discussion by this year's delegates and then referred to member groups throughout the fellowship for further discussion and feedback during the 2014-2015 service year.

In addition to the Bylaws amendments, the ISO-S will introduce two new motions this year. The first recommends deferring implementation of the Board-LitCom amendment for one year to allow additional discussion of the proposed nominating process, before it comes to the Conference for approval.

The second new motion recommends that the business procedures used by the Conference in the future be modified to allow motions to be sent out to member groups for comment in advance of being considered by the delegates.

### Feedback from the Fellowship

The motions for the annual meeting are posted on the ISO service website ([www.saa-iso.org](http://www.saa-iso.org)) in the Member Services area. The username and password can be obtained from the ISO office.

Questions and comments may be addressed directly to the ISO-S by email to [info@saa-recovery.org](mailto:info@saa-recovery.org) with "ISO-S" in the subject line or by postal mail to ISO, Attn: ISO-S, PO Box 70949, Houston, TX 77270.

Thank you,  
—ISO Structure Committee

## LGBT Outreach Subcommittee News

Our projects, as reported in the Nov-Dec 2013 issue of *The Outer Circle*, continue with no substantial updates at this time. We submitted our annual report for the current service year, so please look for it in other ISO reports.

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

We are also in need of active volunteers to serve on the committee. The current service year is coming to a close. New trusted servants are needed for positions of Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary and for people to answer email inquiries.

The work of the committee, the filling of the vacant service positions and the consideration of projects for the new service year will be on our agenda to be discussed at the upcoming conference. All are welcome to attend.

For more information or to volunteer for any of the current LGBT Outreach activities, email us at [GLBT@saa-recovery.org](mailto: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.

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](http://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!

## **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/](http://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](http://www.saa-store.org/audio).

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

## **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/](http://www.loc.gov/nls/)

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

## 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 &amp; 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.”**

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## **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.

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## 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.

June 22, 2014  
July 27, 2014  
August 24, 2014  
September 28, 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](http://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](mailto: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 approval of  
our **newest** piece of SAA literature:

### ***“Getting a Sponsor”***

is now available online at the ISO website store:  
**[www.saa-store.org](http://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.

## ISO Income/Expense Summary as of March 31, 2014

	Mar 14	Monthly Avg	Jan - Mar 14
<b>Income</b>			
<b>Sales</b>	21,186.97	20,301.95	60,905.85
<b>Shipping &amp; Handling</b>	2,296.57	2,202.16	6,606.47
<b>Donations</b>	32,330.81	31,511.19	94,533.56
<b>Investment Income</b>	5,064.83	1,700.61	5,101.83
<b>Other Income</b>	0.00	6.88	20.65
<b>Total Income</b>	60,879.18	55,722.79	167,168.36
<b>Cost of Goods Sold</b>	8,056.19	7,633.74	22,901.22
<b>Gross Profit</b>	52,822.99	48,089.05	144,267.14
<b>Expense</b>			
<b>Wages &amp; Benefits</b>	22,223.69	22,975.43	68,926.28
<b>Payroll Taxes</b>	1,954.90	2,454.71	7,364.14
<b>Payroll Expenses</b>	19.18	18.65	55.96
<b>Office Expenses</b>	923.91	787.99	2,363.96
<b>Occupancy Expenses</b>	1,182.75	2,140.27	6,420.81
<b>Communications</b>	777.26	610.43	1,831.30
<b>Travel-Related Expenses</b>	0.00	4,000.72	12,002.17
<b>Professional Fees</b>	0.00	502.67	1,508.00
<b>Board/Committee Expenses</b>	2,544.13	1,683.36	5,050.09
<b>The Outer Circle</b>	1,508.45	1,021.75	3,065.24
<b>Financial Charges</b>	1,894.97	1,541.34	4,624.01
<b>Depreciation</b>	175.00	175.00	525.00
<b>Bad Debts/Refunds</b>	13.17	114.66	343.99
<b>Total Expense</b>	33,217.41	38,026.98	114,080.95
<b>Net Income</b>	<b>19,605.58</b>	<b>10,062.06</b>	<b>30,186.19</b>

## Financial Results for March 2014

In the month of March our budget showed a surplus of \$19,605.58. We had budgeted for a surplus of \$5,921. We were over our budget estimate by \$13,684.58. Some of the reasons for the additional surplus in revenue were: the Houston Giving Thanks gave \$9,456 more than was estimated, our endowment fund exceeded our estimate by \$1,047, our expenses were \$1,215.59 below our estimate.

Our sales revenue for the SAA Green Book was over our estimate by \$947.44 for March and has exceeded our estimate by \$2,538.72 for 2014.

Our pamphlet and booklet sales exceeded our estimate by \$867.78 for March and have exceeded our estimate by \$1,806.07 for 2014. Our bronze medallion sales exceeded our estimate by \$500 in March and have exceeded our estimate by \$1,691.88 in 2014. Our chip sales exceeded our estimate by \$756.25 in March and have exceeded our estimate by \$1,079.43 in 2014.

Our total sales for March exceeded our estimate by \$3,151.97.

Individual donations exceeded our estimate by \$10,562.02 for March and have exceeded our estimate by \$14,397.49 for 2014. This increase was mainly due to the Houston Giving Thanks event. Group donations were below our estimate by \$1,281.21 in March and are below our estimate by \$5413.93 for 2014.

