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# ESSAY

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October 1988

Post Office Box 300  
Simi Valley, California 93062

## A FRESH BREEZE IS BLOWING

The SA Convention in July in Rochester, New York, was a beautiful experience for those of us able to attend. Feedback still being received indicates that nearly everyone who was there felt that we had achieved a spirit of unity and recovery that many of us had never seen before. What is so encouraging is that this does not seem to have been an isolated event. The same spirit of unity and growth in recovery is evident in SA around the country. It was evident in the Washington, D.C. Marathon, "A Whole New Way of Life," and also in the Chicago area Marathon, "Miracles Happen," during the first two Saturdays in October. Members are beginning to report on this as they find a new spirit of unity in their own local groups. Newcomers are perceiving it and responding to it, even though they may not always know how to name it at first. What they are perceiving and what's drawing them to SA is not just freedom from pain, but a positive recovery. So what we seem to be seeing in SA today, is that just as we as individuals reach a point where we begin to experience a positive sobriety and growth in taking the actions of love and achieving victory over lust through finding what our lust was looking for, so we as a fellowship seem to be moving into a period of group recovery in which we are passing from limited early sobriety and supporting each other through difficult times into a positive sobriety of real growth in unity, fellowship, and genuine love.

Sobriety works. And it's more than freedom from what drove us to the program in the first place. It's the promise of fulfillment. Something very real is happening. Freedom and joy are in the air. And how grateful we are!

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

*Events listed here are presented solely as a service to readers, not as an endorsement by Essay or the Central Office.*

**November 4,5,6, 1988.** West German SA Convention. Contact Helmut at 23-61-33911 for details.

**January 13, 14, 15, 1989.** SA International Convention. Salt Lake City, Utah. See enclosed flyer for information and registration forms.

**July 1989.** SA International Convention, Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Details to follow.

## COMMENTS ON THE ROCHESTER CONFERENCE

**Portland, Oregon.** "I felt the speaker at the S-Anon luncheon was one of the most powerful that I have heard in six years of attending meetings...The conference was tremendous--best ever." K.D.

"The rest of the conference was absolutely perfect, the topics, the speakers, the meals, the hospitality room--*all was done very well!* Thanks for making my first conference so inspiring." T.S.

**Camarillo, California.** "The format and topics of this Rochester Conference were excellent! Keep it going." O.W.

**Palm Springs, California.** "I sure would appreciate some sort of 'dress code' statement. I *really* have problems with shorts and tank tops." C.S.

"I like the spontaneity and freedom from 'big time' production-type conventions. I like the break-out meetings, especially with my 'peer group', i.e., those under one-year sober....Great spirit of fellowship!" J.H.

## GROUP NEWS

**Gooding, Idaho.** "The Gooding SA Group is growing in numbers and sobriety. We have two meetings a week, and have also started one in Twin Falls, which will no doubt soon become independent of us, as there are increasing numbers in recovery in Twin Falls. It is exciting to see the changes in our lives as we surrender our lust and share together. Thank you for all your help and support. See you in Salt Lake City!" V.R.

**Palm Springs Garden, Florida.** "Things in Palm Beach Gardens (West Palm Beach) are going along OK. We have leveled out to about 7 or 8 regulars and 4 or 5 newcomers. Last week we had 3 new people show up." D.G.

**Pine Bluff, Arkansas.** "Things are going well for us here. We met this past Saturday with 21 members present. Our meeting was very productive with many members being in recovery. Some of these members are New Commitments and have only been in the program for a short time but show amazing progress in their personal recovery. We thank our Higher Power daily for the work which he enabled us to do in our lives. Never before have some of us experienced such peace and tranquility as when we followed the Twelve Steps and surrendered our lives to the care of God." S.H., Eleventh Hour SA Group

**Minneapolis, Minnesota.** "Our group is still going strong, we have had a visitor stop in our last meeting from the Burnsville, MN, group. The four of us in the group conscience are still trying to stay sober." B.C., Monday night group

**Inglewood, California.** "Inglewood group is growing. It's a very nurturing group...Truly a 'safe haven' in which we can finally face ourselves." J.H.

**Wauwatosa, Wisconsin.** "Through the blessings of the Program our group has grown in numbers and sobriety." G.D.

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**Greensburg, Pennsylvania.** "Enclosed please find a small contribution from the Greensburg, Pennsylvania group. Although our 'regulars' remain at five in number, we have received inquiries of late from three interested persons in our area." J.M.

