

# Essay®

P.O. Box 111910  
Nashville, TN 37222

June 1995

## REPORT ON THE JANUARY CONFERENCE

[Excerpt from a member's report to Intergroup on the January 1995 conference in L.A. Ed.]

On the first day of the conference I shared at a taped meeting about New York's progress and got a warm confirmation from many members on how healing it is for them to hear that SA here is active and grateful. I told them we had adopted the standard meeting format and the kind of results that this had produced, and many people came up to me afterwards asking how we did it. It kept green for me the memory of that first week when we read *What Is a Sexaholic* and the fear I felt reading it the day after Intergroup voted to recommend it! I remembered that another member of Intergroup attended to support me so I told them not to try to do it alone but to get an ally. So our courage from last year served as a role model for many SA's this year.

I saw that many groups had a unity that could only leave me breathless. In search of this "unity" I participated in the PIR (Partners in Recovery) Step One writing and giveaway process being offered at the conference, and had a real spiritual experience. (Sunday, January 29, 1995, in fact, a member of our fellowship gave away his written First Step in this format and we had a terrific experience again.) Although SA recommends no set process for recovery in Step work (p. 186, White Book) and I saw

three written processes being handed around at the conference, this PIR process was designed by the conference committee to give the sponsorless newcomer with the beginning of their first 30 days of sobriety (and a desire to give away his/her Step) a safe, immediate way of doing it. It requires two sober SA's, allowing for a small group of other listeners if they choose to be there, and a safe situation aimed at a non-graphic, non-specific rendering of a person's lust history: what they did, how they felt, and what it (the addiction) tells them about themselves. It was suggested we only take half an hour to get it on paper, chronological order not a must.

I'm personally fired up about offering this as a possible way for newcomers because at my meeting there is a great deal of slipping and suffering with no structural guidance from the group to aid and support the newcomer. It was also suggested that the person give the Step away again at the earliest opportunity to another group. In California groups these folks then act as welcoming people to other newcomers, telling their stories to them and possibly encouraging them to participate in the process, if they find themselves willing but sponsorless for the moment. In turn, these folks then act as sponsors who are one step ahead, in *their* first 30 days of sobriety. At least it provides some structure and concrete evidence of Tradition

## URGENT TO ALL GROUPS

You should have received a new and very important "working paper" from the SA Literature Committee titled "Practical Guidelines for Group Recovery" with the last issue of the *Essay* newsletter. This material has already proven very helpful in improving meeting quality, sponsorship, and in reversing the tide of slipping most groups experience. It is now being submitted in revised form. This paper must be reviewed by the entire Fellowship before it can be included in forthcoming SA literature. **It is extremely important** that your group give its opinion and input on this paper. Please copy, distribute, discuss, and give the Literature Committee your group feedback. Be involved in the review and dialog process. At least one group is already reading this paper and sharing on it together in their book study meeting. Send comments to the SA Central Office, Attn: Literature Committee. Additional copies can be ordered from Central Office.

## IN THIS ISSUE . . .

- Calendar of Events
- Group & Member News
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- 14 Years Ago in SA
- Call to Inventory



Five— that our primary purpose is to carry the message to the still-suffering sexaholic. I see the contrary a lot—"you can sit here and contribute a dollar, but you're on your own to find help. I've got mine." (This is a reflection of my own guilt more than anything.) In general, a great emphasis at the conference was put on SA newcomers being able to see smiling faces and being greeted by hands reaching out to him or her.

Speaking of *her*: a terrific awakening came to me when I walked in to give my written First Step and two men sat waiting to hear it. I balked. I was groomed to stay away from men and had expected two women to catch the assignment. (I think of the things I've heard lately after meetings about Miss A being too graphic and Miss B's attire being too revealing and nobody male willing to tell her our policies, let alone help her get her First Step heard, because she's a woman!) I thought of the recommendation I got from

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

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

### June 11, 1995, Tri-State New York Spring Conference

St. Stephen's of Hungary Church, 414 East 82nd Street, Manhattan, NY

### July 7-9, 1995, SA-S-Anon Internatl. Conference, Baltimore/Washington DC

Theme: Fellowship of the Spirit. Contact Chris B. (SA) at 703-742-6990 or Paulette C. (S-Anon) at 410-343-1412.

### September 22-24, 1995, Chicago Area SA Fall Retreat

Theme: Serious Recovery. Contact 708-790-6269.

