
ESSAY

April 1989

Simi Valley, CA

NOTES AND COMMENTS FROM THE CENTRAL OFFICE

- Please call the Central Office for meeting information when on travel. (Roy does not have meeting schedules or contacts at his home telephone number.) If you call our standard number, the call still comes through, but it costs the Central Office a little more. Thank you.

- Helen is now working part-time at the Central Office. She is a great help in packing all the literature orders, copying, and various other duties. Welcome to Helen, who started working in October of 1988. Chris has also been hired part-time to handle the general office duties. It is our hope that in the near future, the office will be staffed during normal business hours rather than Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, as is now the case.

- We must once again ask for your continued financial support. We are anticipating great expenses for editorial fees, typesetting, and printing for the new manual, as well as producing our brochure in Spanish. We are enclosing some financial statistics from 1988. For those who wish, we would be happy to send a complete financial statement for 1988. We depend on your generosity to continue our work as well as future growth. In the past, when the needs of this office were made known, the fellowship's response was overwhelming. We are making a special appeal at this time. Donations are tax-deductible.

MEMBER STORIES

Twenty-one SA member stories have been received to date at the Central Office (ref. 15 February letter to all SA groups). Sixteen were received before the 6 April deadline. (Everyone acknowledges that the deadline was very tough to meet. Things don't always move in straight lines around here, and our SA manual publication schedule got away from us.) It has been decided that a separate volume of stories will be produced in preliminary form. It is planned that this volume of stories will follow after publication of both the new SA manual, *Sexaholics Anonymous* and the follow-on volume, *Recovery Continues*. We hope to have the new SA manual out in time for the Milwaukee Convention in July. We think the response of stories is truly remarkable, considering the requirements for three-year minimum SA sobriety and group or intergroup validation. Thank you one and all! Please note that because of the above decision, *stories can still be submitted in accordance with the 15 February guidelines, at least for another month or two.*

A summary of story guidelines follows:

1. The individual must be an established member of SA.
2. The member must have three or more years of uninterrupted sexual sobriety as commonly understood by the fellowship as described in the SA literature.
3. Quality of the individual's sobriety and recovery must be recognized and validated by the other members in the individual's fellowship. *It is the group/intergroup that submits the story(s).* Stories of loners should be submitted through their sponsor(s).
4. Where possible, submittals should be typed, double-spaced, not to exceed four double-spaced pages, preferably less. (*Please have it typed if at all possible.*) Stories will be subject to editing and condensation.
5. No name should appear on the manuscript, but the author should be identified in a cover letter or note from the submitting group or intergroup to the Central Office so submittals can be read "blind."

GROUP NEWS

Pine Bluff, Arkansas: “Things are going well for us here in the Eleventh Hour SA Group. Many are growing in their recovery as we meet each week. We average in attendance about seven members. Again, we would like to thank you for all the help you have been to us in the past. Many times we have asked for information, books, and other material, and have been sent everything we asked for and often more. These things have always proved invaluable to us.”

Washington, D.C.: “We have been able to sell the books, but not able to keep people coming back. I know from experience that we who do come must keep the door open, for they will be back if God wills it. We here in Washington, D.C. trudge the road of happy destiny and are with you in the spirit of fellowship.” **E.R.**

Australia: “I feel very positive about the group slowly growing in size and sobriety. It was exciting to see our name in the ES-SAY (although Sydney is spelled with a ‘y’ not an ‘i’!) It feels really good to be so welcomed into the wider SA fellowship.” **C.D.**

Chicago, Illinois: “Our Wednesday evening group is going great! A few of us committed ourselves to starting a new Saturday evening meeting which had its first meeting this week. Only three members showed up for the first meeting, but several others agreed to support it. Some of us found it necessary to have a Saturday evening meeting as the weekend can be a difficult time to stay sober. Now we have meetings every day of the week in the Chicago area! Keep us in your thoughts and prayers as you are surely in ours.” **M.F.**

Callicoon, New York: “Our group is doing well. There are four of us who attend our meeting regularly. We range in sobriety from three months to eight years.” **J.C.**

Glen Ellyn, Illinois: "Greetings from the Glen Ellyn, Illinois writing workshop. Our attendance stays a fairly constant 16 with mostly men in attendance. Last night there were three new faces in the group. Some good levels of sobriety exist in the group" **J.R.**

Seattle, Washington: "Our regional retreat was a gigantic success, and we'll shortly be sending down donations from both SA and S-Anon. We appreciate you." **C.S.**

