

Essay®

P.O. Box 300
Simi Valley, California 93062

September 1993

Service Not an Option

When I first got sober in AA, service was not an option; it came with the package. When we work through the Steps, we eventually get to Step Twelve, which states that "Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these Steps, we tried to carry the message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs." When I came to SA I was told that AA's Twelve Steps were SA's Twelve Steps.

We need all twelve of those Steps to stay sober! If we could stay sober on eleven, there would only be eleven. If we could get by on five, there would only be five. But there are twelve and we need every one of them if we are to have that long-term, contented sobriety our literature talks about.

When I finally got a sponsor who knew what this program was all about, he asked me if I was willing to go to any length to have a spiritual experience sufficient to bring about release from my disease, and I said Yes! (Desperation does wonders for willingness.) He then told me I was to come over to his house every Sunday for the next twelve weeks and to bring my Big Book and the Twelve & Twelve. (Sunday happened to be a day mutually available to both of us for the working of a Step.)

He had me read aloud, out of the Twelve & Twelve, the Step we were to cover that Sunday, and then he would show me what the Big Book had to say about that

Important COOC Announcement

In the past we have sent the *Essay* newsletter to a large number of people, both members and inquirers, free of charge. We can no longer continue to do this and remain self-supporting as required by SA's Seventh Tradition. It has therefore been decided that starting with the December 1993 issue, we will send the *Essay* to subscribers only, at a cost of \$7.00 for a one-year (four issues) subscription. For group subscriptions of ten copies or more, the cost will be \$5.00 for four issues.

This is the last issue you will receive unless you take out a subscription to the *Essay*. Mailing to groups free of charge is discontinued effective this mailing. Please use the literature order form on the back page of this issue to enter your subscription with the Central Office.

particular Step. We would stop from time to time during the reading and ask questions to more fully develop or elaborate on a particular principle. It is a simple program, if we simply work it!

In the span of twelve weeks my life was miraculously changed. My problems didn't go away, but I

now had a way to engage life on life's terms without acting out in my disease. Since that time I have sponsored more than thirty men in both AA and SA. I know of no one I have sponsored who has thoroughly worked through the Twelve Steps in this manner, who has relapsed, nor have the people they, in turn, are sponsoring. The great gift is that sponsoring people in this way keeps me reworking the fundamentals of the program, and I am staying sober, making progress in my recovery.

I think Dr. Bob said it all so well on page 180 of the Big Book:

I spend a great deal of time passing on what I learned to others who want and need it badly. I do it for four reasons:

1. *Sense of duty.*
2. *It is a pleasure.*
3. *Because in so doing I am paying my debt to the man who took time to pass it on to me.*
4. *Because every time I do it I take out a little more insurance for myself against a possible slip.*

(Alcoholics Anonymous, p. 180)
R.M.

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Ego

Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles above personalities.

Ego has been said to mean Edging God Out. How desperately I want to sign this piece so that I'll be admired and praised — so that I'll feel less small and gray. But this means I am mistakenly allowing, indeed inviting, others to validate me — thinking that they can fill me up and make me whole.

The principles of the Fellowship teach me that God, and love of God and gratitude for God's grace comes first, myself and love of myself and gratitude for my God-given grace come second, and that others and love of others and gratitude for their God-given graces comes next — not last, but definitely third on the order of things. In my topsy turvy world, I came to dream that a human power could heal me. I was looking for healing in all the wrong places and have spiritual scar tissue all over. So when I puff myself up, I am inviting spiritual disaster. How do I feel on my ego journey? Anxious and shrieky. After the journey? Hung over, unsatisfied and alone. So, praises be to God, my name is Anonymous and just for today I'll so remain. And tomorrow, if my lifetime disease of the ego asserts itself once more, and it well may, it does so often, please, human power that you are, pull me up and say:

Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles above personalities.

Anonymous

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

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

September 17-19, 1993 - Fall 1993 SA-S-Anon Retreat, Victoria, Canada. Contact Post Office Box 32018, 3749 Shelbourne Street, Victoria, British Columbia, V8P 5N0 Canada.

October 8, 9, 10, 1993 -

Fifth Annual Southern California SA & S-Anon Unity Conference, Anaheim, CA, sponsored by SA Southern California Intergroup. Theme: Back to Basics. Contact Registrar, c/o Inter-Group, P.O. Box 91083, Industry, CA 91715-1083 or call Barry W. at (909) 467-0348.

October 8-10, 1993 -

Wichita Marathon, Spiritual Life Center, Wichita, Kansas, hosted by Oklahoma City SA. Opens at 6:00 P.M. on Friday and closes with lunch at 12:00 P.M. on Sunday. Contact David T. (405) 429-3140.

October 9, 1993 -

Annual Baltimore-Washington One Day Marathon, Baltimore, MD, 701 S. Charles Street, Baltimore. Theme: This Simple Program. Contact Joe L., (301) 547-1600 (day) or Jeff S. (410) 343-1412 (evening).

November 19-21, 1993 -

3rd Annual German-speaking SA and S-Anon Convention, Benediktbeuren, Germany (near Munich). Theme: To the Center with SA and S-Anon. Contact Ruth in Germany at (0) 228-356713 or Dieter in Switzerland (0) 1-700-0719.

January 14-16, 1994 - PLEASE NOTE DATE

SA-S-Anon International Convention, Rochester, New York.

Theme: Spiritual Awakening as a Result of These Steps . . . Contact P.O. Box 90881, Rochester, NY 14609 or call Mike F. (716) 325-5514 (SA) or Kit M. (716) 244-4189 (S-Anon).

July 8-10, 1994 -

SA-S-Anon International Convention, Portland, Oregon. Theme: Discoveries! Contact Ed or Marie G., (503) 640-9820.

The Group Conscience

There are two ways for a group to arrive at a group conscience. One is the competitive way, the other is the cooperative way. In the competitive, you push your ideas across, take a vote, and the majority carry the decision. This leaves behind a disgruntled minority that feel that its truths are lost sight of in the decision.

In the cooperative way, the group gathers together with the idea of

harmonious and mutual trust leading to a group decision. This leaves no disgruntled minority.

The following guidelines have helped our group to make decisions in the cooperative way:

- Members are disciplined to the thought of a group decision rather than someone's personal triumph. This brings the group together in a receptive mood and the will to find agreement is present.

• A period of silence is maintained for the group to focus on the issue at hand. This is done in the spirit of wanting a solution, not a snap judgement.

• The chairperson goes around the room and asks each individual his or her views. The meeting is not thrown open for a general discussion that would allow the more vocal ones to set the debate. This method gives the least vocal an equal chance to be heard. The chairperson expresses a view only after others have expressed themselves.

• If there is clearly a practical unanimity, there is a period of silence to see if a vote should be taken.

• If there is not sufficient unanimity, the vote is postponed until next meeting. This is done so that a Higher Power may speak to us in the interim.

• If at the next meeting we are still not of a common mind, we take a majority vote if a decision is imperative.

Using the cooperative method we get through twice the amount of work we could with the competitive method. The cooperative method is the way we try to live — it is written in our Traditions. **Anonymous**

Group News

Welcome to the following new groups:

Bannockburn, Illinois
Pearl River, New York
Anchorage, Alaska
Dover, Delaware
Kerema, Papua, New Guinea

The following is from *Sharing Recovery*, a newsletter published by the **Connecticut-Westchester Intergroup**, June-August 1993:

"What we hope to accomplish by putting together a newsletter for

our Connecticut and Westchester groups is to provide a chance to share our recovery, keep ourselves informed of upcoming events, help unify different groups as well as allow them to share successes and failures, and include tools of the program, anniversaries and slogans.