### October 6-8, 1995, Southern California Unity Conference, Los Angeles, CA

Contact: Curt D. (SA) at 818-786-4261

### October 27-29, 1995, SA/S-Anon S. Midwest Fall Retreat, Wichita, KS

Contact: Oklahoma City SA, P.O. Box 21075, Oklahoma City, OK 73156

### January 12-14, 1996, SA/S-Anon International Conference, Phoenix, AZ

Theme: Freedom to Choose Not To. Contact Tom McD. (SA) at 602-759-9157 or Linda McD. (S-Anon) at 602-759-9157.

### July 12-14, 1996, SA/S-Anon International Conference, Chicago, IL

Theme: To be announced

### January 11-13, 1997, SA/S-Anon Internatl. Conference, Oklahoma City, OK

Theme: To be announced

## Essay Editorial Guidelines

The *Essay* editorial function is answerable to the fellowship as a whole. Just as our SA group meetings follow guidelines designed to keep meetings on track, the following guidelines apply to the *Essay*:

- Articles from SA members and SA groups or intergroups are invited, although no payment is made, and material is not returned.
- The Central Office provides the *Essay* editor with copies of letters and other material of potential use in the newsletter.
- Submissions, selected by the editor, are subject to correction of spelling and grammar (the Chicago Style Manual is the standard) and may be condensed to accommodate space limitations; selections may be edited for style and clarity.
- The principles of SA's Twelve Traditions guide editorial philosophy.
- Articles are not intended to serve as statements of SA policy, nor does publication imply endorsement by either SA or the *Essay*.
- SA's sobriety definition is not debated, since it distinguishes SA from other sex addiction fellowships. *Essay* is not a forum for non-SA sobriety and non-SA principles.
- The *Essay* is not a fund-raising mechanism, although from time to time SA's needs may be made known.
- General Guidelines for Submissions: Where possible, articles submitted for publication should be typed and double-spaced. If articles are submitted on disk, check with the Central Office for software compatibility. Send articles to the SA Central Office, attention of the *Essay* editor. When an article speaks for a group or intergroup, it should have the prior approval of that group or intergroup. Articles should observe common standards of friendliness and good taste. Discussions involving therapy or religion are discouraged.



Westchester once that a woman who could not find a woman sponsor get three men to sponsor her (how terrifying!). When I asked about this at the conference I was told categorically that the disease was the common enemy, not each other (*White Book*, p. 178-79). Men who are sober and surrendered make themselves available as temporary sponsors if a woman is not available. I met one woman who has had a male sponsor "temporarily" for a year now. I think we need to ask ourselves here who is the enemy and allow that some of our guys are ready to handle this task. A Sponsorship Panel was held. Many suggestions were offered. I recommend that if we hold our spring conference this year, a similar panel [be set up and that it should be attended by members with long-term sobriety and experience in sponsorship]. **J.F.**

## GROUP NEWS

**London, UK:** . . . our Wednesday London SA group is going strong. We are now averaging between 8-12 people a meeting and we are gaining good, honest sobriety. Thanking you. **D.**

**Quebec City, CAN:** I'm the secretary of the newly reopened Quebec City SA meetings. We're back in business, so please put us back on your map. The Quebec City SA group meets on Wednesday. I'm willing to serve as contact. We've had three meetings up to now. Attendance has risen from 3 to 6. We are in contact with the Montreal Intergroup and intend on joining it for now. Several original members and a few newcomers are coming around. We have all the material of the groups from two years ago, so we will hold our own for the

moment literature-wise. We hope to stay in touch. **L.C.**

**PLEASE SEND  
YOUR GROUP  
NEWS TO  
CENTRAL  
OFFICE!**

## FEEDBACK CORNER

*[The following was received in response to the referenced article. Additional comments are welcome. Ed.]*

Regarding the article in the December 1994 *Essay* on raising/creating the *Essay* consciousness and ideas for offsetting the cost of *Essay*, in our group conscience, here are thoughts and ideas which came up:

**To create/raise the *Essay* consciousness:**

- Display the current issue on the meeting table at all meetings
- Use *Essay* as a resource for meeting topics
- Compose and submit articles to *Essay* each quarter
- Encourage individual articles to *Essay*
- Elect an *Essay* representative as the December 1994 article suggested.

**Ideas for funding/offsetting the cost of *Essay*:**

- Reduce the number of pages. Eliminate Box 300 and other business-related items. Instead, send those as a separate, single mailing to groups only.
- Keep as a group subscription. Establish prices for different numbers of copies.
- Each group have a separate 7th Tradition collection solely for *Essay*.
- Set up a twice-a-year, SA-wide appeal for funds for *Essay*. Publish just what the cost of *Essay* is.
- Encourage subscriptions and special appeals with the theme that, as addicts, we spent a lot of money supporting our addiction; we should now afford some money toward our recovery.