Our product inventory is valued at \$41,391.04.

Our expenses were below our budgeted estimate by \$1,215.59 in March.

Summary of the annual budget (January 1, 2014 to March 31, 2014):

- Sales have exceeded our estimate by \$6,800.85
- Donations have exceeded our estimate by \$8,983.56
- Expenses are below our estimate by \$2,711.05

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\*\*](mailto: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.

January, February and March 2014 have certainly been one of the more eventful first three months of the year for me. A couple of major things happened that I was not anticipating on January 1, one of them being that I was sent to Dubai for my job for about two-and-a-half weeks starting in mid-February. I had some trepidation about this trip, having never been further from the mainland United States than Mexico City, San Juan, or Vancouver.



*The topic for the January/February  
2015 issue is "success."*



For the most part, I didn't experience much in the way of culture shock while I was there since Dubai, a relatively new city, seemed to me to be in many ways essentially a Western city, but located in the UAE. Being concerned about coming across as an "ugly American," I did my best to learn some Arabic phrases such as "good morning" and "thank you"; I had a difficult time keeping the phrases in my head even while I was there, and I don't think I could call any of them up right now, although I might recognize one or another of them if I heard them spoken.

One area which did come as something of a surprise to me was the slower pace of life. I don't normally notice such things when visiting other cities since I am normally either on vacation or at an SAA convention, and so I am operating on a different mindset anyway. However, in this case I was there for work so I was still thinking along those lines.

The people in the city were extremely friendly and relaxed. And they had good reason to be. I did not notice anybody there who seemed to be experiencing our standard pressure to get things done quickly, other than the other members of our crew and myself. We had a fair amount of things to accomplish in a short time frame, and the folks in our city never let our

crisis mode ruffle them. I would send an e-mail to one of the people in our host company and it might be as much as two days before I got a response. The people over there also had reasonably firm boundaries about weekends as well, which were Fridays and Saturdays.

There were times when I felt extremely frustrated, especially being under several other forms of pressure. And overall, I thought that seeing this slower-paced lifestyle was the most valuable experience I brought away from the trip. Even though things did not happen at the speed that any of us were used to seeing—and we probably did come across as “ugly Americans” in that regard—everything did get done and our trip was a success. Now, the trick is going to be keeping that mindset now that I am back home.

Thanks to the wonders of the internet, I was able to edit the rough draft of the March/April *Outer Circle* from Dubai. In the past, I have edited rough drafts of the newsletter from New York and Seattle. I can't help but think that if I were not stepping down as editor, I might one day get to edit a rough draft from Mars.

I have not included the next installment of our popular series on the Traditions in this issue, partly because I am trying to include some of the other articles that have been waiting for a while and partly because we have a lengthy and wonderful piece this issue on temporary sponsorship that includes a number of great resources. This issue also includes past articles from 2006 through 2009; that series will conclude next issue with articles from 2010 through 2013. I'm hoping to include the next Traditions article in the next issue, depending on how many post-convention articles will be included. I will be passing the remainder of that on to my successor, who will soon be chosen.

If you are planning to attend the 2014 SAA convention and want to write an article about your experiences, I more than welcome it. Please send it to me at [toc@saa-recovery.org](mailto:toc@saa-recovery.org) by May 31. Please contact the office if you want to submit the article in a way other than electronically, so we can make arrangements for me to receive it by May 31.

The topic for the January/February 2015 issue is “success.” I feel that I have had a successful life despite the fact that the things that I have wanted to do with it are not the kinds of things that people generally want to pay money for. How do you view success, in recovery, in life in general, or ...? Do you think that being in recovery has modified your view of what constitutes success?

That is all for this issue. I hope to see you at the convention, and I look forward to talking with you in the July/August issue of *The Outer Circle* once more.

## The Circles and My Sobriety

By Z.

I first came into SAA when I was so beaten down that I didn't know where else to turn. I think the concept of the circles was still fairly new in the SAA program; be that as it may, my sponsor never told me about them.

As a result, I didn't have a clue how to gauge my sobriety. Accordingly, I counted the slightest word, thought, or especially gesture as yet another acting-out experience. I had started a ninety-in-ninety at the time and, had I chosen to do so, I could have taken a new desire chip at every single meeting I attended. I also found myself in the dilemma that once I had committed one of those very minor acts, I considered that I had already acted out for that day, and so might as well go through with it or die trying, since I had already lost my sobriety once more.

Between my difficulties in staying what I considered to be "sober" and my failure to use any of the tools of the program, I soon left SAA for roughly a year.

When I came back into the program, after hitting a few new bottoms, and before choosing a new sponsor, I met somebody at one of my first meetings who had not been around much longer than I had. We got to be pretty good friends, and it did not take him long to tell me about the circles; in fact, he could not believe that I didn't already know about them.

I still think that it is the middle circle that saved my life. I only had one bottom-line behavior, the one that was occupying all of my life and slowly draining all of it out of me, the thing that, when I wasn't actually doing it, was occupying all of my fantasies. So when I put my first middle circle together, it consisted of essentially all the things I would do to get prepared for another evening of acting out. One of the big acts in my middle circle was driving to one of my favorite acting-out places. My very favorite place was almost fifty miles from where I lived, so I had plenty of time to reflect on my intentions to act out; obviously, I knew I was in the middle circle. However, there were other similar places closer to home where I could act out, and I found myself in those places on a fairly regular basis. Once again, my only reason for being in those places was to act out, so there was never any doubt that I was engaging in middle circle behavior when going to them.

