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# Essay®

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A Quarterly Publication of Sexaholics Anonymous, Incorporated

P. O. Box 111910  
Nashville, TN 37222

March 1997

## Discovering *Discovering the Principles*

Recently, I was a participant at a business meeting of our regular SA meeting. Having been in SA for four-and-a-half years and coming up on my fourth anniversary, I have attended my fair share of business meetings. However, this group conscience meeting was a test for everything that I've learned and read in the past four-and-a-half years. All I can say is that I left the meeting feeling as if I needed another meeting. The anger and resentment that it brought up in me was carried within for too long a time.

It seemed that no matter how much I prayed, talked to my sponsor or to other

people, these feelings were not lifted from me. But one thing I did pick up from this meeting was something called *Discovering the Principles*. I thought, what's this? Some new literature I haven't read? How come I haven't been told about this?

I discovered this small pamphlet has been around for as long as I've been in SA. Then I checked with our literature person and was told that we've had it for quite a while. So for the small sum of \$2.00, I picked up a copy and began reading it. I devoured everything I was reading. Having read it, I found that the resentments and anger that I was

carrying around were lifted. The section on group conscience meetings totally lifted from me the resentments I felt at the time and hadn't had the power to change.

I now carry this book with me daily along with my other literature and make this a part of my SA reading for the day. Now I have another tool to add to my SA arsenal and one I thank my Higher Power for in my daily prayers.  
M.F.

## How Can We Increase the *Essay* Circulation? We Need Your Ideas

Many of our members tell us that it was several months before they became aware of the *Essay*. Once a person finds the *Essay's* inspirational articles and heartwarming stories of recovery, that person is likely to subscribe and become a regular reader.

But sometimes people don't find out simply because no one takes the responsibility to mention it. Many people assume that everyone already knows about the *Essay*, so why bother to tell others? The *Essay* has become one of the best kept secrets in our organization. (Maybe it's the *only* secret!)

Circulation should be increased so more people benefit by sharing stories of recovery and being kept

up-to-date on important SA policy issues and events at local, national and international levels. How can circulation be increased? Tentative ideas follow:

1. The literature person in each group could take responsibility for notifying all group members. They might also keep records of who is currently subscribing.

2. Groups could include ideas about the *Essay* and subscribing to the *Essay* in a quarterly "Group Conscience Inventory" and forward the results to the *Essay* committee.

3. *Essay* "Circulation Workshops" could be included at local intergroup meetings or national conferences to discuss this issue.

What are your ideas to help increase *Essay* circulation? Would you be willing to help? Who should be helping with this critical task? Please write to: The SA Central Office, Attn: *Essay* Committee, P.O. Box 111910, Nashville, TN. 37222. Your ideas are important to us.  
Thanks.

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## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

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

**March 15, 1997, SA/S-Anon Marathon, Glen Ellyn, IL, by Chicago Area SA and S-Anon Intergroups.**  
Theme: Serenity, Courage, Wisdom. Contact Cory A. at 630/665-9514.

**March 21 - 23, 1997, SA/S-Anon London Convention, Great Britain, Damascus House, by SA UK.**  
Theme: A New Beginning. Contact Susannah at 01144-181-209-0658.

**April 4 - 6, 1997, SA/S-Anon Family Reunion Retreat, Spritual Life Center, Wichita, KS.**  
Theme: Homesty: Bringing the Inside Out. SA contact Tom L. at 303/470-8234.  
S-Anon contact Gene J. at 405/751-3832.

**April 11 -13, 1997, SA/S-Anon South East Region Spring Conference, Nashville, TN.**  
Theme: Working Together. Contact Tom B., SA, 615/822-0500, or  
Deb C., S-Anon, 615/646-9736.

**April 12, 1997, SA/S-Anon Marathon, Cleveland, OH. Theme: Spring into Sobriety,**  
with Sylvia and Gene J. Contact Bonnie D. at 216/428-8835.

**April 25 - 27, 1997, Australia Conference, Camp Discovery, Yackandandah, VIC.**  
Contact SA Melbourne at 01161(3)9506 6719.

**April 26 - 27, 1997. Unity North Regional Conference, Sacramento, CA.**  
Theme: Working With Others. Contact Steve D. at 916/756-2840.

**May 31, 1997, One Day Marathon, Wheeling, WV, sponsored by Steubenville/Wheeling SA**  
Theme: Sharing of the Fellowship. Contact Shawn S. at 614/283-9561.

**June 13-15, 1997, SA Summer Retreat, Lattendales, English Lake District, by SA UK.**  
Theme: Hope for Freedom. Contact Nicholas S. at 1 768-893379.