**F.G., Erie, PA**

## WELCOME TO THE FOLLOWING NEW GROUPS

Mt. Clemens, MI  
Cleveland, OH  
Greater Los Angeles, CA  
Fernandina Beach, FL  
Lewiston, ID  
Reading, PA (2nd meeting)  
Tri-Cities Area, WA  
Charlottetown, PEI, Canada



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## MEMBER NEWS

### Feeling "Normal"

As an active sexaholic, I always wanted to get back to feeling what I referred to as "normal." I would look at other people and think: "Hey, they're normal, why can't I be like them"? Then I'd automatically go after my drug, and soon enough, I'd feel what I fancied was "normal" again. And this worked pretty well for a number of years, except that to continue feeling what I called "normal," I needed a constant supply, and lost my life in the process.

In sobriety I'm discovering that what I see as "normal" is actually the voice of my addiction talking to me. It's saying: "Hey, you need some more of your drug so that you can feel 'normal' again." Except that it is never actually that direct. Instead it says things like "Go on . . . just this once. . . ." or "She needs you. . . ." or other similar stuff.

What turns out to have been "normal" for me, as an active sexaholic, was to keep myself so topped up with lust that I never had to feel any real feelings whatsoever. Instead, I felt phony feelings like self-pity, jealousy, depression or revenge.

In sobriety, I find that what is normal for people who are not addicted, either to lust or to anything else (yes, there really are such people), is to feel real feelings, to feel ups and downs that are as changeable as the weather. The point is, they have been used to feeling those feelings almost since the day they were born, and know how to live with them, and act appropriately, irrespective of what they are feeling. As a recovering sexaholic, I'm not like that. All my life I have been used to *not* feeling the feelings. In fact, I'm so unused to feeling the feelings that other people feel, that either I tend to

confuse them with external reality itself, and end up acting inappropriately to whatever situation I am in, or I end up listening to that inner voice (the voice of my addict) which says, ever so sweetly, "Hey, you don't need to feel like this, it's time you felt 'normal' again." And even if I don't end up acting out sexually, I'll nevertheless find myself acting out in some other way, by spending, speeding, stuffing, scanning, or some other alternative S-activity. It helps me to see that it's *all* lust. Because if I fail to see it for what it is, I'll end up losing my sobriety, as sure as sex is sex!

***For me as a sexaholic the search for "normality" is an illusion. . . . That is why I need the Fellowship of other recovering sexaholics . . .***

For me as a sexaholic the search for "normality" is an illusion. Because what I experience as "normal" has turned out to be utterly abnormal according to any commonly accepted standards of behavior. That is why I need the Fellowship of other recovering sexaholics, through whom I discover a Higher Power who brings me a new kind of "normality"—the serenity of sexual sobriety. **Anonymous**

### Glimpses of Sanity

It does not surprise me to find that the majority of us are too busy working on ourselves to be of much use to others. That's been *my* story for years now! Recovery intensifies feelings which consume my time and

thoughts and it takes years to reorganize life out of the insanity of my past. Along with the work of recovery, selfishness and low self-esteem have kept me from sharing much of what I have to offer others on this road of recovery. The selfishness and low-self esteem have less of a strangle-hold on my life now, thanks to a gracious Higher Power and the Portland SA Fellowship. Though my self-debasing feelings are not completely in check, my desire to open up to others is increasing.

Things I see along the path of recovery are not unique to me. Perhaps that is part of the reason it helps to share my glimpses of sanity out of my fog of wreckage past. Others might read and exclaim, "Aha! We are not alone!" or may see with me some things along the way in a slightly different light and be comforted. Still others may find a safe place to know and be known. And possibly, if for no one else but me, I find a safe place to express myself in a way I can feel good about. So to those of you serving the Fellowship through the *Essay*, I wish to say thank you. Keep up the good work and "do not grow weary in well-doing." **M.F.**

### Sober on the 'Inside' [Excerpt]

This is my story. It is not very pretty and I made some real bad choices in my life. Understand that I do not blame all the things in my early life for the things I did later. I used to use the fact that my own father turned me out when I was 12 as a reason for what I did. This was only a way for me not to accept the responsibility for my own actions.

I am an abused child that turned to abusing kids. My real father turned  
*(Continued on p. 6)*



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## WHAT WE USED TO BE LIKE . . . 14 YEARS AGO IN ESSAY

### Excerpts from two inquirers' responses, July 1981:

"Thank you and God bless you in your work. You'll never know how many lives you have helped."