Because of my difficulty in finding willing acting-out partners who met my very specific criteria, it often happened that I could spend many hours over the course of an evening unsuccessfully trying to act out. Even though I didn't feel especially good about myself when returning home after one of those adventures, I could not, thanks to the middle circle, gauge myself as having acted out that night. This was, of course, in stark contrast to my first time in SAA where I constantly considered myself to be in acting-out mode.

After a short while, I started considering these episodes as moderate

successes in my program, and actually began to feel a little bit better about myself. As time wore on, these middle-circle incidents became less and less frequent. I still remember the time I got in my car early on a Saturday evening to head towards an acting-out place. Part of the way there, I said to myself, "I don't really want to do this; regardless of whether I end up in inner circle or stay in middle circle for the next several hours, I will still have wasted my evening." And I turned around and went home.

I wish I could say that that was my last time in the program that I ever made an effort to act out, but that was still several months or even years away, I don't remember which. However, thanks to my Higher Power speaking to me in the person of that man who was too new in the program to be my sponsor but who gave me a gift—the Three Circles—as big as any sponsor could have given me, I became ready to go back and start the Steps again. I had still not even begun to think about the outer circle; that would be another article in itself; nevertheless, I had one of the crucial tools that eventually helped me to reach a place of sobriety in my life.

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## One View of "Higher Power"

by Thea D.

*[Editor's Note: The following article appeared in the January/February 2008 issue of the SAA newsletter, which was renamed The Outer Circle beginning with the July/August 2006 issue.]*

I once heard a definition of "Higher Power" as "that to which we look for our highest good." Our Higher Power is the power to which we look to for help, comfort, to get us out of troubles, or to get us through. By this definition, for us addicts, our "Higher Power" before recovery had been our addiction; we turned to it whenever we were troubled or needed comfort.

Using this definition, another possible "higher power" is intellect. We may try to reason out everything; before we change, we may argue, we need to understand the problem. If we are smart enough, we can argue almost anything convincingly. We may become caught up in ongoing, unresolved internal debates, which paralyze us from actually doing much of anything. One brother I know used to answer each piece of feedback he was offered with the phrase, "but I don't understand..." After we caught on, we would respond with the old saying, "Understanding is the booby prize!" It was not until he gave up his false higher power of understanding that he was able to achieve sobriety and serenity.

To what do you look for your "highest good"?

## 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:

I've been coming to SAA for three months. There is a guy at my meeting who keeps looking at me. I feel myself falling for him. What do I do?

—In Love?

Dear In Love?:

It is not uncommon to experience this. You say you have been coming for three months. That is great! And there is so much more than just going to meetings. Have you worked with a sober member to develop your list of inner-circle behaviors and have you been staying abstinent from those? Have you found a sponsor? Have you begun working the Steps?

Romance, dating, and intimacy may be deeply intertwined with our addiction. They can be especially difficult to grapple with early in our journey of sobriety. Being attracted to another SAA member might be a blossoming of our spiritual side, or it could be a distraction from the work of recovery, a subtle way for our addiction to reassert itself. It is important to go slowly in new relationships, observing our feelings at each stage and taking the time to truly experience the feelings. This takes courage and a sober willingness. With time in sobriety and the wisdom gained through working the steps, we can participate in intimate relationships in a healthier way.

The quick answer? You do not have to act on these feelings. Allow yourself some time. Seek out a sponsor and talk to her. Work the steps. With the spiritual awakening mentioned in Step Twelve you will be better able to see if this man has a mutually beneficial place in your life. If it is supposed to happen, he will still be there.

—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

## A Program of Action by Paul P.

The program works when I work the program. I often hear this expression after meetings. For me, SAA has been a program based on action and not belief. I can believe in its concepts and principles that help so many; and unless I develop a program of abstinence and replace unhealthy behaviors with healthy ones, I'm not taking action.

I was at my wit's end in 2005 when I couldn't take any more negative consequences from my bad choices, so I chose recovery. I came into SAA as a broken man, desperate for ideas that would help free me from the bondage of self. I believed in the addiction, rather than in a powerful way out toward a better life. I came to meetings, made half-hearted promises to others and to myself, and found myself continuing to struggle. I was unwilling to take action by working a program of recovery. Without action and a commitment to staying sober, I am doomed to failure.

This program differs depending on one's goals, and if I lack a clear plan of action, I will only have beliefs and principles to hold onto. I came into the program with self-medication as my only means of coping with life's upheavals. I now cope by using my creative outlets such as music, photography, writing, and public speaking, to name a few. I also have drawn a line in the sand for off-limit behaviors that I call my "inner circle." I remember the pain, and work to surrender those behaviors to a new way of life. I had to embrace a life that included "living one day at a time," and being accountable to a group. I have hit some milestones, and I have adopted a belief that those who maintain long-term sobriety are people who work a daily program. Getting a sponsor, going to meetings, meditation and phone calls are all tools, and these tools have helped many stay sober and feel the promises in life. After all, the program works if I work the program.

### ***"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](http://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!

## Dear Will

Submitted by the Men's Outreach Committee

Dear Will:

I have been sober for about seven months now. I did a First Step a couple of months ago, and I have put together my circles. I have a few things in my outer circle, and my sponsor keeps telling me that I need to pay more attention to the outer circle and think of what else I can put in there. I really don't get it, Will; I'm staying sober, thanks to the help of my inner and middle circles. I don't see why he thinks that the outer circle is so important. Can you enlighten me?