"Each issue will develop a topic or Step. In special cases problems requiring our attention may be presented. For example, one particular concern currently being discussed at meetings has been the importance of sponsorship and the need for sponsors. Other items to be included in our newsletter will be a tools of the program section, an announcements section, shared stories, suggested readings, and anniversaries.

"The success of this venture will depend a lot on the energy and talent of a few dedicated members. It will also need contributions of any and all those interested. So if you have something you want to share with the rest of us, please put a pen to paper or give your idea to your intergroup representative and we'll do our best to put it into print so that all can benefit.

"Our newsletter will never take the place of meetings or making our Steps, but we hope it will help to unify and add to our recovery. **B.**

White Plains, NY: At a recent meeting in White Plains we had a special meeting on sponsorship. We changed the format and made it an "open" meeting with feedback allowed. We broke the meeting up into fifteen-minute segments.

In the first part, a seven-minute tape from Roy K. was played. Some of Roy's comments: A sponsor is a person who guides us through the Steps; sponsorship

is a human interaction; sponsorship helps us to get out of isolation; a sponsor should be ahead of the sponsee in the Steps, preferably having finished their Fourth and Fifth.

Some of our reactions to the tape:

One person referred to the recent article in the *Essay*, "Thoughts on Dealing with Chronic Slippers," and said "sponsorship is informal—not legalistic. Instead of only one person as a sponsor, I can draw on the experience of several people."

"Having a sponsor injects a sense of accountability."

In the second part, the question was posed: "If you presently have a sponsor, what is this doing for your program?"

"It calls me to be accountable to that person for my actions."

"I can have honest sharing with another person who understands me."

"It is a humbling experience."

"Empathy enters in."

"If I can't find one person, the option of co-sponsoring and using other people is helpful."

In the third part, the question was asked: "If you presently do not have a sponsor, why not?"

"Lack of sponsors."

"Discomfort in relationships."

"I don't like too many demands made by sponsors."

"It took me a long time to find a person who had more sobriety than I had."

"I'm afraid to ask someone and I don't really want to be accountable."

"I can't find the 'perfect fit'."

(continued)

In the last part, the question was: "If you have quality sobriety, why aren't you sponsoring?"

"I already have three sponsees and I feel that's all I can handle."

"I'm not finished with my Fourth and Fifth Steps, so I don't think I'm far enough along in my program."

We finished the meeting by returning to our regular format.
G.M.

Member News

I have been a member of SA for over eight years now, but will be celebrating my first anniversary of sobriety in about three weeks. During my first seven years in the program, I didn't want the painful consequences of my lust, but I didn't want to stop altogether either. It has taken me seven years in the fellowship to finally reach my "bottom" and to "go to any lengths" to achieve and maintain sexual sobriety. I just couldn't take the pain of acting out any longer. I am very grateful to be sober and for the support of this fellowship. I know I could not do it on my own.

Since I've been sober, the meetings have become very precious to me. However, in the last couple of months I have been concerned about some comments I've been hearing at meetings that to me have the potential of affecting the quality of the meetings, and giving a distorted message to others.

The issue is how individuals define what sex it. As we know, our sobriety definition states that sobriety means not having sex with self or others, except the spouse. However, there seems to be some confusion as to what exactly constitutes sex. I have been hearing members talk about masturbating for lengths of time, yet considering themselves sober

because they did not ejaculate. Others talk about going to adult bookstores or fashion shows or cruising their old haunts, yet because they did not masturbate or engage in sexual activity with another person, they see themselves as sober.

These comments concern me deeply. I am concerned about the quality of our meetings and the message we carry to others. To me, masturbation is sexual activity. Whether ejaculation occurs or not does not make it any less a sexual act. The same with looking at adult literature or cruising places to look at potential partners. Voyeurism, exhibitionism, cruising, etc. are all forms of acting out. There is no progressive victory over lust if I engage in any of these activities. Because it may be a "lesser" form of what I have done in the past, or because I may be able to stop before achieving orgasm, I'm still resorting to my drug, and am therefore not sober.

I'm a sexaholic. That means I cannot handle any form of acting out behavior in my life. The moment I begin to think that I can get away with this activity or that activity and still be sober, I'm in my disease. And once I act on this thinking, I am acting out. I have lost control, even if I am able to limit the activity to some point initially. I know the fantasy will come back to haunt me more and more, until lust gets what it wants, which is *all* of me.

I still struggle with lust today. But through the grace of God and our loving fellowship, I do not have to feed my lust. I stay away from slippery places and when I struggle, I turn to my Higher Power, make a phone call, or go to a meeting. I am grateful that I have the willingness to do these things today.

I used to think that the program could not work for me because I

couldn't stay sober. I see now that I was not surrendered. I did not have the willingness to work the program and face the pain of withdrawal. I rationalized that I was different from other members, my problem was more severe. As time went by, however, I saw others with similar backgrounds achieve and maintain sobriety. Little by little my denial was weakening, until finally I could not take the pain of my actions anymore.

This program works! It works for me now too! It works because I am following instructions for the first time! I remember somebody once saying, "When all else fails, follow directions!" It can work for you too, and I believe that today. Sex, in any of its forms, is indeed optional. M.F.

Without daily surrender of my powerlessness over lust, there is no possible way I would have over two and three-quarter years of sexual sobriety. Without daily surrender of my powerlessness over resentment, rage and hatred, there is no possible way I would have recently celebrated two years of what I call "verbal abuse sobriety." I used to criticize my wife's body—resenting, blaming and hating her for not measuring up to lust's standards of perfection; I spewed out this verbal venom or flashed it through rage-filled eyes for 13 years. It is as much an addiction for me as lust—and just as unconquerable, except by God. As my program brothers and sisters applaud my sexual sobriety with a birthday cake and a chip, so my wife at home applauds my verbal abuse sobriety with a birthday cake and a chip. Her love for me is a miracle, her support priceless. I thank God for my wife; and I thank my wife for encouraging me in 1990 to seek help through SA. It has saved my life and my marriage. A.L.

Freedom from Lust

[The following is a transcript of a talk by Jesse L. at the Nashville International SA Conference, July 1993]

Thank you very much. It is beautiful to be with you. And thanks to Martha and Joan and all you people in Nashville for creating this beautiful environment for us. And thank you Harvey for helping bring me here and giving me this chance to say over a concerted period of time something that is so important to me. I have looked for this opportunity for some time and now it is here.

I am Jesse L, a grateful sexaholic. I did not lust yesterday. I have been lust-free for a goodly number of days. These days add up to 3,886 lust-free days. For that freedom from lust I am never sufficiently grateful. Because of 17 years of Twelve-Step life before I got to SA, my years in SA have been focused primarily on the Twelfth Step. I re-worked the first nine Steps on SA in my first three months. Since then, as Chuck C. and Clancy have recommended, I have spent my life on the last three Steps, principally searching only for knowledge of God's will for me and the power to carry that out. This work has shown me that lust is the central issue in my life.

All sexual sobriety is what happens when you are lust-free. You can get sexual sobriety and still be lusting but it isn't worth much. The most extreme example was the guy who, long ago in our group with a very generous IQ, convinced himself that not masturbating meant that he was sexually sober. So he would masturbate to the point of ejaculation and stop so that he could be sexually sober. That was his technical sexual sobriety and it is the most extreme example of technical

sexual sobriety I have ever found. But he kept slipping for some reason.