"'It's about time.' The clergy are not helping people with these problems so it's time for those who have 'been there' to help themselves by helping others. . . . I pray for your success in this mission. It will succeed if centered on God and bear fruit of love and humility. . . ."

**From the first SA newsletter, July 30, 1981.** [*The reference is to the first SA conference held the weekend of July 25th, with seven men and two women from around the U.S.*]

. . . . The feeling of oneness was remarkable. Can't help feeling the unity was due in part to our individual commitment to what we're after—freedom from the obsession of lust and sexual sobriety. This was reflected in our policy agreement on defining sobriety. . . . Perhaps it was the tough, uncompromising and clear stand on this crucial matter . . . that has attracted so many to identify and want that very sobriety all over this country. . . .

It seems that Sunday we were connected—connected to each other and somehow, in and through that, connected with the Love that is God. And this is why the meetings are so important; most of us will not be able to stay sober *without meetings*. The meetings are where we give of ourselves in sacrifice to each other and where we receive the connection this brings. . . . And with meetings like we had Sunday as a possibility for each of us where we now live,

each in his own city, we have great hope.

For now, after that joyous but heavy parting, it is each of us where we are, sharing the message of our own recovery and growth—our experience, strength, and hope—and carrying it to others. . . .

### From the August 18, 1981 newsletter:

. . . . [M]ost of you are going through some hard times, and some have slipped. The high from 7/26 [the conference] and the meeting here won't do it for us. This and other "band aids" help out, but in the long run, radical spiritual surgery is the only hope for our disease. . . . Meetings and working the Steps. That's what works. . . .

The good news is that apparently some people want to stay sober! So far, about 75 in all throughout the country, with new takers coming in every day. . . .

As most of you know, we conducted a group conscience of the Steering Committee by phone and came up with the letter to the media, which was sent to all *responsible* media requesting SA information. [A copy of the media letter was enclosed with the issue.]

. . . . [S]ome . . . have discovered the perils of not using a meeting format to structure the meeting. Our egos as sexaholics are not known for their diminutive stature. . . . The format serves as insurance against personalities that would dominate meetings. Little statements like "no cross talk" at this meeting can save much anguish. The format becomes kind of a silent authority everyone learns to live under.

### From the third newsletter, August 20, 1981:

. . . . We're still in the slow process of getting most of you together out there, and we know how anxious you are for SA meetings. . . . But what we have now is better than nothing, and it's up to each person desiring sobriety to take those difficult but necessary first steps out into the light. . . . Everyone, at least, has the phone number of at least one recovering sexaholic on the program. . . .

### From newsletter Number Four, September 1, 1981:

[Roy and Sherman announce their "once-in-a-lifetime opportunity" of flying unlimited mileage during September for \$398 each anywhere American Airlines flies in the U.S. This allowed them to drop in on almost every SA group that wanted to get started, plus the chance to meet members where no group was in the immediate offing.]

### From the October 12, 1981 newsletter [reporting on Sherman and Roy's trip through ten cities in 24 days]:

"The beautiful spirit of cooperation and helpfulness was unbelievable! In each city, we left with great longing in our hearts, if we could only meet again. And again. . . . Already we have been welded together in a Fellowship stronger than anything we have ever known."

Without a doubt, SA is now national. There are some 11 groups, either in process of forming or already going strong, with new groups coalescing all the time. Individual members who say they



want sobriety but are not yet part of groups bring the total number of SA members to about one hundred.

. . . . [We are in process of filing forms with the IRS that will grant us non-profit-organization status so membership contributions are tax-deductible, as in A.A.]

. . . . The best news of all is that people are staying sober! Not everybody, of course. But people who shouldn't be staying sober are staying sober—people who don't even have an SA group yet! Without even realizing it, perhaps, many have taken their First Step—a change of attitude that makes the receiving of help from above possible. . . .

Wherever we went we sensed a deep and genuine hunger for sexual sobriety, together with an affinity for the SA program of recovery. . . . We found universal acceptance among professional people both to ourselves and the program of SA. We also found that going with at least another member was much more effective than going alone.

[It was during this trip that SA's "The Problem" was written, "In the air, between flights, at odd times during meals, or whenever inspiration struck—4:30 in the morning, for example. . . ." It was first submitted for Fellowship feedback with this issue.]