**Chicago, Illinois.** "Our group is continually growing and one member just celebrated his 4-year sobriety date!" M.F.

**Ft. Worth, Texas.** "SA in Ft. Worth continues to grow in numbers as well as in sobriety. We have averaged around ten people per meeting all summer. Last Thursday, we had fifteen in attendance. This is an all-time high for us and hopefully an indication of things to come. Our sobriety continues to grow, and it seems that God is bringing people into contact with the program at just the rate we can handle them....Thanks for SA Central. A special thanks to NAN! We at Ft. Worth appreciate all her hard work and effort." T.K.

**Boulder, Colorado.** "Our Monday night meetings have been growing over the past two months and we seem to have a consistent size group of between 15 and 20 people per meeting--very gratifying." S.K.

**Wichita, Kansas.** "Our group is doing great!...Growing stronger on a daily basis." K.T.

**Grand Junction, Colorado.** "Our group is still hanging in there!" T.H.

**Albuquerque, New Mexico.** "Thanks so much for sending all the nifty SA literature. Members at last night's meeting stood over me (like hungry vultures) while I opened the box. Our group has only recently grown to the extent that we need to have this literature on hand, especially for newcomers and people like me who haven't been in the program a long time. As of last night (when we celebrated another one-year birthday), we have four members with a one-year length of sobriety. The rest of us are inching up there, one day at a time." G.

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**Nashville, TN.** "I just thought I would pass on a progress report on SA here in Nashville. Lo and behold, we are now up to 7 meetings a week. We have finally gotten a Sunday meeting.... We are also up to 2 S-Anon meetings a week. The S-Anon meetings are having approximately 8 people at a meeting. The SA meetings are growing in number as well as frequency. We are getting approximately 15 to 20 people at a meeting and this is fairly consistent throughout the week. It seems that more and more people are staying now than used to. What a relief!" H.A.

**New York, New York.** "Greetings from the East Coast! [Tri-state Intergroup]. We are growing and feeling more committed than ever to the fellowship. It has been a growing consensus lately, especially at our business meetings. Please accept our contributions." A.S.

**Sidney, Australia.** [In September an SA group was started in Sidney.] "I have a strong sense that I am not alone and as a group we are not alone....We would be interested in ideas from the note in the January issue of *Essay* 'Special Request' 'We need some kind of tools, protocols, processes, methods for carrying the message to others'.... It's amazing how the Higher Power works.... the peace and tremendous sense that God is with us (instead of my fears and self-doubt) and picking a way clear for our little group...." C.D.

## **GROUP DONATIONS SEND LITERATURE DOWN UNDER**

In September, SA group donations paid for an express shipment of literature to the new group in Sidney, Australia! Literature was provided free of charge as a gift from the fellowship. The expression of support was warmly and appreciatively received.

## **TRAVEL PLANNING**

For information on meetings in your travel itinerary, call the Central Office, (805) 581-3343.

## MEMBER NEWS

**Lakewood, Ohio.** "I'm so grateful for SA for putting me on a spiritual path!" T.O.

**Waldorf, Maryland.** "I have been sober in SA six months now. It's been the greatest. I've been sober in AA for ten years now. But this last six months in SA have been so powerful to my life. Thank you SA." P.G.

**Clearwater, Florida.** "I have started reading the book (the SA manual) and I was very dismayed to realize how much I have got to do to straighten out my sex life--really my life in general. I was turned off from religion in general at a young age, and even though I am now realizing how much the spiritual void since has contributed to where I am now, it won't be easy to get the spiritual beliefs back without a lot of work. At least I am now willing to admit my problem and can get started on it." T.F.

**Portland, Oregon.** "I am so thankful for SA and am glad that there is a program and an answer for people with sexual addiction like me. I have needed SA for a long time but only discovered it in Portland this month, and I am attending three meetings a week. I feel that SA is as important to me as insulin to a diabetic, I need it to live." G.P.

**Los Angeles, California.** "I have been on your program about four months now and have 102 days sobriety. I have used the SA manual and have gone to whatever 12-Step meeting I could find that would fit into my schedule...I am a woman and I have been married nine years. I have always had trouble with lust, but until about three years ago I never committed adultery, etc. During the last two years I had an adulterous affair with a man and was so addicted, I have now almost lost everything in my life. I couldn't stop. I tried everything. I am so thankful for this program, it has given me hope again and a way out. It works. Please let people know. I know others have been where I was but too afraid to be honest. I don't have a sponsor yet, but the Lord has ministered to me and given me my strength." J.H.



**Hodgkins, Illinois.** "Thank you so very much for being there when I needed you. All of my Twelve-Step friends mean a great deal to me." R.P.