His exaggerated use of lust while staying technically sober by his interpretation of our program shows us our real enemy, which is lust. If you play with any lust, it is playing with the tiger and that tiger will kill you. If you stay lust-free and stop lusting instantly when it comes, then sexual sobriety is inevitable for you.

Lust is very pervasive in today's world, but I believe lust has no power. It is our ego that has the power. It is the ego that has always been the enemy. Since caveman times each of us have been equal in that we are born separate and alone. And our lives have been spent on a spiritual quest to demolish the ego. What ego uses to destroy us is only a detail, it isn't the issue. And what ego has used to destroy us through the ages has varied from time to time and today ego is using lust.

So the minute we are ready for the prayer, God help us, God works perfectly and lust is powerless before that prayer of "God help us."

What is the spiritual sickness of lust? At first we see it as wanting sexual stimulation at that moment instead of the thing God was offering us at that moment. Especially we use lust to run away from the pain, the consequences of our mistakes in living, that God was offering at that moment. So how can we ever learn anything. It is like the fire alarm is going off and we cut the wires to the fire alarm because we don't like fire alarms and that part of the house burns down.

That's why immaturity is so much our problem in SA, because how can you grow up if you avoid all pain and the learning from all pain? So that's why, when we come into SA, we do the most precious thing which we have

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never done before which is finally starting to get over being babies and grow up. This was pointed out to us so powerfully in a speech given by a famous doctor at the Phoenix SA conference in 1984. At that time he was the only professional who had any long-term experience with recovery from sexual addiction. He said in our first three to five years of sexual sobriety we go through early adolescence, and in the seventh to tenth year of our sexual sobriety, we go through early adulthood. By his time schedule, I started growing up at age 57. I would not reach early adulthood until age 64, but that was no problem because that sure beat the heck out of my alternative which was never doing it.

I believe the spiritual sickness of lust is wanting sexual stimulation at that moment instead of what God is offering us. Later we come to see that lusting is wanting anything other than what God is offering us each moment. My story tells how lust killed my life. And my story tells how stopping all lust instantly and seeing lust for what it really is has led me to a new life that I didn't even know

existed, to say nothing of knowing it was possible for me.

To me this program is only about one thing--lust. All the rest is just details. Lust is the only issue, sexual sobriety is the inevitable result. Lust robbed me of real life from age seven to age fifty-seven. Lust cost me fifty years of life. No

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wonder I wanted to stop all lusting the minute you told me that what I thought was my life-long friend was really my enemy. No one had told me that before and only your special ability and knowledge as a fellow man or woman sexaholic could reveal the enemy that was lurking beneath the guise of a friend. It's like a spy novel. Your most special agent is a spy for the enemy and you must kill him immediately.

I had never suspected him, lust, so no wonder I was immediately grateful to you for the good news. And to remember Jean here, I say as she did, I am never sufficiently grateful. And most important of all, since you came to me ten years ago and told me who the enemy was, this fellowship has given me the safe haven where I could seek a lust-free life.

My sponsors claim to need my help but it's actually a set-up job. They are faking their illness so they can ask me the questions they need to ask so that I have to answer them and then have to follow my own good advice. I just

wanted them to know that I know their tricks.

As I have progressed down your path, I have found that a lust-free path has led me to a life of beauty and joy I had sought since a young man. When I was seventeen I went to our young Baptist minister. I had been baptized at twelve and became more and more aware of the contradictions of church life. Our minister was a very religious young man and I loved being in his church. But I said to that pastor, "Reverend, there's got to be something more." Now I know what that something more is.

This is a talk I have been thinking about for quite some time. I was going to write an anonymous book about it. But then you people in Nashville gave me the God-sent chance to say it instead which is so much better. So, like so many of my books were said to a group, so is this talk my experience, strength and hope and my book to you about what you gave me.

Our program is one of attraction rather than promotion. I was taught that in the fall of 1966 by the people in that other program. I took my wife to a meeting at her request. I stayed because of the warmth and love I felt at that meeting. Their love and warmth attracted me. Their love for me opened my heart to them. Their love for me started the healing I needed in my life. Their love for me caught me and held me long enough so I could start learning. It was their love that attracted me.

Then, when I moved to Bozeman, the oldtime AAs there stepped in to help get that other Twelve-Step group going. They started to teach this crazy guy. I was crazy without benefit of alcohol, but crazy because of a drug they didn't know I was on and I didn't know

I was on. Those AAs taught me who I was over and over again, a child of God. For 16 years I went to my meetings and AA open meetings. But it is so significant that you asked me to speak on the Twelfth Step because in my Twelfth Step work in Bozeman, my life was an almost complete failure in attracting people to that other Twelve Step program. I couldn't attract anybody. I couldn't carry the message in my own town through my own life. My words in my books were beautiful and powerful. My life wasn't beautiful and powerful. The people who read my books were attracted to the program in droves but the people who read the big book of my life didn't want it. I watched people my books had attracted start meetings that grew astronomically. Yet, when my wife dropped out of the flourishing Bozeman group, the membership dropped way down and it just barely stayed alive for the next five years when I was in that program. So I had five years of failure in my life in Twelve Stepping in another program. That was one thing that was making me ready.

The other thing was a volcano of sexual addiction that blew up in my face in 1969 and 1970. And my addiction blew up while I was still trying to practice that other Twelve Step program. I would ask God to help me each morning and slip again. I would wake up each night with fire in my belly wondering why I couldn't stop and seeing that my whole life was on the line each day. I got into affairs. As I slipped down that toboggan slide into hell, I violated every canon and every honor and everything about me. I had no integrity in the beginning of the addiction and I had nothing but shame and horror at the end.

In July of 1976 in a Westwood, California bookstore I had a deep awakening that paved the way to the real awakening that was to come seven long years later. I had gone to spend three days with a woman I had been having an affair with. But in that early evening insight, I saw all of a sudden that I loved my wife more than anyone in the world. I saw that she was the person I most wanted to be with. But, if that was the case, why didn't I act like it? And why, in the face of difficulties with her, did I turn like a dog with my tail between my legs and crawl away from her in fear? I saw that I had to break off the affair with this woman a day early and go back home and try to learn how to be a man and how to be responsible. That was in late July of 1976. So I had white-knuckle sobriety without you and without the secret.

My wife thought I was trying to torture her to death. She had recovery in another program and a new way of life. I knew there was something wrong in my marriage and with women but I didn't know what it was. I had stopped the acting out. There was still an occasional masturbation or an occasional use of porno from the satellite, but that was only a once-a-month kind of a thing, the kind of thing that none of you would have any respect for as a real addiction like the one you had.

In March of 1983, we were in Phoenix for the winter. There was a sex addict minister in some kind of recovery going around telling from the pulpit his wild tales about his descent into hell as a sexual addict. And boy was that a spectacular tale! At the end of his addiction he had progressed to the point where he was looking out over his congregation deciding what woman in that congregation he was going to have sex

with that night. He would go to a motel in his little town and check in with her, so he was just screaming to be caught. That shows how the path to idiocy goes.

Well, that story was the talk of the town. "Wow, did you hear about him?" The story was all over Phoenix. So, of course my wife heard about this story and saw the parallels to what she had earlier suspected about me. As for me, I didn't see that the story applied to me at all, because I wasn't acting out as I saw it. I would just walk into a restaurant and make sure that our waitress knew what I was and who I was. I thought it was kidding and joking. Hah! I was coming on to every woman I saw. I would lie in bed fantasizing sex with another woman. My wife would call me a jerk and I would use as a tranquilizer some sexual fantasy about one of those women I thought loved me. Now one of them did try to blackmail me but in my twisted mind I thought she really loved me. She wanted to, she just had these little problems like needing money, otherwise she would never have needed to blackmail me. So to my mind, it was true love.