**From the newsletter which carried the "ESSAY" masthead for the first time, November 15, 1981:**

The word from SA members around the country is unity. We're being welded together in a fellowship of recovery. Men and women are getting sober! Coming out of themselves into the light, and making contact with other members.

Coming to. Becoming part of the healing process of each other's lives. That's good news. . . .

New SA groups are forming. There's cross-fertilization starting between groups. And the spouses have started their own Fellowship—S-Anon, patterned after the Al-Anon Family Groups associated with A.A.

. . . . Another word from around the country is that many have come off their SA "honeymoons" and are facing the reality of living sober (or not living sober). . . . But we're rediscovering [the Steps] for ourselves through experience.

In the Los Angeles group we've experimented with doing a "formal" First Step. The member who was the "guinea pig" . . . gave his First Step . . . and asked for feedback from the group. . . . Another danger was the tendency to get too analytical. It doesn't seem to help recovery to know *why* we did what we did, but it does seem to help to see *what* it did to us and others. . . .

Acceptance of "Lust Kills" and "The Problem" was unanimous. Acceptance of the Statement of Principle was unanimous. . . .

[The AA *Grapevine* article "How to Stay Married Though Sober" was included with this issue of the newsletter.]

A member writes: ". . . . I can't stand just plain sobriety; it's not enough. I need something to live for, and nothing better fills that black hole of emptiness always lurking behind the center of my being. The measure I give is the measure I get back."

**7th Tradition:** Total member donations received since June 22nd—\$258.50. ♦

## MEMBER NEWS

(Continued from p. 4)

me out, and he had sex with me off and on for years. This led me to grow up believing in the homosexual way of life. When I started out, my sexual partners were about the same ages as myself. As I grew older my sex partners grew younger. I have never been able to maintain any kind of lasting relationship during all these years.

I went to prison after I was hitchhiking and met a person that was an escaped convict. We broke into a few places and got caught. Later I did a lot of foolish and dumb things and was in and out of prisons for years. . . . I am in prison [now] for having sex with a male minor, his brother, and cousin. . . . I sincerely believe I owe my Higher Power a very large debt. Doing 12-Step work is taking an otherwise useless person and giving him a reason for still believing his Higher Power had a reason for his being. . . . But when I see people from our groups get out and get into the Program and do good, I feel good about myself.

How could I ever have had any kind of a relationship before when my whole life was all about *me*? I was so tied up in self-satisfaction that I never had time to care about anyone else or even think about their needs. Sex ruled my life completely and I was still telling myself that I didn't have any problem. The world was wrong! Not me. Stinking thinking is what led me down this path.

Now maybe you can understand why at this late age and under these circumstances my Higher Power has shown me how to enjoy a sober, stable life. . . . **Anonymous**



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## A CALL TO INVENTORY—GROUP AND FELLOWSHIP-WIDE

Our situation as a people coming out of sexual slavery is not unlike the story of the people coming out of bondage from Egypt. Years of enslavement brought them to utter despair, crying out to God for help. Through an amazing series of events, they were led out—often kicking and screaming in unbelief—only to find themselves wandering in the wilderness. Free at last, on the outside, they soon discovered the harsh reality that theirs was a spiritual malady inside. The severity of withdrawal brought back the craving for the old way of life.

We may leave our Egypt, but it still has a piece of us.

### Where Is SA Today?

As we view SA's entire history from 1981 to the present, we see that many, if not most, of those who have attended meetings still prefer their Egypt. Risking the exodus is just too scary! Others have made it out into the wilderness of sobriety, only to find that mere sobriety is not enough. It is a wilderness! We sense the dread of seeing ourselves which working the Steps reveals, and we retreat to the presumed comfort of trying to control and enjoy. Like grain sown on rocky soil, many seem to spurt into life only to die out sooner or later. A very few learn to walk the wilderness by faith and not by sight, one step at a time, cross over their river Jordan, and engage the enemy one battle at a time, following the Victor who leads the way. They've discovered there is a promised land and One who "satisfies the longing soul and fills the hungry soul with goodness."

Hundreds of SA groups and thousands of members, yes. That's SA today. Newcomers coming in through the doors, yes—in some

cities, coming in droves. Running the organization better and better, yes. But what percentage of all those who ever attended your group stayed to grow in sobriety and *recovery*?

And more significant than the revolving-door or slipper syndromes is SA's powerlessness over lust. How "impossible" it is. Think of it—the sheer overpowering force of just the memory of one past sexual encounter, coursing through our soul more intoxicatingly than an injected drug—and we're off and running! That's what we're up against.

