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# *Essay*

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June 1991

Post Office Box 300  
Simi Valley, California 93062

## **ATTENTION ALL GROUPS !!**

No matter how small your group, please notify Central Office with a contact name and a telephone number. This information will be used to help inquirers make contact with the group nearest to them. Thanks for your help.

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## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

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

**July 12-14, 1991 — SA and S-ANON International Conference.** Chicago, Illinois. "Honesty, Recovery, Healing." For information call Rich (SA) (312) 539-3231 or Barb (S-ANON) (708) 246-1243.

**October 4-6, 1991 — Victoria SA Retreat.** "Growing Up in Sobriety." For information write Victoria SA, P.O. Box 332, Victoria, British Columbia, V8W 2N2, CANADA, or call (604) 592-1916 or Al (SA) (604) 477-4533.

**November 1-3, 1991 — Joint SA/S-ANON Convention.** Worpswede (near Bremen), Germany. For information call Ruth P. at 011-49-228-356-713.

**January 10-12, 1992 — SA and S-ANON International Conference.** San Diego, California.

**May 15-17, 1992 — SA Convention.** Near Bonn, Germany

## NOTES FROM CENTRAL OFFICE

### PRISON COORDINATOR

Van V. will no longer be the SA Prison Coordinator. Until an SA Prison Service can be established, all coordination will be done from the Central Office in Simi Valley, California. Thanks for your cooperation. We need volunteers for a Prison Service. See "An Invitation to Service" in this issue.

## **FIRST QUARTER 1991**

### **LITERATURE BOOK SALES:**

Books	1,230
Meeting Guides	29
Brochures	4,013
Member Stories	292
Recovery Continues	370

### **DONATIONS:**

Individual	\$1,641.61
Groups	5,783.94
<b>Total Donations</b>	<b>\$7,425.55</b>

## **GROUP NEWS**

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

Akron, OH	Portland, OR
Asheville, NC	Somerville, MA
Binghamton, NY	Stoneham, MA
Blackwell, OK	Tacoma, WA
Depoe Bay, OR	Toronto, Canada
Lancaster, OH	Wonewoc, WI
Miles City, MT	

**Syracuse, NY:** "As we enter into spring. . . we see continued new life in our SA groups. We have three meetings a week in **Syracuse** (all growing in numbers, praise be to God!) and have begun a meeting once a week in **Binghamton, NY**, 70 miles south of us. We have members with one, two, and three years of sobriety, and we are constantly scrutinizing our meaning of sobriety, and the quality of our recovery. We adhere very strongly to the SA standard of sobriety and the traditional meaning of marriage. We thank SA national office for unwavering leadership in guiding us to freedom" by God's grace. Keep up your good work." **B.A.**

**Glen Ellen, IL:** "We continue to have an average attendance of around 24. We've been encouraged by several anniversaries of over one year of sobriety this last year.

"April 21 marks our third year. In that time we've hosted two regional conferences. The first was attended by 50, the second by 125. The level of honesty continues to be good. Thank you for your continued good work in supporting our recovery with good literature." **J.**

**Grand Junction, CO:** "Our group fluctuates in numbers. . . Some move from the area, others seem to be unable to connect with the program and the life of recovery. At the present time we normally have six to ten at our meetings. These are the core group of those who 'keep coming back' because the program is working for them. We enjoy a warm fellowship with unity and goodwill in abundance. Several in our group have well over a year of continual sobriety. We are committed to learning a spiritual way of life and giving our lives over to the care of God. He continues to prove Himself faithful and worthy of our deepest trust.

"Several members drive 60-90 miles each way almost every week to attend meetings. Those who live right in **Grand Junction** are very supportive and encourage those who drive long distances by their own hard work in the program. . . . may God bless each of us as we strive to turn our lives over to Him and make ourselves useful to Him and our fellow man." **M.H.**



**Tucson, AZ:** "... many of us are having outstanding recovery through SA. We now have six members in **Tucson** who have a year or more of sobriety, and I believe the quality of sobriety is improving as well. We share length of sobriety and progress on the Steps as we introduce ourselves in meetings." **R.S.**

**Boston, MA:** "Our regular Friday meeting has been doing quite well in terms of attendance, and while we still do not boast of numbers we see in other fellowships with similar addictions, we feel our group has generated a level of intimacy and open honesty that most of us have never been exposed to in the past.