Albuquerque, New Mexico: "Enclosed is \$40.00. All's well here, or should I say not well yet. We now have six meetings a week in Albuquerque. See you in Salt Lake." **D.R.**

Arroyo Grande, California: "Our little group is doing well. We're staying sober." **R.G.**

West Palm Beach, Florida: "We have eight to ten regular members and our growth seems to be slow but steady." **A.S.**

St. Louis, Missouri: "Right now we are averaging 10-12 members per-week. These numbers go up and down. We are doing well with some very good sobriety, (3 or 4 people over one year and 3 members approaching one year). Some of us are struggling, and that is part of the program. God bless you all in this great work." **M.M.**

Ottawa, Ontario: "We are now five active members. We have three meetings a week. We are struggling and growing and slowly getting more sober. May God bless you all." **N.G.**

Bethesda, Maryland: "As for other news, the Baltimore/Washington Intergroup has decided to make a bid for the July 1990 International Conference. We are quite excited about that possibility." **B.K.**

Denver, Colorado: "We are struggling to get our participation

at this meeting (5-8 average). This is a great lunch break meeting. The level of sobriety continues to flourish and grow. New members are finding that noon meetings are a big plus for them in their recovery. We appreciate the opportunity to meet and share with each other in the middle of our work days. It works, try it, you may like it.” **B.K.**

San Diego, California: “I’m enclosing a copy of our current meeting schedule. As you can see, San Diego is really growing!” **D.N.**

Vancouver, British Columbia: “We are pleased that our groups are doing well. We usually have 12-18 members which is a tremendous improvement over last year’s 5-6. We believe that as we provide a warm caring group that more will be sober and continue into recovery.” **B.M.**

Hilton, NY: “We now have four meetings a week in Rochester. Recovery is happening in Rochester. We’re going through some growing pains, but we’re growing! Sobriety is building! This past week has been the most serene and peaceful I think I’ve ever had. I have realized parts of all of the promises. I’m in the process of writing and giving my Fourth currently--what an experience. So much has changed in the last 9+ months in the program. My attitude has undergone a major change. I so look forward to the continued adventure ahead.” **F.Z.**

Kalispell, Montana: “The big books are going like hotcakes. We have about 50 in-and-out members in our group presently and we are growing. Normally, at least ten people show up at the meetings, which is pretty good for a town of our size, about 10,000.” **P.B.**

Tucker, Arkansas: “We are a new group that just started a couple of months ago here at the Tucker Unit. We have not been in recovery very long, but the changes are already beginning. We are so glad to know that we are not alone in our fight for

sobriety, and we have other groups who in their minds and hearts support us as we also support them. We want to thank you for the support and dedication that you give to this wonderful program of recovery. We would also like to correspond with any other groups who may want to offer us any informaton. We would like to express our appreciation for the donation of the SA white books. They will be of a great help to us in our search for sobriety, and they also have a lot of information that we can use.” **D.W.**

Westport, CT: “The fellowship in Connecticut is gradually growing. There are four meeting a week now and talking about starting a fifth.” **W.R.**

Dayton, Virginia: “Our Harrisonburg SA group is getting under way! Last night we voted in officers. We will soon be holding a buisinees meeting and a group conscience meeting The SA Meeting Guide you sent us in reponse to C.’s letter has been immeasurably helpful. It is helping us to establish our SA group. In the past, we had no direction and could not rightfully be called an SA group. Now I feel that we will soon become a legitimate, autonomous, anonymous SA group.” **J.**

Spruce Pine, Alabama: “I wanted to let you know that we had five people present this week at our meeting in Muscle Shoals.” **B.A.**

EYE-CATCHERS

Some notices found on the bulletin board of the Klinik at Bad Herrenalb, West Germany, where Roy held the workshops last November:

“If you can’t live or die, make coffee.”

“Could it be that smokers’ eyes burn too? Could it be that smokers appreciate a meeting where the air is clear?”

“A sponsor in AA conveys a life-giving tradition that I do not believe can be got from books.”

“Happiness is found along the way, not at the end of the road.”

“If you don’t stand for *something*, you will fall for *anything*.”

“How many people never fly simply because they never try their wings?”