—Sober for Today

Dear Sober for Today:

Your question reminds Will of the quote by Criswell at the very beginning of the classic bad movie *Plan 9 from Outer Space*: "We are all interested in the future, for that is where you and I are going to spend the rest of our lives." (And don't tell Will you haven't seen *Plan 9 from Outer Space*.) Anyway, you're probably wondering what a classic bad movie would have to do with your sobriety. So Will is going to enlighten you.

Believe it or not, SFT, Will once also believed that the outer circle was not very important, certainly not as important as the other two circles. By doing so, Will was essentially looking at his sobriety through the wrong end of the binoculars, as it were, and seeing his sobriety as a series of "thou shalt nots." So Will was content to be sober and to not be doing the things that he used to do, but he had not taken any time to fill up those gaps, other than doing the obvious things such as prayer and meditation.

Will would go to SAA meetings, which were usually over no later than 9:00 p.m.. Even when the group would go out for coffee afterwards, Will was usually home no later than 10:15 or so. Now, Will is a big classic movie buff, as you may have already guessed. You may not have already guessed that Will is also a night owl, and his sponsor told him a long time ago to stop worrying about whether it was his being a night owl that led to his addiction or his addiction that caused him to start being a night owl. "It doesn't matter, Will."

Anyway, it was easy for Will to go home and either turn on the classic movie channel on television, which he is grateful is still there after all these years, or pop in a VHS tape (remember those?). These activities, pleasant as they were, were probably not enough to keep Will out of his addiction forever, because they involved a certain degree of passivity. Will could sit back on the couch and let his mind drift. And eventually his mind would start drifting back to the addiction.

Will eventually figured out that he was letting his mind become something of a blank slate. He knew that just sitting home and passively watching movies was not good for his sobriety, and, being the night owl that he is, he had enough snap to realize that going to bed early was only going to make things worse.

Although he can sometimes be a bit slow on the uptake, Will is nothing if not resourceful. He started thinking about some activities he could do with his late evenings. He began by thinking back to the things he used to get enjoyment out of when he was a kid. He remembered that he used to enjoy stargazing, so he bought the books he knew from his childhood that outlined the constellations. He still doesn't know much more than where Orion is located and that it is only up during the winter months, and it gave him something to do all the same. He started playing the piano again also; he's still not very good at it, but at least it is fun. And, probably most important, he started finding some new activities that were recovery-based, such as working with men who were living in recovery houses, many of which are open even late at night, and writing letters to prisoners.

Without realizing it, Will had started getting involved in those dreaded outer circle activities. And getting involved in these activities kept the demons of addiction at bay while, at the same time, they continued to lose their power over him. Will had now arrived at the place where he was going to spend the rest of his life, to get back to the Criswell statement he quoted earlier. So, Will started formalizing those activities into an outer circle.

In other words, SFT, the inner and middle circles helped Will to *get* sober, and it is the outer circle that is helping him to *stay* sober. And now, if you will excuse him, Will is heading over to the gym; this is something he only did with great reluctance when he was a kid, but this gym has a personal television on each of the aerobic machines, so he gets to watch classic movies and engage in another outer circle activity at the same time.

—Will

## **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/](http://www.saa-iso.org/)

and select "Volunteer" to fill out a volunteer form.

## Temporary Sponsorship

by Marilyn S., Nashville, Tennessee, SAA

Nashville, Tennessee, SAA identified a need for additional sponsors. We created a committee that was tasked with sponsorship development and twelve-step issues. We surveyed several SAA groups and online resources in an attempt to avoid “re-creating the wheel.”

In starting our sponsorship development program, we elected to start with temporary sponsors since we could find no specific information about their role. We defined a temporary sponsor as: “A more experienced person in recovery who guides the less experienced through the program over a six-week period of time. This is a one-on-one relationship focused on getting oriented to SAA, using the tools of recovery, understanding/starting to work the steps, and obtaining a long-term sponsor.”

The following document was developed as a tool for temporary sponsors or the initial phase for a new sponsor. This document was approved by the Nashville Intergroup on 1/4/2014. We are distributing these to our groups, and plan to hold training sessions for people interested in learning more about sponsorship. We are working on a resource packet for temporary sponsors and a more in-depth one for sponsors. Also in development is a PowerPoint presentation about the qualities and characteristics of a sponsor, how to develop a sponsor relationship, and tasks sponsors perform.

The guide can be utilized by other SAA groups by replacing the Nashville-specific content with their group specific information. We want to state that this tool is just an option, and is not the only way to approach temporary sponsorship. We acknowledge that not all sponsees follow the same time schedule. Individual variances are to be expected. Additional content may be added by temporary sponsors based on the needs and readiness of the individual sponsee.

We would be happy to share a copy with other SAA groups. Our contact is: [saanashville@yahoo.com](mailto:saanashville@yahoo.com). *[Editor's Note: The guide was submitted to The Outer Circle in chart format. After some consultation with the oversight committee regarding ease of publication in chart format in the newsletter, and with the permission of the author, I decided to print the guide in outline format. Copies of the guide sent from SAA Nashville would more than likely arrive in chart format which would probably be a little clearer than the outline format adopted here.]*

### A Guide for Temporary Sponsors

**1. FOCUS: Did the newcomer have an opportunity to be Twelfth-Stepped?**

**ACTION:** (a) If no, ask them if they would like to meet with you and another

long term member to ask questions. (b) Invite them to meet you for coffee/soft drinks after a meeting. (c) Stay after a meeting to follow up on any questions.