Why are most of us still under the tyranny of lust? Why so much slipping—and among "true believers"? Why is our sobriety, such as we may have, so fear-driven instead of love- and joy-driven? People often wonder whether this individual or that is in recovery; the question comes up all the time, whether we voice it or not. But when is an SA *group* not in recovery and what percentage of the whole do they represent? The situations I've heard about and witnessed over the years do not paint a rosy picture.

It was only a couple of years ago that a traveling member went to SA meetings from city to city over the U.S., despairing of what he described as the widespread lack of sobriety and recovery. He finally arrived at one of SA's largest and oldest established areas, only to discover the sad reality of its sickly condition. This jarred him to action, for his own survival, and the result jarred some of the locals into taking corrective action.

The problem is, we as groups seldom ask *ourselves* our true condition. And how can a group see its own reality without some external reference? How can we know we're missing the mark if we don't see the

mark or know what it is? Groups have a way of remaining self-centered, just as we individual members do.

As I see it, we are hardly at the beginning of victory over lust within ourselves, much less SA as a whole, not to mention even touching the sexaholism in our culture.

But isn't this what we think SA claims to promise?

So we are forced to ask: Has SA ever had a spiritual awakening? Has SA ever had a *spiritual* awakening?

### What to Do?

It is extremely important that we find out and face honestly where we really are and where we are not. Today.

We have three choices: 1) We can continue blithely on, just as we are, no matter what our condition might be. 2) We can let ourselves get fooled into thinking that since we're going such great guns organizationally we're really okay. 3) As the sign at the railroad tracks says, we can Stop, Look, and Listen. We can take our own inventory. And now might be the very best time to do it!

If recovery for the sexaholic is impossible without a searching and fearless moral inventory, and if group recovery is impossible without searching and fearless group inventory, how can SA recover without its own searching and fearless inventory? Or is SA in denial? In denial over its true powerlessness to bring about recovery? Are we acting as though we have The Answer, when in reality it is so poorly demonstrated in our collective experience? Are we



really satisfied with the way things are? Is your group? Are you?

### Let's Take Our SA Inventory.

I propose that we call for a year of inventory. That we set aside time in our international and regional conventions. Let's augment that with reports in *Essay*. We can ask the right questions to uncover the problems, then work together toward solution. What percentage of sobriety and long-term recovery do we have? What is recovery? Are we progressing in victory over lust? What is it? Are our marriages getting better? Sex without lust? Optional at that? Is there healing in our families? Are there any intra-fellowship amends that need to be made? Are what any of us are or are doing holding SA back? Let's measure our *fellowship* against each of the Twelve Steps and Traditions. If not you and I and our group, who? If not now, when?

Does anyone feel the force of this? Any takers? Any ideas?

If we take refuge in our numbers or organization, or even in our leaders, literature, or principles, we will fail. *God* is SA's only refuge and strength! Since 1981 and before. Since Egypt! We have been called out. This is the incredible miracle of our time and condition.

Let us be faithful to our calling. But how? Where is SA today? Are we still wandering in the wilderness? Better to find out now. So SA can begin working the Steps of recovery. **Roy K.**

### Are the Twelve Steps Meaningful Only to Individuals, or Do These Principles Also Apply to Our Fellowship?

**Question:** "How can SA as a fellowship work the Steps; I thought only individuals could do that?" Response: "The idea does sound kind of new and strange, doesn't it? But let's see what it might look like."

1. If we've honestly "bottomed out," we can see and admit SA's powerlessness over lust and its inability to manage itself spiritually.
2. We can come to believe it is only God who can restore SA to spiritual sanity.
3. We can turn SA—its groups, intergroups, committees, conventions, leaders, its workers, and all its affairs—over to the care of God, trusting he will lead us, instead of our having to "make it happen."
4. We can institute a Year of Inventory—searching and fearless.
5. We can bring that inventory to the light of all and publish the results.
- 6 & 7. We can humbly ask *God* to remove those defects in our fellowship's spiritual character.
- 8 & 9. We can begin amending those spiritual wrongs we do see.
10. We can continue taking our fellowship inventory, promptly admitting it to ourselves.
11. We can together improve our conscious contact with God by continually asking for the knowledge of *his* will for SA, relying on his strength to carry it out, rather than our own rational understanding, knowledge, and expertise.
12. We can test the promise: whether SA will experience a spiritual awakening as the result of having worked these Steps. If we do experience that awakening, then we will have The Answer. Because it will really be working as advertised.