**Bay Village, Ohio.** "SA has meant so much to me in the past year. Without it, my life was a mess, unmanageable. Now there is order and true joy. I attended the Rochester conference, which was an experience like nothing before in my life. God bless SA and all its members." T.D.

**Regina, Saskatoon, Canada.** "The other day I learned a crucial lesson. I was feeling in a confrontative mood and was inappropriately (for meeting time anyway) challenging one after another for their lack of sobriety and recovery. A good friend of mine went last and had a slip and sounded confused in his sharing. Being disappointed, I also let him have it. He left as we closed the meeting, and I began to sense how out of place I'd been as chairperson. However, I just tried to let it go and didn't bother making amends for a couple days until I was literally on the verge of acting out. I prayed a desperate prayer of surrender and 'help' immediately received the insight that my lust was a combination of pride and fear of being rejected by a friend. I was trying to act and feel like nothing was bothering me. Being aware of these feelings wasn't enough; I had to call my friend and go over to his place. We had a good talk, and then when I told him that I felt like I'd lost a friend, I cried. I had been completely out of touch with how deep the feeling was, and lust and acting out would have provided a convenient soother for those other feelings. Later in reflection it struck me how the intense feeling of lust does provide a cover for deeper more painful feelings. Lust causes me to forget who I really am and eventually, if I keep acting out the connection between feelings like fear, inadequacy, rejection, and lust becomes remote and that confusing state of despair and shame is all I know besides lust. This became a Step Two awareness for me--God restoring me to sanity. It is insane to lust when my inner truth is fear of rejection! Also for me...I have to confess a pride that would prevent me from taking the actions to make amends. Simple awareness of the truth (inner vulnerable feelings) is not enough; I have to then act on the inner truth and do justice (make amends)." T.G.

**Kirkland, Washington.** "My life has changed dramatically since finding out about SA. It's really exciting to be involved and to watch the group grow." R.S.

**Rochester, New York.** "I have just started in the SA group in Rochester, NY. I currently have 39 days of sobriety and am amazed at how much I've learned and how much I still need and want to learn since becoming sober. It is awesome the sheer power that can be found in sobriety and letting go. I am not very good at it yet but when I can (and have to to stay sober) I am so grateful." R.Z.

### **WELCOME TO THE FOLLOWING NEW GROUPS:**

Asheville, NC; Bethlehem, WV; Canoga Park, CA; Charlotte, NC; Fairfax, VA; Jackson, MI; Memphis, TN; Sacramento, CA; Sidney, Australia; Stockton, CA; Washington, PA. **Note:** If your group is not listed with CO, call Nan at (805)581-3343 or write Post Office Box 300, Simi Valley, CA 93062.

### **COMMENTS FROM A FRIEND OUTSIDE SA**

"I am writing to thank you for putting me on your mailing list for the *Essay* newsletter. It's a terrific piece of literature filled with powerful and inspiring information which has helped me and others I have shared it with tremendously. . . I have a 2-year anniversary next week, which is very satisfying, and with the grace of God I will enjoy soberly and gratefully." [From a friend in another program.]

### **CENTRAL OFFICE POLICY**

Over the last several years, there have been a few letters from members requesting that various writings be considered for distribution. In such cases, the Central Office has referred members to the following procedure, which has evolved over time and has been implemented as these requests were made: Any writing being submitted by an SA member must first be voted on and approved by the local group of which the individual is a member. In cases where an Intergroup is active, it should also be approved by that body.



**GROUPS ASK FOR FEEDBACK** (Send in your responses to Central Office)

**Wichita Falls, Texas.** "We have been meeting regularly for two years with mixed results. We began with a core group of two and have had ten different people attend meetings at one time or another. Our longest period of sobriety is two years, and our shortest is five days. Some older group members have recently slipped, and one has stopped coming. We are in a slump and we need your prayers. We seem not to be able to keep people coming back. I experienced the same thing when I attended meetings in Dallas two years and six months ago. Are we doing something wrong or is this typical? We follow the group guidelines pretty well. We meet formally for 1 1/2 hours on Mondays and informally for 1 hour on Fridays to support each other through the weekends." R.B.

**Olympia, Washington.** "We are getting new members all the time, but we have trouble keeping some of the old timers, or people stop coming when their problem is over. Is this a problem with other SA groups?" J.H.