"Since many of us in the area feel a need for more than one meeting per week, we have just recently started two other meetings in the **Boston** area. The first is in **Stoneham, MA**, on Sunday evenings and alternates between Speaker/Discussion and Step/Literature.

The second new meeting has only met once as of this writing so is still in the formative stages, but will be situated in **Somerville, MA**, and will focus very heavily on understanding the Steps and making them part of our daily lives. We will keep you informed on the progress of these two new additions to the recovery process in **Boston**." **C.A.**

**Alexandria, VA:** "All of us are grateful to the SA program and want to help SA at the national level. . . . Our Wednesday evening meeting usually has five to ten people. We are not a large group but do have a faithful number who regularly come. Thanks for all you do at the national level." **B.H.**

**Prince Edward Island, Canada:** "Sorry for being so long in payment of the white book" it is some heavy book. The group is going well. We've four regular members who are really working hard on their sobriety." **C.G.**

**Chanute, KS:** "... our group started out with just three people and has grown to six. We are here to help each other stay sober. We believe that if you keep bringing the body, the mind will soon follow. We keep coming back because it works." **B.S.**

**Portland, OR:** "Our group grew out of the original eastside meeting that was approaching nearly 30 participants each Sunday night. We fortunately found a home for a second Sunday meeting on the west side of **Portland**, hence we've come to be known as the Sunday evening 'westside' group. As a group we started in November, with six of us, and we've been consistently growing together in strength and recovery. Occasionally attendance swells into the double digits, but more importantly, many of us have significant sobriety and recovery, with at least four of us having over two years." W.S.

**Wilmerding, PA:** "We have about 30 names on our Wednesday SA sobriety list with seven to eleven attendees most meetings and three of us with more than one year of sobriety." L.H.

**Rochester, NY:** "We [Rochester Intergroup] meet on a monthly basis to pray together, share recovery, and handle matters which are perceived to involve SA in the **Rochester** area. There is a lot of discussion at these meetings and a lot of items on our agenda. We receive support from the autonomous groups and fund an inventory of literature and sobriety chips as well as our P.O. Box. Now that these projects are completed, excess money in our treasury will be sent to the C.O. in addition to money sent by the individual groups. I have said this so many times, but it's true, **Rochester** is truly blessed with an SA program that has saved many lives, including mine, and the Central Office has played a big role in this. May God bless you and all the work you do. Yours in God's love and sobriety." D.G.

**Akron, OH:** "The Tuesday night Freedom Group is still growing. We now have a second **Akron** meeting every Saturday morning. We are hopeful that it grows as steadily as the Tuesday group. Recovery is continuing for many people in this area. Some of us are helping to get a group started at **Southeastern Correctional Institute in Lancaster, OH**. Our first group there went extremely well. There are many men there with a strong desire to recover." J.T.

**Winona, MN:** “Thanks to our Higher Power and your work, we have finally started a **Winona SA Group**. Due to our city’s location on the Mississippi River, we have named our group **The Winona River of Hope SA Group**. . . Currently we have four attendees, one female and three males.” S.S.

## MEMBER NEWS

**Blackwell, OK:** “As of February, 1991, I started an SA group here in **Blackwell**. I am very grateful for the four members of SA at **Wichita, KS** for coming to **Blackwell** and helping me to get started. I am very grateful for SA and my recovery. I’ve been in recovery since June of 1988 when I found out I was a sexaholic and started attending SA. Thank you for SA—a safe place.” L.W.

**Miami, FL:** “I was exposed to your program and another similar program about two years ago. I belong to another 12-Step fellowship. . . but I cannot talk about what you all talk about recovery from an addiction to lust. If I try to talk about this, even with people whom I trust, they get defensive and tell me it’s not really a problem. Boy, have I heard that one before! Anyway, when I came to a single meeting of SA, I had the foresight, grace, and finances to pick up quite a bit of literature. . . . Reading this has helped me by letting me know that I am truly *not alone anymore*. Thank God.