To many it will seem so very strange to even think of putting the priority for running our fellowship into the hands of God unseen. There are always two aspects to SA. One is the organizational, the externals: meetings, committees, conventions, business, etc. The other is the unseen, our spiritual quality. Our success in the externals can obscure or blind us to the reality of SA's spiritual condition. And for us, without the spiritual reality of true recovery, we have nothing. **Roy K.**

With the last issue of *ESSAY* was included a new working paper, "Practical Guidelines for Group Recovery." This has grown out of a local inventory taken to do something about the "tidal wave of slipping." We have all been urged to study and discuss this very important paper and send feedback to the Literature Committee via the Central Office. Some groups have been discussing the paper together by way of taking their group inventory. Positive results are already apparent. The hope is that if and when groups try this approach, group and individual recovery may improve. Testing the suggestions is something our groups can start doing immediately. Give us your reactions and suggestions.



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## FROM THE SA CORRECTIONS COMMITTEE (SACC)

Here are a few of my own SACC and prison experiences I would like to share with you:

- SA's willingly driving four hours to an SA meeting on the inside and even more joyfully driving four hours home again that same evening
- SA's on the inside meeting whenever and wherever they could to share their experience, strength and hope with each other, even without support from the prison administration.
- Inside SA's willing to endure strip searches after an SA meeting with outside SA's. (Not one SA member left, and that included two newcomers.)
- SA's meeting on Sunday afternoon, driving long distances to attend the SACC meeting. They have offered suggestions, edited letters, addressed envelopes, listened to me whine and moan (I am sober but not well yet, but I'll keep coming back!), and volunteered to write to another inside SA when they are already writing to several.
- The SA's on the inside have supported and encouraged me with their letters . . . Their prayers have often carried me and their gratitude has changed my heart. They write to each other wherever possible. (We now have 21 on the inside SA's mailing list, including one former inside SA who is now on the outside.)
- The Cleveland Friday night SA meeting signed over 30 Christmas cards for inside SA's. A 17-year-old SA

member helped address and stuff those Christmas cards.

- I have seen SA's on the inside and outside serve and then serve some more. I believe it is called "willing to go to any lengths" to stay sober! And those that continue to reach out to the sexaholic who still suffers continue to stay sober, by the grace of God and this Fellowship.
- Some comments we received from SA's on the inside who received Christmas cards and letters:  
"It meant a lot to be remembered, although I'd only

***Thanks again for being there. I'm at that point where I don't really want to change, wish I didn't have to, but know I do have to.***

corresponded once before. I know from my own sobriety that it takes being grateful for sobriety to want to do service and help others. . . ."

"Thanks again for being there. I'm at that point where I don't really want to change, wish I didn't have to, but know that I do have to. I know I'd never have the strength to do it alone, so I really appreciate your support."

"This card tells me that my efforts to progress are not in vain. Though I have my faults, you all have said I am worth while and that I am worth loving."

"W.C. (outside SA contact) is a wonderful person and a real encouragement. Thank you very, very much for contacting him for me. I know for sure that there is hope and feel that my bondage to this addiction has already been broken. I feel so free for the first time in my life, and I owe it all to my heavenly Father and you guys."

"I am now in contact with an outside SA member, who in fact is volunteering to come here to the jail bi-monthly to hold S.A. meetings."

"I am glad to know I am not alone in my struggle to stay sexually sober."

"I wish one day to be in a group outside with you all. I like your company and I know that you are truthful. I want to change and with your help I will do it. Love you all."

If you would like to correspond with those on the prison list, please send us your name and address. We will add it to the list and we will send you a current list of inmate addresses. We suggest 1) when writing use a P.O. Box instead of your home address (sometimes your group or inter-group box is an option); 2) Check with your sponsor, and 3) Have some sobriety; make sure you have something to give away. Send your name and the address you want to be on the list. NOTE: This will be added to the SA inmate mailing list. Inmates will also receive this address: SACC, P.O. Box 785, Madison, OH 44057. **M.F. ♦**



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## SUMMARY OF THE COOC MEETING, MAY 7, 1995

### Tax Issues

COOC continues to receive advice and consultation on various tax and employment issues . . . concerning employee vs. contractor status for former employees of the Central Office. The new accountant in Nashville has prepared the Annual Report for 1994, pending double checking of some figures. The accountant will file an extension on the 1994 tax return, Federal and California State.

### Essay

As approved by COOC many months ago, a fax machine has been purchased for the use of the *Essay* editor. It was also moved and approved that the COOC be considered responsible for setting the publication schedule and assuring that *Essay* issues are mailed in a timely manner.