RESOURCES: Current sponsors and intergroup representatives and officers may assist in answering questions or explaining program areas.

## **2. FOCUS: Did the newcomer get a newcomer packet? Meeting list?**

ACTION: If no, give them a packet. Ask them if they have any questions about it.

RESOURCES: Newcomer packets are available from Intergroup reps, or meeting locations. *Marilyn, Andrew, and James C. have extra copies.*

## **3. FOCUS: How do we make a newcomer feel welcome?**

ACTION: (a) Include newcomer in social gatherings in SAA. (b) Talk to newcomer about what happens in the meetings and appropriate behavior (crosstalk, dress, language, etc.). (c) Encourage them to ask questions. (d) Ask newcomer to assist with: chairs, coffee, literature, chips, and readings. (e) Encourage newcomer to make phone calls to sponsor and others in the program. (f) Explain that “hugs” are optional, healthy boundaries encouraged.

RESOURCES: (a) “Sex Addicts Anonymous” (hereafter referred to as “the Green Book”), Chapter Two, pages 10-13. (b) The Green Book is available to read online, and may be purchased in print or electronic form at [saa-recovery.org](http://saa-recovery.org). Intergroup also has Green Books for sale. (c) “Safe and Sexually Sober Meetings: Helping Women Feel Welcome in your Meeting” brochure (available to read online). *This doesn't apply just to women!* (d) Women's Meeting on Monday night. (e) “SAA and the Lesbian / Gay / Bisexual / Transgender Sex Addict” brochure (available to read online). (f) SAA/ ISO Website: [saa-recovery.org](http://saa-recovery.org).

## **4. FOCUS: How do we begin the temporary sponsorship relationship?**

ACTION: (a) Define framework and boundaries for the temporary sponsorship relationship. (b) Establish a working temporary sponsorship relationship.

RESOURCES: (a) Definition of temporary sponsor as suggested by SAA Nashville Intergroup: *A more experienced person in recovery who guides the less experienced through the program over a six-week period of time. This is a one-on-one relationship focused on getting oriented to SAA, using the tools of recovery, understanding/starting to work the steps, and obtaining a long term sponsor.* (b) Article from Plain Brown Rapper: “Sponsorship Contracts”, Volume 18, Issue 5, Sept-Oct 2006 (Located in newcomer packet and also electronically at [saa-recovery.org](http://saa-recovery.org)). (c) “Sponsorship Agreement” contract from Wiki files (available in Nashville Temporary Sponsor Resource Packet).

## 5. FOCUS: How does a newcomer get started?

**ACTION:** (a) Encourage meeting attendance—at least six meetings before deciding whether it seems to fit. (b) Give options for phone and electronic meetings. (c) Encourage phone calls to sponsor and others in the program. (d) Suggest reading Green Book. (e) Focus on solution rather than the problem.

**RESOURCES:** (a) “Getting Started in SAA: A Beginners Packet for Recovering Sex Addicts” brochure (available online at [saa-recovery.org/SAALiterature/English/GettingStarted/](http://saa-recovery.org/SAALiterature/English/GettingStarted/)). (b) Telephone and electronic meetings are listed at [www.saa-recovery.org](http://www.saa-recovery.org). (c) CD “Getting Started in SAA” by Chris R. & Edward C. from 2009 ISO Convention. (d) CD “Staying in the Solution” by Santi L. from 2005 ISO Convention. Both CD’s are available for purchase from ISO or in mobile lending library. For library info contact Marilyn or Andrew. These are also available via MP3 recordings that can be downloaded for \$3 each or ordered as CDs for \$6. <http://saa-store.org/audio/>

## 6. FOCUS: What are tools of recovery?

**ACTION:** Introduce the idea of tools of recovery: meetings, telephone, sponsor, journaling, service, boundaries, slogans, meditation, prayer, literature, and working Steps.

**RESOURCES:** (a) “Tools of Recovery: A Practical Guide for New Members of SAA” (available to read online). (b) The Green Book (Chapter Four).

## 7. FOCUS: What are the Three Circles?

**ACTION:** (a) Explain the Three Circles tool for sobriety. (b) Review the Three Circles brochure in the newcomer packet. (c) Give newcomer a blank “Three Circles” diagram. (d) Assist the sponsee in developing the three circles and setting boundaries.

**RESOURCES:** (a) The Green Book (Chapter Two, Pages 16-19). (b) “The Three Circles” brochure (available in the newcomer packet and online). (c) “Three Circles Diagram” in the newcomer packet. (d) Additional “Three Circles” diagrams (several options) available from Marilyn electronically, Intergroup, and in Temporary Sponsor Resource Guide.

## 8. FOCUS: Does the newcomer have to give up all sexual activity?

**ACTION:** (a) No, in SAA the focus is on avoiding the most destructive, demoralizing, and illegal behaviors. (b) Explain how sobriety is defined in SAA. (c) Encourage reading the brochure in the newcomer packet, and on SAA website.

**RESOURCES:** (a) “Abstinence and Boundaries in SAA” brochure (available to read online). (b) “Abstinence” brochure (included in the newcomer packet).