How much lower and twisted can you be than that? To me, there is nothing lower than that. People think, well a criminal sex rapist, he is lower than that. No he isn't. Not to me. I don't think you can go lower than low.

So, my wife in a great moment of clarity and a growing recovery, got hold of an SA folder with two telephone numbers and handed it to me. "Get in SA or get out!" Thirty four years of marriage, seven years after I had quit my acting out, and that's my reward for being a good guy? Here I was being the best guy I could be and I got zapped. But I took the folder and made the call. I got Kent on the phone, a guy who came in

from the first Dear Abby letter. He said, "Jesse, it's lust. It's what's in your head that is killing you." That was the greatest relief that I have ever felt. Nothing in my life has been more important than that. Because, yeah, I got married and that was important. I had children and they were important. But

I would ask God to help me each morning and slip again. I would wake up each night with fire in my belly wondering why I couldn't stop and seeing that my whole life was on the line each day.

those things didn't exist, when lust was in my head. When lust stopped being in my head, then my wife and my marriage and my family and my friends and myself came into existence from that moment.

You might say, Well, that's making too much of a thing. No, it isn't. You haven't lived my life. And that's why I stressed what that life was like before where the external signs were great but the internal signs were awful. So I went to see Kent.

But I couldn't get to a meeting right away. I had a little problem. I was in the process of saying a book to a group of people at a seminar I had set up in Phoenix. The book was about a funny subject, it was about how we could have a perfect marriage with our present mate. That seminar was on Wednesday, so that delayed my coming to the Wednesday night meeting for a few more Wednesdays. So I couldn't come to the SA

meeting right away, but I didn't need to because I was lust-free from that telephone call until today. By the time I got to the meetings I found to my horror that I would have to go to Oklahoma City in just 30 days. Fortunately I had been around the Twelve Steps for seventeen years

I immediately did my First Step and told about all the sexual things I had done which bothered me. I got a sponsor right away. I did my Fourth and Fifth Step with him.

so I knew something about the program. I immediately did my First Step and told about all the sexual things I had done which bothered me. I got a sponsor right away. I did my Fourth and Fifth step with him. I worked the first nine Steps over again in terms of my sexual addiction.

So I had a ton of lust thinking to stop and that's why my story in the little blue book says, "It Was All in My Head." So like some of you who have spoken at this conference earlier, I too have to apologize for my poor acting out story when I came in because it is so feeble compared to the wonderful acting out stories some of you have to tell. Phooey! I think our situation is just like in AA. We can play one-upmanship with the horrible details of our stories that give us so much concern. By focusing on the "I drank worse than you did" aspect of our stories, we are continuing our isolation and separation. And we risk missing the central point of our stories. The details of our

stories are not to be hung on to gleefully. I think we need to see to the heart of our stories and that the details are possibly totally inconsequential. Because lust is the issue, not those details. I was lost. I believe I was as lost as any of you were lost. I don't believe there are degrees of lostness.

When I came into SA, I had some advantages that helped me. All the years of sponsorship and teaching by those old AA's in that other program were ready to go to work for me now that I was off my last big drug, lust. So I came in here knowing that the program was all God, like my old sponsor said. He was on skid row. When he came into AA, he crawled on his hands and knees up the stairs to that second-floor AA clubhouse. He didn't like religion so he didn't take to the God-part. He took the two-step deal, One and Twelve. But how can you take One and Twelve without any God in there? Anyway, he thought he didn't have any God-part. But after five years, he finally asked his sponsor how he could get long-term sobriety. The old "twelve apostles," as he called them, sat him down at the bargaining table and told him, "If you want long-term sobriety, you've got to get the God-part of this program." So, as he said, "I started working on the God part. And you know, I found that there wasn't anything else, there ain't no other part."

So I said, "God help me" the instant any lust came to my mind. I took every measure I could to avoid lust. I stayed out of malls, stayed away from the television and movies. I might be walking down the street and see a woman coming towards me, I'd walk over to the other side of the street if I had to to avoid lust. The people at my meetings in those early days couldn't believe what I was doing. "You are giving up the best part of

life," they said to me. I thought, "Well, maybe I am. I'm a maniac." But it's no problem. Sometimes taking things to extremes serves me to good advantage and that was one, I'll tell you, where I believe it really served me.

Now, if the prayer "God help me" wasn't enough to stop lusting from continuing, I found myself a bigger weapon. Sometimes I would just be driving along in the car and all of a sudden, bang, my ego had slipped a videotape in my head of the most intense sex possible and I'm watching it play. Where did that come from? Well my ego knows where the lust tapes are and it pops them on there for its amusement. So I would say, "God, help me." But the videotape keeps on playing, it won't shut off. So then I go to the heavyweight stuff, a long prayer. For me it is the Our Father, a long prayer. "Our Father...", and I'm saying that prayer and see to my horror that I'm still lusting in a part of my head while I'm praying. Lust just won't shut off. But it is no problem, I found, because of two things. When I'm praying, lust can't really get hold of me because lust needs my undivided attention. And I will never give lust my undivided attention. That videotape can play and play. And then I found another secret, and that is I can always pray longer than my lust attack can last. So always at the end of one of those Our Fathers would be a time when the tape had stopped playing and the screen was blank.

Now it might come back on five minutes later. No sweat. Here we go again boys, "God help me, God help me, God help me, Our Father..." Or, there have been other times when that tape will come on and I'm just a little lethargic about snapping into the "God help me," for a few seconds or so. I hear people with these

ten second lust rules. Not for me. You can do enough lusting in ten seconds to slip good. And even three seconds, that isn't fast enough for me. I need the second thought rule. That is, that the first thought is on God because I'm an insane sexaholic and God knew what he was doing when he made me that way. But the second thought, that's on me, and I don't want it. Sometimes I'm not as sharply aware of my sexaholic nature as I should be. Sometimes I lose some of my vigilance, the eye of the hawk. So I come to awareness in my third or fourth lust thought before I'm aware of where I'm at. But then, bang, "God help me." I've said that God help me prayer so many times that a lot of times now I'll see something that's an occasion of lust and I've automatically gone to "God help me" before I'm even aware of what's going on. That prayer and that vigilance for lust is now built into me like patch pockets in a suit.

So, from the start I had a ton of lusting. But I saw that I got the same relief from stopping lusting that all the others got from stopping lots of acting out and lusting. So being a scientist, a PhD psychologist, I'm impressed by the fact that those who mostly just stopped lusting when we came in got the same results as the person who stopped lusting and acting out. That says to me that acting out isn't the real problem. Acting out is just the eventual and inevitable result of lusting.

So I knew the program was all God and believed it totally so I knew I just had to stop. I stopped lusting that sharply for thirty days and went to Oklahoma City to be with two of our sons in treatment. Two other kids were living there who were drug and alcohol counselors and they both looked at me and said, "Dad, you're different."

Those were such beautiful words to hear. They were the first external signs I got that I was making progress. And those words came after just thirty days. Those words made me look at other things and I saw the shame and guilt, most of it, had gone. I had thought shame and guilt was some historic thing that came with the territory like old Sigmund Freud tells us.

But when you think about doing the awful things I was thinking of, if you don't feel ashamed and guilty about them, there is something seriously wrong with you. Sometimes I run into a person who says, "But I've got my guilt." Fine, but lighten the guilt load by quitting doing and thinking what you feel guilty about.