### Prison Committee

Moved and approved to reimburse the Chair of the committee \$466.55 for expenses incurred during the second half of 1994. Moved and approved to make a \$700 budget available to the prison committee for 1994 for reimbursable, non-book expenses. Discussion of how to account for the cost of sending free books to prisoners (that is, actual vs. billing cost) and of AA's method of sending literature to prisons, which is done locally rather than nationally. Suggestion to put these issues on the Baltimore business meeting agenda. Discussion of whether COOC can give special permission for xeroxing to the prison committee, for example, xeroxing the meeting format from the White Book. Motion made and approved to ask the prison committee to evaluate these ideas.

### Literature

Motion approved that COOC send a free subscription of *Essay* for one year to a group that is actively trying to "grow" SA in Brazil. Motion approved to ask the literature committee to send a letter of thanks to Lucia, who translated the White Book into Portuguese, and Phil, who helped a great deal with the Spanish translations. Discussion of creating a brochure, in English and Spanish, to give to mental health, public health, and religious professionals. Discussion of the request the literature committee made at Anaheim that they receive sample start up kits and welcome newcomer packets from local groups so they can create one for SA. ♦



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## 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 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.

**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 TRADITIONS OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS:** 1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon AA 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 AA membership is a desire to stop drinking. 4. Each group should be autonomous, except in matters affecting other groups or AA as a whole. 5. Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers. 6. An AA group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the AA name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary spiritual purpose. 7. Every AA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions. 8. Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever non-professional, but our service centers may employ special workers. 9. AA, as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve. 10. Alcoholics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the AA 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.

(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.)

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**SEXAHOLICS ANONYMOUS**  
P. O. Box 111910, Nashville, TN 37222  
(615) 331-6230 » FAX (615) 331-6901  
Payments must be made in U.S. funds only.

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Street \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_ \*Group \_\_\_\_\_

First Order	
Repeat Order	
Money Order Enclosed	
Check Enclosed	

PLEASE INDICATE ENGLISH OR SPANISH TRANSLATION.  
(IF NOT INDICATED, ENGLISH WILL BE SENT.)

- \_\_\_\_\_ SA White Book { \_\_\_ \$10.00 English \_\_\_ Full Cover \_\_\_ Blank, if not indicated, blank will be sent }  
{ \_\_\_ \$8.00 Spanish - no cover/not hard bound }
- \_\_\_\_\_ SA Brochure - Problem, solution and 20 questions { \_\_\_ 20¢ English } { \_\_\_ 30¢ Spanish }
- \_\_\_\_\_ SA Meeting Guide - Suggested formats and experience in starting a new group { \_\_\_ \$4.00 English - not available/under revision } { \_\_\_ \$4.00 Spanish - not available/under revision }
- \_\_\_\_\_ Member Stories - Twenty-one recovery stories { \_\_\_ \$6.00 English } { \_\_\_ \$6.00 Spanish - not available/in translation }
- \_\_\_\_\_ Recovery Continues - Articles that discuss various aspects of recovery { \_\_\_ \$8.00 English } { \_\_\_ \$2.00 Spanish - no cover/not hard bound }
- \_\_\_\_\_ Discovering the Principles - SA's growing experience with the Traditions { \_\_\_ \$2.00 English not available/under revision } { \_\_\_ \$2.00 Spanish - no cover/not hard bound }
- \_\_\_\_\_ Notes on Origin and Early Growth of SA { \_\_\_ 50¢ English } { \_\_\_ 50¢ Spanish }
- \_\_\_\_\_ Some Opinion, Medical and Personal, on the Physiological Aspects of Male Sexual Abstinence { \_\_\_ 25¢ English } { \_\_\_ 25¢ Spanish }
- \_\_\_\_\_ Essay Newsletter { \_\_\_ English - one year/four issues - \$7.00/year single subscription - \$5.00/year per subscription for an order of 10 subscriptions or more. } { \_\_\_ Spanish - not available }

\_\_\_\_\_ TOTAL OF MERCHANDISE  
\_\_\_\_\_ Deduct 20% if order is \$200 or more  
\_\_\_\_\_ Sub Total  
\_\_\_\_\_ SALES TAX (FL .06) (CA .0775) (TN .0875)  
\_\_\_\_\_ SHIPPING & HANDLING (See Chart)  
\_\_\_\_\_ DONATION  
\_\_\_\_\_ TOTAL (U.S. Funds Only)

<b>SHIPPING &amp; HANDLING</b>	
\$ 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
Over \$100.00 =	\$6.00

\*If your order or donation is for a group or intergroup, please indicate in the address section above.

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