## 9. FOCUS: Newcomer is in a lot of emotional pain/chaos.

**ACTION:** (a) Pain is a great motivator, and is probably what led the newcomer to SAA. We have to walk through the pain to get to the other side. Medicating only covers up the symptom, it does not “relieve” the cause. (b) Keep focus on one day at a time. (c) Behavior has to change first. The thoughts and feelings will follow. However, there may be a time lag. (d) Encourage staying in the present. Guilt and shame are rooted in the past. Fear is future based. (e) Share your experience, strength, and hope about dealing with anxiety and emotional pain. What tools worked for you? (f) Meetings, meetings, meetings. Ninety meetings in ninety days has been life-changing for many. If that seems overwhelming, suggest thirty in thirty; they can always “re-up.” Don’t forget telephone and electronic meeting options. (g) Use tools of recovery. (h) Outer Circle behaviors. (i) Identify triggers. (j) HALT (Hungry, Angry, Lonely, and Tired). (k) SOS (Scared, Overwhelmed, and Sick). (l) Be aware that as one addiction goes down, another may manifest (i.e., overeating, overworking, etc.). (m) Slogans: “Fake it until you make it.” “Act as if.” “One day at a time.” “Easy does it.” “This too shall pass.” “Trust the process.” “Keep it simple.” (n) Serenity Prayer.

**RESOURCES:** (a) CD “A Model for Living in the Present” by Jim L. from 2009 ISO Convention is available for purchase from ISO or in mobile lending library. Contact Marilyn or Andrew for lending library. (b) The Green Book, “Personal Stories,” starting on page 99. (c) AA Big Book (Alcoholics Anonymous): “Acceptance” quote page 449 (third edition) or page 417 (fourth edition).

## 10. FOCUS: How do we start working the First Step?

**ACTION:** (a) There are a variety of ways to approach working the First Step. *The most important thing is to start the process.* (b) Suggested to use the First Step guide to recovery or the Step One Worksheet. (c) At this point, a decision needs to be made about continued sponsorship, or finding a “long-term” sponsor. (d) Sponsor along with sponsee decides on format or resources to use based on need, experience, and personal preferences. List of commonly used resources listed here are OPTIONS for doing step work.

**RESOURCES:** (a) “First Step to Recovery: A Guide to Working the First Step” brochure (available online SAA website). (b) The Green Book (Chapter 5, Pages 20-25). (c) Plain Brown Rapper (Volume 16, Issue 6, Pages 12-15): “Step One Worksheet” (included in the newcomer packet). (d) greenbookstepstudy.org website sponsored by Plano TX SAA. (e) Twelve Step Workbook Options: (1) *Gentle Path Through the Twelve Steps* by Patrick Carnes. (2) *Twelve Steps to Recovery Workbook for Sexual Addiction* produced by Charlie Risien and members of SAA fellowship in Texas. Available digitally from Marilyn. (3) *Hope and Recovery*. (4) AA Big Book. (5) *The Life Recovery Bible* (a Christian centered approach) Tyndale House Publishers and *The Life Recovery Workbook* by

Stephen Arterburn and David Stoop. (6) *Facing the Shadow Workbook* by Patrick Carnes.

### **11. FOCUS: How does a sponsee find a long-term sponsor?**

**ACTION:** (a) Temporary sponsor and sponsee may elect to continue a working relationship. (b) Temporary sponsor may assist sponsee in selection of long-term sponsor. (c) Don't "Look" for a sponsor, "Listen" for one.

**RESOURCES:** "Getting a Sponsor" brochure (available to read online from SAA and in Nashville Temporary Sponsor Resource Guide).

We would like to thank Paul M. from Houston and Dave R. from Plano for sharing sponsorship documents from their respective groups. Thank you to Tom K. in New York for feedback (permission granted to mention their names).

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## **What Keeps Me Sober**

by Paul C.

*[Editor's Note: The following article appeared in the September/October 2009 issue of The Outer Circle.]*

I have been in recovery from addiction to pornography for over seven years, and have had a hard time staying sober. I would get thirty to sixty days, or maybe only a week, and then slip. I consider myself religious, so this was a double frustration: my prayer life didn't seem to be doing the trick, although applying the program to all other areas of my life has made a "life-changing" difference for me, especially in my relationship to God. I just wasn't staying sober on the internet.

Then I was at a religious retreat and picked up a used book. The author said this: if I am tempted, it is because there is an unmet need or stress that immediately preceded it, and I reach for the addiction as an antidote. He said that I should not fight the temptation directly, but instead ask God to soothe the unmet need, whether it was loneliness, anger, betrayal, boredom, or some other unidentified need. Then I should wait two minutes and see how I felt.

It works every time. I was used to running the first three Steps on any temptation to act out—I'm powerless, God has all power, I surrender this to His care—but I never identified the cause in the moment. Even in the middle of the night I use this prayer to be released and go back to sleep, and know that I'm never alone.

## First and Ninth Step

by David S.

*[Editor's Note: The following article appeared in the November/December 2006 issue of the SAA newsletter, which was then called The Plain Brown Rapper]*

I had a slip a few weeks ago and it cost me. Not just money, but peace of mind as well. I had a few weeks of clean sobriety going and then, all of a sudden, I was on the phone lines acting out. I had used up my "free introductory" membership and now it was time for the fifty-percent-off deal. I took it. I ran naked to the garage, got the family credit card out of the car, and jumped back into bed and onto the phone (talk about powerless and unmanageable!). I proceeded to act out for an hour or so, and then my paid membership ran out. But I could get an instant extension with the push of a button, as they already had my credit card information on file. So I pushed the button and continued acting out. It was nothing new or exciting; I just wanted the high.