So, I gave a talk when I first came to Oklahoma with only thirty days of sobriety, and my little friend Sylvia came trotting in and she heard my talk and knew that was her problem, too. Now I had a meeting to go to. And then I went to Provo, Utah, to talk to the Overeaters because they had read my books. I told them I didn't know that much about overeating so I talked to them about my sexual addiction. I passed a sheet of paper around and a whole bunch of women signed up. Now I had some new friends in Salt Lake to talk to to help me with my program. Then I went to Minneapolis to make a talk and a group started up there, the one Jim E. was talking about. I went to Bozeman for my School of Life and a guy from Edmonton was there. He went home and started a group in Edmonton. Bill from Livingston needed a group and found me, so the Bozeman group started up. And the guy from Edmonton became my sponsor.

I went to Seattle and gave a talk to alcoholics there and talked to the sexaholics alone in the evening. The SA group there had died

out so the AAs who were sexaholics started a new group. Wherever I went, it seemed like a group popped up. My son said, "Dad, you're just like Johnny Appleseed." And all that message carrying was done with only three to six months of sobriety. How could I carry the message so well

So I said, "God help me" the instant any lust came to my mind. I took every measure I could to avoid lust.

with so little sobriety and still so crazy from the old lust? Ordinarily that's impossible, especially when I had had to face that I couldn't carry any message for years in my other program.

Was it me and my charisma? No, obviously not. Me and my charisma didn't work before, did it? It didn't work worth a dang. No, charisma wasn't the secret. What was the secret? Near as I can figure out it was some combination of God's grace and a lust-free spirit. God couldn't work through me before because all the lust clogged up the channels. So the message-carrying I did in those earliest days is another reason I think a lust-free spirit is so vital.

I think that is why SA in Nashville is so big because you had two lust-free spirits here. There were three people started the Nashville group. When I was in Simi Valley in December of 1983 for a meeting Roy called, there were about 15 of us there. One of the guys there was another Roy. We called him "little" Roy. He loved the program. He was excited about sexual sobriety. He came back here to

Nashville, got a group started and found Harvey. He got some sobriety and maybe then some complacency and maybe some lust crept in the back door. And then he thought he was ready for a relationship. He needed a relationship. Oh, how he needed a relationship. And he got one.

... acting out isn't the real problem. Acting out is just the eventual and inevitable result of lusting.

Then his addiction started coming back on him and he started in with his obscene phone calls, and ended up in prison for murder. So he is sitting not too far from us but he can't join us.

I don't know how much his getting into a relationship hurt him, but if there is anything that still makes me blow my stack, it is running into the relationship hounds. It seems that they get a little sobriety and the next thing they want is a relationship. What can they know so early in their sobriety about such a deep subject? And why are their wants such a driving thing to them? God is going to give us our relationships when we are ready and need that relationship. And if God doesn't give us a relationship, to me, that says we aren't ready or we don't need it.

One of the things God handed me when I walked into this program was a lot of celibacy. So I ended up with more celibacy time than all but one priest in this program. That was one of the gifts God had for me. But the program tells us that. It says sex is optional. Isn't that beautiful? And it is proof that you can build a beautiful marriage

despite that. It doesn't make my wife totally happy that that was taken away. But there are little obstacles in the road that a car will drive over, but it is the great big obstacles like the boulders that the car won't drive over.

So it seems to me now that it might have been the lust-free spirit that was the only difference, and the big difference, that let me carry a new message. Now people wanted what I had. If you want what we have and are willing to go to any lengths to get it, then you are ready to take certain Steps. And they wanted what I had. Kind of! I don't have a lot of sponsorees because I'm such a cantankerous so and so that very few people can stand me. Harvey told how his old AA sponsor kept hanging up the phone. But Cherry had 50 sponsorees. I got three. A psychiatrist, a playwright and a 22-year-old divinity student. They are the only three who can stand me on a regular basis. But that's beautiful. I've got a lot of fishing to do and a lot of other things to do, and that's the way it goes. I come at people pretty hard sometimes and the only ones that last are the ones to learn to not take me too seriously and come roaring back.

But all these early times in my groups, I couldn't figure out why others would play with lust and weren't willing to stop like I was. It took me years to see that each of us come in from different situations. In my case I had gone through all these things I told you about. Lust nearly cost me my marriage. Lust smashed every value I had. Lust made a mockery of my life. Lust robbed me of my integrity. Lust made it impossible for me to really practice my other program. Lust made it impossible for me to attract others to that program. So I had many reasons for giving up lust that others

didn't have. That's why I said I was a grateful sexaholic in the first meetings I came to. I was grateful for it because that's what it took for me to break out of my prison and to smash a hole in the wall of my monstrous ego.

I remember one time I was talking at an AA conference and said that I was the supreme egotist. I practically had to fight everyone in the room for the title. So I know there is a strong chance there might be another big ego or two lying around here in this group.

So I had two adventures in this program, one was my adventure in fellowship where I reached out to others in every way I could. For years it was hard to reach out with the phone or letter. But as AA says, I acted my way to right thinking. An isolated sexaholic like me finds it very hard to reach out. Us sexaholics have no trouble being seen going into the porno shop. But we are too dainty to pick up the phone and call our sponsor. "I'm too isolated and shy. I just can't ask that of me. I can lie and cheat and steal to support my addiction, but call somebody, oh, you don't know me, I'm such a poor baby." But, for me, by reaching out to you, I could then be healed by you.

My second adventure was with lust. That adventure has carried me home. My wife has always been teaching me and a special place was when I came into this program. By reading the spiritual books and their definitions of what lust was, she started teaching me that lust wasn't just wanting sexual things. Lust is wanting anything that God doesn't have for you in this moment, anything God doesn't have for you right now.

Some of you clowns in this program seem to have taken me on to sponsor me whether I ask you

to or not. You keep coming up to me trying to improve my program. Thankfully, you just won't give up. Like old Gordon from Galveston. He constantly has my improvement on his mind. He is thinking of things I need. So he comes to town to see me. Then he comes to our meeting and he tells a story as though it is on him. It is the typical fake deal you guys do to me to make me learn. Gordon told me how his sister in Michigan was bothered by his profanity. His family back there asked Gordon if he possibly could to put a curb on his tongue. So he started practicing profanity sobriety.

That was the first opening I had to the wider sobriety that has funneled out from there. I saw I got a hit out of profanity, a shot of adrenaline. So I aimed for profanity sobriety, kind of, pretty well. Then I saw I needed traffic sobriety because I got a hit from speeding and worrying about the cops. And then I went on to more and more kinds of sobriety. I started in on anger sobriety and resentment sobriety and women's lib sobriety. I saw I would obsess on those things and get internal drug hits from them. I was powerless over those things, too, and couldn't handle them. So I asked for God's help to move my mind away from all those things just like I had with lust. I ended up stopping every internal drug hit I was on that I have been able to identify so far. So I stopped manufacturing all these drugs inside my body. I shut down the drug factory as well as I could with God's help and God's awareness.

My sobriety went on and on until finally I ended up with a much more advanced kind of traffic sobriety which is compassionate driving where I give the right of way to anyone who needs it or wants it and I do so in such a way

that they don't know that I did it for them by me watching far enough ahead. To me now it is very self-serving to serve others and get attention for it. So I'm looking for that person that needs the right of way up ahead and then just kind of backing off. Or, if someone pulls out in front of me too quickly I just kind of slow up so they don't need to feel me back there behind them. And that helps because what life is about is you are my brothers and sisters. And I love you. And if I love you, I need to be compassionate to you instead of trying to beat you to the parking spot.