MEMBER NEWS

West Columbia, South Carolina: “Enclosed is a check for the support of SA and in appreciation for being left on your mailing list. I have been sober for 18 months. My marriage of 28 years is slowly getting better. I like myself more and I am beginning to experience some peace within myself. I believe that God is working his purposes for His creatures through SA in a marvelous way. The source of my strength is the conviction I have of His acceptance of me and His continued presence...as expressed in Psalm 139:1-18....I know He loves me unconditionally.” **T.S.**

Rochester, New York: “I need to make an amends to the Salt Lake conference attendees. I had a lot of fear of people, acceptance, unfamiliar situation, etc. at the conference. I isolated, became judgemental, resentful, began lusting, and before I knew what was happening, almost acted out. I need to make amends to all of you for judging myself superior; to God, my higher power, for resenting God; to the women I lusted for; and to myself for not trusting God and allowing the disease to have its way. For all of this I am sorry, and I ask for your forgiveness.

I no longer look at this as a ‘bad’ experience, I consider it another of the many learning experiences I have. I have God, the fellowship, and the Steps to thank for this change in attitude. I am becoming more thankful of the past I have had and look forward to the continuing adventure ahead. I also look forward to seeing all of you that can make Milwaukee this summer.” **R.Z.**

Austin, Texas: “Please encourage all the inquirers in this area to contact me about getting a group going--and please send me the format and any other information I need to organize a group. I know that there are so many others like me who can benefit from an SA group and who can get back on the road to recovery as I have. I am not the only one in this state whose life has been so drastically changed because of my addiction.” **C.B.**

Cleveland, Ohio: “Thanks much for putting me on the ‘ESSAY’ mailing list. The work you put into that little piece of literature has really paid off in the encouragement it gives its readers. The format, especially the giant print, is excellent.” **G.J.**

Milwaukee, Wisconsin: “Thank you so much for the program. I have a new life because of it, and it’s true that great things are coming to pass for me and countless others.” **C.C.**

Toronto, Ohio: “I have nine months sobriety now. The ESSAY is very good, it has helped me stay on line and so has the white book.” **M.S.**

Portland, Oregon: “I’ve only been in the program about 15 months and continue to be amazed at the difference it makes in my life. I think the greatest thing is the friends in the group, and the continued support. Ours is a good group, some growing going on here. The toughest part of this work remains turning my life and will over to God as I understand God. A day at a time.” **J.D.**

Vancouver, B.C.: “SA works! Recently I had a test which measures physical reaction to sexual stimuli. I had a minimal reaction. Four years ago while I was in prison, I had a strong reaction. I attribute this to the SA program, the Twelve Steps, and three years of sobriety.” **B.M.**

Kansas City, Missouri: “I attended my first SA meeting in Kansas City almost three years ago. I have been with various therapists and self-help groups, but the self-respect, self-love that I have today I can only credit to SA. Although I struggle with sobriety, I no longer have to act out one or two times daily, which I had been doing for almost 20 years when I came into the program. The ‘fix’ doesn’t work any longer. I know this in my head but it hasn’t completely sunk into my heart. As an abused child that feared how unlovable I am--even to God, it has been difficult to learn the basic message of the 12-Step-programs--

let go, let God. Each day, however, I am seeing God, the program works in my life. I am able to refer to members of my SA group as friends and am comfortable in calling them--as a recovering loner this in itself is a miracle. I am truly grateful for SA and the recovery it has given me and the promises it offers.”

J.F.

Hull, Quebec: “...The point of me saying all this in this long introduction is that I am less and less attracted to SA as SA is getting bigger and that I am observing we are more liberal and tolerate swearing including sexually abusive language. I am seeing this at conventions. People go up and speak in front of large groups. Their words are being taped. It is not as if I don’t have proof of what I am saying. I cringe every time I rehear these abusive expressions on the tapes, which otherwise carry a good message. J.C.

Regina, Sask.: “...The ‘sobriety imperative’. First of all, this saved my life, and you remember how I resisted the radical definition at first. I do so no longer and am absolutely committed to the definition as it is....I am relieved (for SA) to have met a few gays at the conventions who thoroughly uphold the SA stand on sobriety and marriage.” **T.G.**

REFLECTIONS ON SOBRIETY

(one member's reflections on an important topic).

"...We are still having some difficulty, however, with members who accepted the bottom line sobriety definition but continue acting out in other ways. This is particularly so with voyeuristic aspects of their disease as well as concerning relationship pre-occupations.

I have attempted thinking through what some of these tensions are that people continue to have although they are maintaining their base line sobriety. It seems that they fight the progressive victory over lust. To me, it seems that as long as we maintain our bottom line sobriety, we continually see new pockets of lust. In other words, the top plate seems to reveal more and more aspects of our disease. Some people seem to be able to see that top plate and then utilize the steps on that new top plate as they did for the original sex with self and not sex outside of marriage concepts. Other people seem to hide behind their bottom line sobriety and even though they notice the new top plate, they are not willing to let go of it yet.