Within a few days I told my wife, my sponsor, and my group about the slip. I made direct amends to my wife and have been sober of the chat lines ever since. However, I needed to make financial amends to my family. My teenage son didn't need to know the details, but the family didn't deserve to lose the money either. So I began to think of ways to pay back the money without burdening my family with more lost time by working extra hours. Then it came to me: my guitar collection. I play music for a living and therefore have a number of guitars for various uses. One guitar I had purchased while on tour in Florida. I remember one night in the hotel room alternating between playing the new guitar and acting out on the phone. When morning came, I hurried to the front desk to pay my phone bill before anyone else could see what I had done. The shame was overpowering. Then I found out that the tour manager had already paid the bill in full. He had to have seen the calls I made, or maybe not. Either way, we never spoke of it.

So here I am, fifteen years later, needing money to make a Ninth Step amends. I took that guitar (and a few other things) and sold them for less than half of their worth. But I was able to cover the credit card bill and not burden my family any further.

I don't miss the guitar as such. I still have nine others. But I do notice the empty space in my collection and am reminded of how cunning, baffling, and powerful this disease is.

The good news is that I no longer feel the shame that I used to feel, just appropriate guilt and responsibility. What a gift. Thank you all for keeping me sober. Were it not for the fellowship of SAA, who knows what I would be selling, and why I would need the money.

## Watch Your Step[s]!

by Ed G.

The road to recovery is, or should be, a long and winding road that, in essence, takes me not to a destination (recovery) but rather on a journey of self-discovery. After all, there are twelve different routes (Steps, if you will) and there is no time limit to reach the goal of recovery. There are twists and turns while following those routes not unlike those found on mountainous highways. As with those twists and turns, I sometimes find I have to back up and try a different route to get to the next way point of my journey of discovery.

My journey begins when I recognize that something is amiss in my life and is causing me problems at work and with relationships. I came to realize that life was not meant to be that way. Oh, certainly, life has its pitfalls; but it's when I find myself crawling out of more pitfalls than riding the normally smooth highways of life that I begin to realize that something is not right with the way I am living. Once that realization happens, I have navigated the first highway of discovery. It has not been an easy ride, but it gets me in position to tackle the other highways to recovery.

Since I discovered on my first highway that I am the one who has caused my current problem, it only makes sense that I would make a lousy coach for finding my way to the correct route. As I said earlier, I discovered something was amiss in my life—I was what was amiss. Consequently, it is now necessary that a second party, who sees me in a different light, enter the picture. That “party” goes by many names, and in letting go of my self-management, I turn to what is referred to as my Higher Power (HP). Not being able to put myself on the right path alone, I use my HP (to many, that HP is called God) to be my spiritual guide. Also, by this time I probably have acquired a sponsor, a mentor, to help steer me through the minutiae of my life and how my choices led me in the wrong direction. It becomes a matter of accepting that I can't do for myself what needs to be done to gain recovery from this “cunning, baffling, and powerful” affliction called sex addiction—and it is why I came to SAA.

At this point, we accept that our journey is barely getting underway. As Robert Frost said, “and miles to go before I sleep.” That quote reminds me that my journey of discovery has yet a long way to go.

For the sake of brevity, as well as space concerns in the newsletter, I won't go over all the “routes” I must travel to reach that plateau of serenity I call recovery. Suffice it to say I now begin my introspective look at myself; with our HP's and my sponsor's help, I can uncover those characteristics within me that have led me down the wrong path of life. In doing so, I find it necessary to share my life's journey with others. Again, I don't always find all of my faults, so it helps to seek wise counsel from others who have “been there; done that.”

It goes without saying (but I will), that as I traveled the wrong route, I have

hurt others in various ways. It is an unfortunate fact of life that, with my illness, I have affected others by my negative sexual addiction. I don't think for a minute that the use of pornography, in all its forms, with or without masturbation, is not hurting someone—besides myself. Someone somewhere has been put in a position to pose for such pornography and that has exposed that person to my world for my so-called “enjoyment.” As I get further into my addiction, I generally move away from my family and friends, for I know they would not approve of my actions. It doesn't take too long to realize that even I don't approve of my own actions.

As I near the final routes to my recovery, I have recognized that I have hurt a number of people. It would be nice if I could make amends to them all, but that is rarely possible. Sometimes all I can do is write a letter to them, but not mail it, saying what needs to be said if I could do it face-to-face.

As I said in the beginning, the road to recovery is long and often fraught with setbacks. But as I close in on my final Steps, I can look back and see my life a lot more clearly. I can also find that I am getting quite good at turning my negative characteristics into positive ones, or at least rid myself of the burdensome faults I have discovered along my journey. I have found that because of conversation with others I have met along the way, with my HP, and with my sponsor, a new understanding of myself has emerged and is now ready to carry the miracle of recovery to others with whom I may come into contact during our journey.