I believe we sexaholics have a special talent for holding pictures in our minds. Just as alcoholics can't handle the chemical alcohol, I think we have a special problem because of our ability to retain pictures. I don't want any more pictures in my head. We live up a mountain valley outside Bozeman and I love to watch the Boston Celtics. My wife and son started a Serenity Shop a few years ago. She comes home tired needing to watch Jeopardy to relax. Well guess what time Jeopardy is on? Boston Celtics time. It was an uneasy peace for a few seasons, "Honey, you watch the game tonight and I'll do something else." So we got a second dish out back. That's the Boston Celtics dish. Each fall I return with new hope. But when the beer commercial comes on in the Boston Celtics game, I just hit the mute button and turn away.

My wife sees that and says, "What's wrong with you? You don't have any freedom. Are you going to act out because you see some gals playing on a beach with some guys?" Well, I'm not going to try to teach her all about sexaholism, nobody can understand this but a sexaholic. The reason I mute those commercials and turn

away is that I just don't want those pictures.

So I think being as lust-free as we can be is the heart of sexaholism. I think lust is the shield we put up to keep away life, to keep away love, to keep away God and they are all the same, life, love, God. Sexual sobriety isn't the issue, lust

Lust is wanting anything that God doesn't have for you in this moment, anything God doesn't have for you right now.

is the issue. I've seen lots of sexual sobriety and some of it isn't worth much. And who are the long term people in sexual sobriety who slip? They are the ones who are lusting, sometimes even in its subtlest forms of romantic and other kinds of stuff. Those romance novels in the supermarket are just as pornographic as the hardest core stuff because the readers of both books are lost in lust. But in a way the romance novels are more dangerous because people think that romantic lust is harmless. It sure isn't harmless for a sexaholic, it is as dangerous to us as dynamite.

On the other hand, I've never seen freedom from lust that wasn't staggeringly beautiful. I've seen that it has always planted those people's feet firmly on sobriety's pathway. So lust-free seems to me to be the total answer. Those who don't lust, stay sober. Those who lust, don't stay sober. I'll repeat that. Those who don't lust, stay sober. Those who lust, don't stay sober.

Occasions of lust are in our society constantly. It's like

matches dropping on a pavement. When a lighted match falls on a pavement, there is no fire. But say I'm lusting. That's like throwing a little kindling wood down, dropping little pieces of paper and spilling a little gasoline on the pile. Still no problem, there won't be a fire. But then look

*Those who don't lust,
stay sober. Those who
lust, don't stay sober.*

what happens when an occasion of lust comes along and the match drops on that pile of lust. What lust is is going half-way down the waterslide and trying to stop. What lust is is like the guy who masturbated to the point of ejaculation and tried to stop. So all wanting things that God isn't offering us in this moment is lust and will kill us.

Now, you can turn that around and make it into paradise. My wife recently said to me that a spiritual life needs two things. We first must face the fact that we are going to die. I thought I had because I had a heart attack thirty years ago and that threat of death has been hanging over our heads for most of our marriage. But I saw that I wasn't ready to die and that lust and sex with young women was a way of hanging onto life for me and a way to steal somebody else's life and vitality. You don't see many sexaholics running around chasing 80- and 90-year-old women or men. No, we were always seeking someone younger and prettier. So thanks to SA, I did a couple of things. I stopped using sex to hang onto life and drive away death. And because of the peace and joy and love that you have given me and a whole bunch of things that I don't

understand, I have finally accepted that I am going to die. It's so beautiful to accept that because until I accept that I can't do anything. Now, thanks to you, I can see so clearly that, until I die, I'm going to live, or turning it around, I'm going to live until I die.

Now I'm planting trees. And I'm not frantically grabbing at projects that I want to do before I die. There is no hurry. I've got all the time in the world.

Freedom from lust of all kinds has led me to the same place that the deepest kinds of spirituality I'm studying lead to, the moment by moment awareness and appreciation of what God is offering me at this moment. That's life at its highest. There isn't anything greater than that. Now, you are all used to it. You all experience it regularly, you just didn't understand quite how radical it was. And you experience it, each of you, in your meetings. When you are in that meeting there isn't hardly a wandering thought in that meeting except in the newest people, the worst off of the people. But most of us walk into those meetings and we listen like old AA Vince did in his meetings. He sat in those meetings with his head forward and his whole being focused on the one who was speaking, as though his life depended on it, and it did. He said to me one time, "Jesse, a meeting is worth a book." He would reflect and chew over those meetings until the next one. All day long, he would think about the last meeting right up to the next one. And then we gradually take that moment-by-moment awareness we practice in our meetings and we carry it on in all the rest of our life outside the meetings.

The dumbest thing I ever hear in the meetings is people saying that those earth people out there just

don't understand us. That flake is holding on to feeling separate and alone and feeling apart from. We need to see that those people out there are really further along in life than we are. They just can't be approached by the same language. We just need to adjust some things.

There is a line in *The Problem* that says, "we went for the connection that had the magic *because* it bypassed intimacy and true union." But we were looking for the magic. Do you remember any of you, looking for that magic? I've got good news for you, I've got great news for you. One of the most beautiful lines in the Big Book of AA says, just ahead of the promises, "Before we are half way through..." Well, I must be at that time it talks about because by now I've found the real connection and the real magic. In the last three days, and I mention them most specifically because we have shared them together, I have been experiencing that magic. As I have been moving among you these three days I have had the watchful eye of the hawk for those of you who are carrying God's gifts for me. As we caught each other's eye, almost all the time I was able to receive the gift you had for me. It could have been a loving glance, an appreciative smile, a recognition of another of God's children. It could have been some gift you had to give me. It could have been you giving me the gift of allowing me to serve you in some way. So that is the real magic. It is the real gold, not the fool's gold that you and I spent our lifetime chasing. As one great spiritual man said, the world is its own magic.

I have come to believe that way deep inside us is the ego and a razor's edge away from it is that whole total life of the spirit there in us waiting to be discovered.

And the way I found it was by pursuing a lust-free life. With your help and in your company I came to this new land. Now, all of a sudden I wake up to find myself at the place I had asked the Reverend about at age 17, fifty years ago: The place where the something more is. I believe now that there is something more and I have found it and I know where it is and it is right here with you. But when I go home it is right there in my home with my wife and my children who respect me and love me.

Very few husbands have heard the kind of things that I have heard in the late process of making amends that I have done. When I came into this program I didn't make a single verbal amend to the important people in my life. In the first 17 years in that other program I got sick to my guts of what I had seen about verbal amends. If you are different, show me. And I have been showing my wife that I love her. When she asks for something I jump and do it. A couple years ago my wife said, "Jesse, I need an extra shelf in the top of my closet but for heaven's sake, please don't jump up and do it right now." Very few husbands have heard words like that.

At first when she started her Serenity Shop with my son, they wanted to learn it themselves. My job was to keep my mouth shut and I kept my mouth shut. And boy I tell you, if you are sitting there watching a wreck coming and you know it and you can keep your mouth shut, I tell you, I want to shake your hand because that is one of the hardest things there is to do. So I kept my mouth shut.

But recently, in this last year, she has been asking me more questions. And she will say, "Now, Jesse, what do you think we should do about this?" So I say,

"Well, honey, it seems to me yours and Joe's job is to serve people spiritually and that's what you and Joe are doing so great at. You're both learning the retail business. And the fact you're still losing a little money yet because of various factors beyond your control is of no consequence."