**Chicago, Illinois.** "Enclosed please find a check for \$100.00 which is a group donation from our Wednesday meeting. We're still holding steady at around 18-26 people per week; and we also just started using an electronic timer to 'control' the length of comments. Most of us prefer not to have to use this; however, our group got so large that people speaking at the end of the meeting or latecomers had only a short time to share or no time at all. We have had a lot of recovering people with a lot to share in a limited time. Some of the people who have been coming around for a long time tend to use up a little more time than others when they share (this includes myself. Personally, this has really confronted me with my need to control and my need to 'say the right thing'). *We are aware of another group here in Chicago that has a meeting with 30+ people where everyone gets to share.* We are jealous!....But willing to work out 'time problems'. Any suggestions from other groups out there?" J.B.

## ANNOUNCEMENT FOR LONER MEMBERS

Prisoners should write to the prison committee c/o Matt W. at: Post Office Box 20412, Kansas City, MO 64195.

Other loner members (or those willing to correspond with loners) please write Elizabeth-Ann M., Post Office Box 457, Boulder, MT 59632.

## SA FINANCES

Currently only a small percentage of SA groups makes regular contributions toward Central Office expenses. (See the Donations report in this issue. Group donations are reported in ESSAY in accordance with the vote taken over a year ago.) This, plus profit from literature sales, has made it possible to meet expenses, and for this we are all joyously grateful. It is becoming increasingly necessary to have the Central Office operating forty hours per week instead of the three days (normally, Monday, Wednesday, and Friday) per week we now have. Also, translating our literature is becoming an added expense, and costs involved with the projected paperback edition of our SA manual will be considerable. Think of how much better the Central Office could serve the rapidly growing needs if more groups contributed regularly. And if we had more income, we could conceivably reduce the price of our SA manual, as some have requested.

Many groups have found that passing a second basket earmarked for Central Office is an easy way to assist in our international Twelfth Step work. Other groups take up a special collection once a month. Still others give a percentage of the surplus after local expenses. This is what keeps us in the black. We in SA can be proud and grateful that as a fellowship we are entirely self-supporting!

Why not suggest to your own group that it consider joining in this common mission? Soon, the need for more help will be urgent. Each group is urged to do what it can, within its means. Your contribution counts!

# **DONATIONS--THIRD QUARTER 1988**

Alhambra, CA	650.00	Muscle Shoals, AL	10.00
Apple Valley, MN	158.25	N. Hollywood, CA	155.00
Baltimore, MD	132.00	Northridge, CA	150.00
Berkeley, CA	30.47	Oklahoma City, OK	74.15
Boulder, CO	145.45	Ottawa, Ontario	30.00
Bozeman, MT	66.46	Palm Desert, CA	18.10
Cambridge, MA	30.00	Palm Springs, FL	23.63
Chicago, IL	206.00	Phoenix, AZ	15.20
Cleveland, OH	170.00	Pittsburgh, PA	7.00
Elmhurst, IL	24.00	Portland, OR	215.98
Erie, PA	25.00	Riverside, CA	81.94
Ft Collins, CO	15.00	Rochester Convention	1631.19
Gaithersburg, MD	109.00	Rochester, NY	465.00
Glen Ellyn, IL	50.00	St. Louis, MO	50.00
Gooding, ID	45.20	San Diego, CA	428.23
Greensburg, PA	15.00	Santa Barbara, CA	8.37
Inglewood, CA	62.96	Van Nuys, CA	172.00
Kansas City	255.00	Warren, MI	120.00
Laurel, MD	57.50	Washington, DC	293.00
Lomita, CA	76.07	West Los Angeles, CA	700.00
Long Beach, CA	208.00	Wichita Falls, TX	16.00
Long Island, NY	75.00		
Lynnwood, WA	23.00	<b>GROUP DONATIONS</b>	<b>7862.79</b>
Milwaukee, WI	554.64	<b>PERSONAL DONATIONS</b>	<b>2015.83</b>
Minneapolis, MN	15.00		

**TOTAL DONATIONS      \$9878.62**



**GROUPS RESPONDING TO IGC PROPOSAL**  
**(Received by 30 September 1988)**

Alabama, Spruce Pine	Canada
Arkansas, Pine Bluff	Ottawa
California, Camarillo	Vancouver
Lomita	
Long Beach	
Northridge	
Van Nuys	
West Los Angeles	
Connecticut, Stamford (Tues.)	
Stamford (Thurs.)	
Westport	
Illinois, Chicago (two groups)	
Iowa, Mt. Pleasant	
Missouri, St. Louis (Tues.)	
St. Louis (Sat.)	
Montana, Bozeman (Mon.)	
Bozeman (Tues.)	
Bozeman (Fri.)	
New Mexico, Albuquerque (4 groups)	
New York, New York	
Rochester	
Ohio, Cleveland	
Oklahoma, Oklahoma City (2 groups)	
Oregon, Astoria	
Portland	
Pennsylvania, Butler	
Greensburg	
Pittsburgh	
Washington	
West Virginia, Wheeling	
Wisconsin, Appleton	
Wyoming, Rawlins	

## THE SA MISCONNECTION

At the heart of our condition is the drive for union with Person. Bonding. This drive, instead of having been diminished by our misconceptions in lust and sex, seemed to *increase*. Never satisfied with the substitutes, our longing for personal union merely deepened and energized the vain pursuit for the real.