So there you have it. Whether I call them highways, routes, or paths that I traveled through to reach my goal of sexual sobriety, they are more familiarly known as Steps—and there are twelve of them. They are not unlike the steps I must take in putting together a child's new toy. If I follow the directions (the Steps), I will come to a successful conclusion—recovery. Whatever term I use, I do take Steps to regain my place in society. And it can be a tenuous place at best because if I don't keep myself aware of where I am on my journey to recovery, I may miss a Step and find, that I am not very welcome in society. So, unless I take the time to look back at my recent journey, and start putting my life back together again, I may find myself back where I started and perhaps in a worse situation.

Note: Recovery is not a permanent state of being even though I may have completed the Twelve Steps. It is important to periodically take a good hard look at myself to see if I am slipping back into old patterns. If I find that I am, or that I have discovered some additional negative traits, I may revisit one or more of the Steps as needed to increase my awareness of who I want to be and not what I am.

## Return to New York

by Mike L.

*[Editor's Note: This article is excerpted from "From the Editor" of the May/June 2007 issue of The Plain Brown Rapper. Because my experience here was so powerful, I want to share it one more time.]*

I recently returned from a trip to New York City. The trip was significant to me in several ways. It was the first actual vacation I have taken in years. While I can't complain that I don't get to travel enough (although I often complain anyway), every trip I have been on for a long, long time has been tied into a goal or expectation that someone else had for me or that I had for myself. The only goal I had on this particular trip, aside from finally keeping a promise I made to myself back in 2003, was to enjoy myself, and I did.

Being a city boy, I've always loved New York, going back as far as 1965, when my family visited the 1964/1965 World's Fair that summer. However, I've had a love-hate relationship with the city since 1980 when I made an unsuccessful attempt to live there, an attempt that was cut short by a serious illness that caused me to return to Austin, where I had been living before I moved. I never seriously faced the sadness and anger I carried as a result of feeling like a failure, and over the years I stuffed those feelings to the point of completely forgetting about them. I did go back for a few days in November of 1986 and managed to leave without having gone back and addressed this issue.

After being away for more than twenty years, my first reaction on seeing the city again was to wonder what it was that I had ever seen in it in the first place. However, after only being there for a few hours, New York had me in its spell once again.

One memorable thing I did on this trip was to find the Dakota and especially to see the very simple but effective memorial to John Lennon across the street from it in Central Park. Just a simple mosaic in the sidewalk with the one word "Imagine," but seeing it was probably the most moving moment of my week there.

After seeing the Dakota, I made a point of walking down the nearby street where I lived while I was in the city in 1980, and even stepping inside the rooming house where I stayed. In 1980, rooms were \$60 a week; well, the Dakota it wasn't. Now those same rooms go for \$100 a night, and the place discontinued its weekly rates six years ago. I was not prepared for the rush of feelings that came up as I walked down that street. Amazingly, the most important feeling I experienced was one of pride. Even if my plans to live in New York permanently did not work out as I had hoped, at least I didn't leave those plans on a back burner, only to spend the rest of my life wondering what might have happened if I had tried it. Most important, I was reminded of the anger I felt before at my plans not working out; that anger came up and it dissipated, rather than just going back and

being stuffed again.

There are several possibilities as to why I got so sick while I was there, especially since the doctors never did figure out what was wrong with me. However, one definite possibility is that it derived from my acting out; New York was not a “safe” place for me to be in terms of my addiction. And possibly, if I had stayed there, I might not have lived to tell about it. I really needed to be in Houston where, after more stumbling around in my acting out, I could find recovery. And, not so amazingly, New York has now become a very “safe” place for me to be, as indeed just about any place is as long as I remain in recovery.

I had my trip so fully planned this time that I did not make time to go to any Twelve-Step meetings. I’m hoping to remedy that situation on my next trip, which I have currently planned for later this year. While New York did not work for me as a “home,” I think it may work well as a “home away from home,” and I’m hoping to get back there more often. After all, I have to make up for a lot of years!

[Update: I have kept this promise to myself and visit NYC at least a couple of times a year and I walk down that old street from time to time, just for grins. There are many more SAA meetings in New York than there were in 2006, including some at 1:00 p.m., not to mention AA meetings that start as late as 2:00 a.m., so I get to at least one meeting there per trip.]

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](http://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.

## 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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The ISO of SAA Board of Trustees has established an e-mail box which may be used to register comments, positive or negative, from the fellowship about the ISO staff: [\*\*oochair@saa-recovery.org\*\*](mailto:oochair@saa-recovery.org)

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# How to Submit an Article to *The Outer Circle*

“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.

**Second:** Send your article: by e-mail to: [toc@saa-recovery.org](mailto:toc@saa-recovery.org)

or mail to: ISO  
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**Third:** Send in the below **Release Form**. Download an extra from the

## Submission Deadlines & Suggested Topics

Next Issues	Deadline	Suggested Topics
Sep-Oct 2014	July 5, 2014	Steps & Traditions 9 & 10, and <b>“People, Places, and Things”</b>
Nov-Dec 2014	Sep 5, 2014	Steps & Traditions 11 & 12, and <b>“Experiences getting/staying sober early on”</b>
Jan-Feb 2015	Nov 5, 2014	Steps & Traditions 1 & 2, and <b>“Success”</b>
Mar-Apr 2015	Jan 5, 2015	Steps & Traditions 3 & 4
May-Jun 2015	Mar 5, 2015	Steps & Traditions 5 & 6
Jul-Aug 2015	May 5, 2015	Steps & Traditions 7 & 8

### General Release Form:

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