"Just a minute, dear, don't go too fast. I want to write it all down." Not very many husbands have had their wives say to them, "Don't go too fast, I want to write it all down," especially wives of sexaholics.

And so back to what we learn from Nashville. Each of you here is so vital, Dave from B. C., Francis from Saskatchewan, Tim from Ohio, Art from Georgia, Dave from Texas, Dan from San Diego. Each of you can be the person whose life changes a whole state or province just as Harvey's and Jean's presence here in Nashville totally altered the whole city of Nashville. This is a different city because of the work they did and particularly it is a different city for all of us. And I don't think this is too bad a place to work. I just got through telling a couple last night, "For God's sake move to Nashville where you've got the most loving fellowship you could possibly find so you can lay in the arms of that fellowship."

Why did Nashville grow so big? I think it was because of the massive humility of Harvey and Jean. Each in their own special way were powerful examples of this program as it was written down and by the words and lives of AA. Both had the humility to constantly seek support, help and direction despite the pull of their sexaholic isolation. Their loving care and the help of people like the two Daves, Jimmy and others, took a fragile plant and nourished it through tough times. In other

cities we have seen SA start and stop or flourish for a while and slow down. But we know from the Nashville experience that each city state and province is waiting for the people whose lives are so changed by SA that any of us drunken fools can sense that they have what we want and make us

I have been showing my wife that I love her. When she asks for something I jump and do it.

willing to go to any lengths to get it. And then, like in Nashville, you go from two meetings to over twenty and you send out tentacles that radiate out to other towns and cities. And so does SA's life-giving message get carried to the one who still suffers.

So this is what I have been doing as I have been walking among you here is living this new life that you gave me. I've been receiving all your gifts and now there is a new bunch of golden threads between me and each of you that will last forever more.

[For information on ordering a tape of Jesse's talk, contact Francis at (306-) 543-5999.]

Feedback Corner

The meeting on chronic slipping was completely without resentment! (at least, no resentment about the theme. . .). Some people identified as chronic slippers. Some asked for a sponsor. Even though the group didn't find an answer to chronic slipping, the meeting was a success. R.P. *[From the German SA convention.]*

The Twelve Steps of Sexaholics Anonymous

1. We admitted we were powerless over lust—that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God **as we understood Him**.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God **as we understood Him**, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these Steps, we tried to carry this message to sexaholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

THE TWELVE STEPS OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS: 1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol—that our lives had become unmanageable. 2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity. 3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God **as we understood Him**. 4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves. 5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs. 6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character. 7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings. 8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all. 9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others. 10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it. 11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God **as we understood Him**, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out. 12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these Steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

(The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions are reprinted and adapted with permission of Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc. Permission to reprint and adapt the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions does not mean that AA has approved the contents of this work, nor that AA agrees with the views expressed herein. AA is a program of recovery from alcoholism only. Use of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions in connection with programs which are patterned after AA but which address other problems does not imply otherwise.)

The Twelve Traditions of Sexaholics Anonymous

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon SA unity.
2. For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.
3. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop lusting and become sexually sober.
4. Each group should be autonomous, except in matters affecting other groups or Sexaholics Anonymous as a whole.
5. Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry its message to the sexaholic who still suffers.
6. An SA group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the SA name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary spiritual purpose.
7. Every SA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
8. Sexaholics Anonymous should remain forever non-professional, but our service centers may employ special workers.
9. SA, as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
10. Sexaholics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the SA name ought never be drawn into public controversy.
11. Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, TV and films.
12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

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September 1993

Highlights SA Conference Business Meeting, July 10, 1993 Nashville, Tennessee

Agenda: January 1994 conference in Rochester; service committee reports; other business.

- Rochester was the only bid after one month and thus became the site; it was moved to change the dates to January 14-16, 1994.

Motion: To accept January dates as proposed--carried unanimously.

- A motion was made to make permanent the SA International Conference Search Committee as chartered in January 1993, i.e., that we form a committee of at least three people who will review conference bids and consult with S-Anon before making a final decision concerning location. Another motion was made that this committee report at each conference its choice of conference site one year in advance. The motion passed.

- The Intergroup Formation Service committee is collecting information and making a list of existing groups. (See following report.) Bill T. has sent out some information on the Chicago Intergroup. He asks for more help if possible.

- There are four members on the Conference Tape Service Committee, headed by Francis H. (306-543-5999). A list of conference tapes is available, but current feeling is we should not centralize tape duplication. Remains to be

decided if we should have a tape catalog.

- A Central Office Budget has been established. Income for the Central Office is essential and part of our 7th Tradition. Donations and literature sales are down this last quarter. It was suggested that sending the *Essay* newsletter by subscription only would help solve our recurring financial problems, and that our financial need should be made public.

[Note: \$1,020 was collected at the dinner Saturday night for support of the Central Office.]

- Keith D. (Vancouver) is asking for input on the formation of the Literature Service Committee.

- Michael B. (Wichita) reported for the General Service Study Board on a proposed structure for SA Fellowship service. (See following report.) Comment was made that in AA the Intergroups support local groups and do not function to produce General Service Board representatives. Motion made that the proposed General Service Board structure report be submitted to the Fellowship for review and feedback and be returned to the committee through the Central Office. (Motion passed.)

- David T. reported on the New Group Committee; they send out information on new groups and encourage adoption of new groups by existing groups.

- Bernie M. reported for the Prison Service Committee. Ten prisoners have been contacted.

They correspond and they try to get a near-by SA group contact. Fifteen SAs are on the committee.

- Following is a list of Central Office Oversight Committee members and their regions (adopted at the Chicago International Conference business meeting in July, 1991):

Northwest (OR, WA, ID, MT, BC, ALTA, AK, NWT): Keith D. (Vancouver). **Southwest** (CA, NV, UT, AZ): Dan N. (San Diego) and Jim C. (Los Angeles). **North Central** (WY, ND, SD, NE, IA, MN, IL, WI, SASK, MAN): Jim O. (Chicago). **South Central** (CO, KS, OK, NM, TX, AR, MO, LA) Sylvia J. (Oklahoma City). **South East** (IN, KY, TN, NC, SC, GA, AL, MS, FL, INTL) David M. (Nashville). **Mid-Atlantic** (VA, WV, OH, PA, MD, DE, NJ) Betsy T. (Washington, DC). **New England** (NY, MA, CT, VT, RI, NH, ME, ONT, QUEB, NB, NS) Larry M. and James M. (New York City)

Reminder

Articles and news items submitted for the December 93 *Essay* must reach the Central Office no later than October 29.

Agenda Items January 1994 Business Meeting

The next business meeting will take place at the Rochester conference in January 1994. In order to make the best use of time, we are asking that all agenda items be submitted in advance. (Please indicate how much time you would like for each item; we will try to honor your requests!) Please send agenda items to: Business Meeting, P.O. Box 90881, Rochester, New York 14609. Cut-off date: December 1.

Committee Needs Volunteers

The Service Structure Study Committee (SSSC), formerly the General Service Board Study Committee, is announcing some openings. We need one representative from each of the following three regions: northwest, southeast and northeast. (See above for states included in each region.)

The SSSC discusses, researches and proposes service structure ideas applicable to SA. Qualifications are that representatives be active in their local SA group, sober in SA for a minimum of two years, and be able to take part in a conference call with the other members of the committee about once every six weeks. If you are interested contact Michael B., 636 Eastern, #101, Wichita, KS 67207, (316) 686-5104.