We come into SA, come off the substitute connections, and lo and behold, we start finding true union with person in other SA members. First, as we identify with them in meetings, sharing honestly. There is bonding here; the first time we've ever been intimate with people in the deepest secrets of the heart. We are totally exposed and vulnerable, leading with our weakness. And we are accepted! And the others feel the same way. The "safe haven" of being together is a marvelous refuge. A dependency develops; we need them coming back to meetings, and they need us. We sense that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts, and we must continue having whatever it is we're getting there. Fellowship. That's why it's so threatening for regulars to stop coming to meetings.

Then, we seem to single out those toward whom we have some special affinity, for whatever reason, and risk closer intimacy. More self-disclosure and more bonding ensue. But something else happens. We also begin to see their defective natures in action. And they ours. Often, we don't like what we see, and our impulse is to push them away or back away ourselves. They're part of true union now; they've got to be perfect! They *can't* let us down. Thus, we bring to this growing interaction and union all of the faulty mechanisms of our sexaholism, *for ours is the illness of diseased unions*. What happens? The very people we need so desperately for recovery—other members—eventually begin relating to us out of their sickness! And we out of ours. How can it be otherwise, given what we are? Sometimes it's such a jolt we don't know what hit us. Pain.

Since one essential aspect of our malady seems to be misplaced dependency, we often subconsciously make the other person serve more than his or her natural place in our support system within the fellowship bond. Love and support stop being enough. Perhaps we need them too much, as we did our parents or lust or dependency objects. Perhaps they need us too much. Perhaps we begin transferring suppressed anger at parent or

authority figures onto them, or they onto us. Maybe it's sibling rivalry all over again. *All of the relational dysfunctions with which we come into SA eventually get expressed in our relations with other members.* When this happens, it's just a matter of time before that person "lets us down," just like we thought everyone else used to do, or when they no longer "satisfy" our need of them. All this can blow us apart, and sometimes it does.

Thus, the very mechanism of our addiction can come into play between SA members. We can act out our sexaholism with each other without having sex or lust! (Which indicates that sex was only a symptom, not our real problem.) That's why victory over our diseased unions must become part of the process of recovery. We'll never get well without it. We learn to simply trudge through the pain and learn from experience. The Steps and Traditions tell us how. And we can walk through the experiences to build a deeper bond.

One member describes the experience of having to step back from another member in order to recover from her excessive dependency. She suffered terribly from the pain the experience caused, but she also found that it contributed to her recovery in a way that nothing else could. Instead of fighting back or running, she humbled herself before God, accepted the situation, and prayed first that she might be free to be an instrument for good in that person's life. Then she asked that she might be connected with that person in accordance with *God's* will and not her own. And that's the very thing that happened. Not only did she begin to be freed from dependency in that relationship, she began to be free from dependency in other relationships as well. And as a result, she was able to relate to that person and to others on the basis of a more genuine friendship.

This points up the necessity of making the transition to our true Connection with God as soon as possible. If we linger on having the group, sponsor, or other individuals as Higher Power, they may remain nothing more than a power created in the image of our own sick need. A *lower* power! Which prevents our real need from ever being filled. Without finding personal union with God in our own experience (Steps Eleven and Twelve), we increasingly must use, abuse, and distort other relationships in attempts to fill that need. This basic need of ours won't go away; it's got to have some kind of connection. That's just the way we are.



Thus it seems we can't survive in the fellowship we need for survival without learning how to love one another *through the illness*. And considering the load of liabilities we come in with, we don't seem to be able to love without the love of God. In the final analysis, our program always seems to come back to God and His love for us. We can and do love, because He first loved us.  
Roy K., Simi Valley, CA.

#### 1988 THIRD QUARTER STATS

Books dispersed-----	988
Meeting Guides dispersed-----	79
Brochures dispersed-----	3976
Total Expenses-----	15492.75
Sales-----	8761.18
Donations-----	9878.62
Total Credits-----	18639.80

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