Over the years, I have certainly experienced the new top plates that show up but if ever I hold on to any of them, the discomfort becomes excruciating. Last month, I celebrated my fifth year of sobriety. It's been a wonderful period for me. Lust is so much less a problem in my life today. I still have many problems in my life and still many character defects to be willing to let go of, but lust has not caused the havoc in me like it had in the past.

Thank God for Sexaholics Anonymous. Thank God for the gift of my recovery." **H.A.**

GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS ASK FOR FEEDBACK

(Send in your responses to Central Office)

Anonymous: “Now I’m dealing with another problem...a spouse who is antagonistic to SA, SLAA, AA, or any other Twelve-Step program because of the references to ‘higher power’, a feeling that the program doesn’t reflect Christian values, and (probably most important of all) her own fears of having to face that fact that I am, indeed, just like the people she read about in the material from the various groups, addicted to sex and lust. Got any suggestions on how I can share with her my fears, my continuing struggle with my addiction without making her angry that I haven’t been sharing on a regular basis up to now? Just generally, HELP!”

Wichita, Kansas: “What progress in designing an SA anniversary medallion?...I thought about a bronze medallion with the Serenity Prayer on one side and on the other, the symbol from our brochure with the anniversary month or year (Roman Numerals) in the center and possibly a motto, e.g. One Day at a Time.” **R.L.**

Glen Ellyn, Illinois: “The question being raised is whether we should continue the practice of giving priority to those who want to give their First Step to the group because we’ve had something like 6 or 8 straight First Step meetings. The thought was to consider alternating format so that those wanting to give their First Step would have frequent (but not unlimited) opportunity to do so, and balance the meeting format with our regular format. A brief reaction from you would be appreciated.” **J.R.**

Edmonton, Alberta: “What has been your experience with hugging and touching in SA meetings?” **C.B. and K.A.**

MEMBER NEWS FROM GERMANY

Our continued thanks to Ruth P., who sends us the following news from West Germany and translates the German newsletter for us.

“...The most important impression was being accepted as part of a fellowship of close friends with the same problem...I felt the need to talk openly about my relationship to my Higher Power and to confess that I do indeed still have difficulties getting to a loving forgiving, Higher Power from a fear-inspiring image of God...” **J.**

A and later in SA friends who had helped organize larger conventions said again and again that they had gotten so much out of it. I never really believed these friends and thought they were exaggerating. This time I had the opportunity to help organize myself and can only agree with these friends. I am grateful that I had the chance.” **M.**

...I went to the meeting, ‘What is my picture of me as a male?’ In the meeting I didn’t talk on the subject specifically, but I thought about it...In English ‘man’ means ‘male’ as well as ‘person’. And ‘woman’ comes from ‘wombman’...the difference between male and female has become smaller for me...In the business meeting I announced that I would stop serving on the service committee. The reason I gave for giving up my service was that I was afraid that if I didn’t work in the service committee, SA Germany would break down and I wanted to face this fear. I could see from the laughter that burst out how narrow-minded my fear had been...Being sober means for me basically to accept reality the way it is, no matter what it costs. And only if I am willing to give everything, can I get everything..” **R.**

THE SALT LAKE CITY CONVENTION - JANUARY 1989

Boulder, Montana: “The conference was wonderful. Approximately 178 attended. The first business meeting that I attended December 1983, there were 15 of us there. Five of us were in attendance in SLC. I truly recommend these conferences for loners as a way of connecting to others in the program and to the program as a whole. We are isolationists by nature, then you add our loner status to our isolation, and what you get is true loneliness. Last year I cried and cried for I had never felt so alone in sobriety.” **E.M.**

Gooding, Idaho: “Many of us really enjoyed the conference in SLC, and we send our thanks to all the folks who made it possible through their efforts and hard work. Thanks.” **V.R.**

WELCOME TO THE FOLLOWING NEW GROUPS

Bremerton, Washington
Ann Arbor, Michigan
Rochester, Minnesota
Providence, Rhode Island
Danbury, Connecticut
Twenty-nine Palms,
California
El Toro, California

Harrisonburg, Virginia
Montreal, Quebec, Canada
Newberg, Oregon
Colorado Springs, Colorado
Chattanooga, Tennessee
Syracuse, New York
Murfreesboro Tennessee
Atlanta, Georgia

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