Service Structure Study Committee Proposal

After compiling a list of active intergroups, designate areas of service structure, perhaps based on states. Divide those large states that have active SA intergroups into two areas, for example, lower and upper New York State. Also,

Eastern and Western Canada. Then develop "sharing of experience paper" from active intergroups on how to form active intergroups in areas that don't have one. This paper could be completed at the next two semi-annual International Conferences with organization of paper by the intergroup committee.

After intergroups have formed, they will pick delegates to send to annual delegates conference (the first one taking place in perhaps two or three years). At this conference, mechanisms for electing overseers may be developed, and the following year at the second annual delegates conference, overseers will be elected.

In AA, each delegate represents a specific region of the U.S. and Canada. The delegates are rotated every two years. These delegates meet at an annual conference in New York together with the Trustees of AA. The Trustees are made up of 14 recovering alcoholics and 7 non-alcoholics. They oversee the General Service Office in New York City and are responsible to the Delegates Conference. The General Service Office (GSO) is to carry the message both inside and outside the AA fellowship. In addition, the GSO is the guardian of the traditions, copyrights and fiscal responsibilities of the Fellowship.

Highlights from Central Office Oversight Committee Meetings July 10-11, 1993

The focus of both meetings was on raising funds and cutting costs, specifically the cost of the *Essay* newsletter. It was agreed that from now on, the *Essay* will be sent to subscribers only. It is planned to continue publishing at least four issues per year, and the

annual subscription rate will be \$7 per subscriber for four issues. Each issue will have a separate subscription flyer included. Currently the *Essay* is our most costly expenditure, accounting for approximately 20 percent of our annual budget. It was also decided that we experiment with a most cost effective format for the *Essay*. (Feedback on formatting of this issue will be appreciated.)

Intergroup Formation Committee

The Intergroup Formation Committee is attempting to obtain information from existing intergroups. We plan to compile this information in order to provide a network among existing intergroups, and to provide useful information to areas attempting to form an intergroup.

We ask each existing intergroup to call or write the SA Central Office in Simi Valley with the following information: Intergroup Name/Area Covered; Mailing Address; Telephone Number; Name of Current Contact; Contact Address and Phone Number (if Intergroup address/phone number do not exist). We will then send you a form asking for more detailed information. Please contact the Central Office as soon as possible. As of July 1993 we have received information from the following intergroups: Chicago, IL; Nashville, TN; Rochester, NY; Portland, OR, Oklahoma State.

If you want to work with this committee or want to receive available information about forming an intergroup, please contact Bill T. via the Central Office. **Bill T., Chicago**

DONATIONS FOR SECOND QUARTER — 1993

Akron, OH	35.00	Phoenix, AZ	40.00
Alexandria, VA	150.00	Portland, OR	213.55
Alhambra, CA	190.36	Quebec City, CAN	190.00
Anaheim, CA	45.00	Quesnel, CAN	60.00
Ardsley, NY	15.00	Ravenswood, IL	75.00
Atlanta, GA	35.00	Redlands, CA	91.72
Baltimore, MD	140.00	Regina, CAN	115.25
B. Columbia, CAN	22.55	Riverside, CA	85.46
Camarillo, CA	303.00	Rochester IG, NY	110.00
Casper, WY	20.00	Salem, OR	40.00
Chicago, IL	65.00	San Bern., CA	15.00
Cleveland, OH	100.00	San Diego, CA	50.00
Dallas, TX	25.00	Seal Beach/ Paramount, CA	35.00
Daytona Beach, FL	10.00	Seattle, WA	150.00
Del Amo Hosp, CA	5.00	Silver Spring, MD	40.00
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Glenwood Spgs, CO	24.05	Twin Falls, ID	186.70
Hacienda Hts, CA	17.32	Villa Park, IL	50.00
Hillsboro, OR	63.50	Warner-Robbins, GA	60.00
Houston, TX	10.00	West Covina, CA	39.35
Irvine, CA	59.50	Westchester, NY	50.00
Laurel, MD	25.00	Westfield, NJ	40.00
Long Beach, CA	60.96	Wheeling, WV	15.00
Los Angeles, CA	3.00	Wichita, KS	75.00
Lincroft, NJ	10.00	Willow Creek, IL	380.00
Midlothian, IL	29.00	Yukon, OK	503.50
Milwaukee, WI	368.00		
Montreal, CAN	46.60		
N. Hollywood, CA	75.00	Total Group	6,113.35
Nashville, TN	325.19	Total Individual	801.39
Orange, ca	17.00		
Palm Desert, CA	50.00	Grand Total	\$6,914.74
Penn Hills, PA	110.00		

Statement of Income and Expenses - Two Quarters Ending 6/31/93

Income - All Sources	\$43,766.39
(Less) refunds	0.00
Total Income	\$43,766.39
Expenses:	
Auto	29.75
Bank service charges	85.00
Courier/UPS	7.50
Education/Seminars	0.00
Legal/Accounting	946.81
Miscellaneous	88.64
Office expense	1,395.80
Outside services	18,890.75
Postage	4,996.87
Printing	5,628.92
Refunds	24.76
Rent	5,700.00
Repairs/Maintenance	654.18
Supplies	374.67
Taxes - Other	460.00
Telephone	4,661.20
Travel/Entertainment	<u>22.63</u>
Total Expenses	<u>\$43,967.48</u>
Net Operating Income (Loss)	<u>\$(201.09)</u>
Net Income (Loss) before Tax	<u>\$ (201.09)</u>
Net Income (Loss)	<u>\$ (201.09)</u>



2nd Quarter Literature Report

Blank Cover	680
Full Cover	103
Meeting Guide	23
Member Stories	112
Recovery Continues	184
Developing the Principles	75
Brochures - English	3,279

We try hard to make this listing correct. If your group name was not noted on the check, the donation is totalled under "Individual" and is not listed separately. To assure proper credit, please indicate on the check exactly who the donation is from. The listing reflects donations received during the Second Quarter only. Donations received after 7/1/93 will be in the next *Essay*.

SA ORDER FORM

ORDERED BY:
(Please print or type)

Name _____
 Street _____
 City _____
 State/ZIP _____
 Phone _____

SA
P.O. Box 300
Simi Valley, CA 93062
☎ 805 581-3343
FAX 805-581-4057

*Payments must be made
 in U.S. funds only.*

- First Order Repeat Order Money Order Enclosed
 Check Enclosed

<i>Quantity</i>	<i>Cost</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Description</i>
_____	\$10.00	<i>Sexaholics Anonymous</i>	With title or plain white cover
_____	\$4.00	<i>SA Meeting Guide</i>	Suggested formats and experience in starting a new group
_____	\$8.00	<i>Recovery Continues</i>	Articles that discuss various aspects of recovery
_____	\$6.00	<i>Member Stories - 1989</i>	Twenty-one recovery stories
_____	\$2.00	<i>Discovering the Principles</i>	SA's growing experience with the Traditions
_____	\$7.00	One year subscription to the <i>Essay</i> newsletter	NOTE: Price is \$7.00 per year (4 issues) for fewer than ten copies; price is reduced to \$5.00 per year per subscription for an order of ten copies or more.

_____ **Total Cost of Merchandise**
 _____ **Deduct 20% (for orders over \$200)**
 _____ **CA Residents** (add sales tax = .0725)
 _____ Shipping/Handling (See Chart)
 _____ **ORDER TOTAL**

SHIPPING AND HANDLING

0 - \$9.99	\$1.75
\$10.00 - \$19.99	2.95
\$20.00 - \$29.99	3.40
\$30.00 - \$49.99	4.25
\$50.00 - \$99.99	5.00
\$100.00 and over	6.50

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