“The most important thing is that I get in contact with you all, with a meeting nearby, and with a few people who understand the turmoil I have been going through.” M.R.

**Tucson, AZ:** “My story is very similar to many I have read and heard in SA. I was sexually obsessive and compulsive for over 50 years. And my disease got progressively worse until I finally found myself living in a flop house hotel, losing my job, frequenting porno shops and flics, and having



lost my family and friends. In desperation, I called SA and got help. From the time I attended that first meeting nearly 32 months ago, I have been sober, and my recovery has progressed many times faster than my disease had. In gratitude, I share now. . . .

“Before I came to SA, I was constantly overwhelmed by guilt and shame. My behavior was contrary to my own moral code and in violation of society’s expectations. As a result, my self-esteem was at rock bottom. I had been suicidal on five different occasions. I had been working with a very competent hypno-therapist on the self-esteem issue, but to no avail. However, after about 30 days of sobriety, the therapy began to work. In fact, I soon discontinued the therapy. . . I take great joy in the progress of my recovery since I decided to let God direct my life. . . .

“Before coming into the fellowship, I lived a dual life—one very public and the other very secret. My family and friends had no idea of my obsession and compulsion. I was afraid that they would somehow find out and would have nothing more to do with me. But when I came into SA, I learned that I needed to share my deepest darkest secrets if I wanted to recover. And share I did, all of my Steps, even a summary of my Fourth, with my home group. As disclosure brought relief from my obsession, I gradually developed a genuine enthusiasm for sharing my insides with my fellows. Participation in the fellowship has greatly relieved my fear of disclosure to my closest friends, those in SA. . . .

“I carried an enormous load of guilt and shame into SA. I know that my behavior was very wrong, but I also knew that I couldn’t stop for a whole day. I was convinced that my problem was moral depravity, and that I was beyond hope. But in SA I have learned that God could and would help me, if only I would work the Steps. As I worked seriously on my shortcomings and began to make amends, I felt the guilt and shame slide away. My awful past became simple historical fact. Yes, working those Steps most certainly relieved my burden of guilt and shame. . . .

“I had always felt on edge and unhappy. I was a bundle of ‘self will run riot’. Anger and resentment filled my days and nights. There was no peace in me, and certainly no joy. But in recovery I began to learn how to live. I began to feel good about myself and my life. I found significant serenity, and I developed the ability to enjoy life in freedom from obsession and compulsion. . . .



"My life had been marked by a compulsive quest for better and better sex, which was never good enough to satisfy my cravings. Every waking moment focused on my obsession, and my compulsion drove most of my activities. My wife had left me and left town. I had no friends or relatives in town.

"For the first year of my sobriety, my only friends were my fellows in SA. For me, sobriety meant total sexual abstinence, and that certainly seemed impossible. But this program works, by God! And the recovery I began to experience far outshined the loss of sexual pleasure, which was never enough anyway. I found that my life without sex was infinitely better than my former life with compulsive sex. . . .

"As a compulsive pleasure seeker, my search was my illness. For me, sex was always self-centered. It always meant self-gratification. I was always using others, always taking, never giving, totally without love. But as I achieved some significant recovery, I began to develop a real relationship with my former wife. Now with 'nothing to lose,' I was able to risk self-disclosure and make genuine amends. One year into sobriety I moved back in with her and our two daughters, and we agreed to live a celibate life until remarriage. So for the second year of my sobriety, I learned that love without sex was infinitely better than the earlier experience of sex without love. . . .

"In summary, this program has really caused a spiritual awakening in me. I truly feel reborn. I have a new chance to really live this time. Through prayer and meditation, I have made a start, but I realize only a start, at developing a conscious contact with God. This initial effort has been so exciting and so rewarding that I expect this spiritual journey to be the central endeavor of the rest of my life.

"God, I thank You for my sobriety, the precondition for my spiritual development. I thank You for the SA fellowship and for the 12-Step program that has provided the recovery I have experienced so far. And I thank You for the spiritual awakening that energizes me. Today I know that You will be my special partner in the continuing development of my spiritual life for the rest of my life. I ask only that I may continue to learn more and more of Your will for me, and that I may have the power to carry that out."  
**R.S.**



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