**October 11, 1997, All Day Marathon, Cleveland, OH. Contact Larry N. at 216/766-8476.**

### 1997 International Conference Announcement

**July 11 - 13, 1997, SA/S-Anon International Conference, Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada. Theme: The Promises**

Contact Francis H. (SA) at 306/543-5999 or Carla J. (S-Anon) at 306/949-2417.

### 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 *Essay* editor with copies of letters and other materials of potential use in the newsletter.

\* Submissions, selected by the editor, are subject to correction of spelling and grammar (*The Chicago Manual of Style* 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 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.

### S-Anon Referrals

Would you like to refer family members and friends to S-Anon, but there is no group in your area? No problem. Just refer them to the S-Anon Central Office:

S-Anon International Family Groups  
P.O. Box 111242  
Nashville, TN 37222-1242  
615/833-3152

The Central Office can send them literature and put them in touch with the closest S-Anon members.

S-Anon is a fellowship of people who share their experience, strength and hope with each other that they may solve their common problems and help others to recover. The only requirement for membership is that there be a problem of sexaholism in a relative or friend. Our primary purpose is to recover from the effects upon us of another person's sexaholism, and to help families and friends of sexaholics.

### New Groups

Albany, NY  
Bryn Athyn, PA  
Greenwich, CT  
Milpitas, CA  
Woodstock, IL

El Salvador  
Hobart, Tasmania, Australia

### Group News

#### I Am Not Alone

Frequently my head and my heart think and feel that I am alone. This is

especially difficult while being the secretary for an SA meeting of one, here in Fort Bragg, Calif. One Thursday night my Higher Power gave me a gift. It is a tool for revealing loneliness as the deception it is. I use it frequently. I call it the Gratitude Attendance Check.

Its use is very simple. When I reach the point in the meeting format that says, "Let's take a moment to introduce ourselves," I close my eyes and conjure the names and faces of the people I've met at meetings and conferences. In my mind I thank them for coming, make eye contact, and smile. What had been a room where I could hear the echo of my breath is, within only a few minutes, cozy, warm, and standing room only.

It is fitting that my imagination, so long conscripted into service to my sex addiction, is now a channel for love and friendship. For a little extra fun I like to call up a few people after the meeting and let them know where they were. We have a good laugh as we talk about recovery and my head and my heart begin to understand that I am not alone. G.S.

**Minniewater, NSW, Australia:** In a member's family beach house -- 14 hopefuls, newcomers, old-timers -- travelled over thousands of miles to be together. Bonded in our need for recovery from addiction to lust, from lifestyles so varied, so alike.

From Melbourne, Sydney, Canberra, Moree, Armidale, Lismore, Brisbane. Two thousand miles apart or just 400. We are about the same size as the United States of America with 17 million people far flung. And SA is growing. Twenty-five or thereabouts couldn't make it. But by God's grace the word is spreading. Hope for the sex lust addict.

So when we met at Minniewater we embraced, we were precious to each other. Some arrived early, left later.

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Bonding, laughter, listening. Our theme was "Growth" -- in the individual -- in the group -- in the fellowship of our huge country. This year we were more relaxed, we had double the number of last year's Minniewater mini-conference. Time to walk along the beach with another one or two, time for meditation as the sun rose, time for the "one-to-one" in a corner between meetings. We felt we were more than on the threshold of SA in Australia, we could see the sun rising upon a future of God, fellowship, hope and growth.

Some of us have years of SA sobriety; experience in the program, and we have a handful of those we look to for wisdom. We are young in SA -- we learn as we put the Steps into our lives. We have four females country-wide but none could get to Minniewater and how we would have loved to have them with us! And over in Perth, on the west coast, there is a small group, three thousand miles from Minniewater. In Hobart, at the southern most tip of Australia a group has sprung up. Others as I write are finding SA.

We hated to say goodbye to this haven, this specialness each felt at Minniewater, and now we look at April 25, 1997 for our third annual SA Conference at Yackandandah, Victoria. We may be able, God willing, to start S-Anon. Anonymous, Aus.

**Tamuning, Guam:** Greetings from the Guam SA group. We're only two strong, but we've been meeting weekly for nearly a year. And God has richly blessed us. I always leave the meetings uplifted. We've had several others join us from time to time, but the two of us are the original members.

We've talked to the local AA Intergroup, to the Guam Ministerial Association and to the director of the Mental Health Department, so we haven't kept ourselves hidden. Also, we have a contact phone number in the

local newspaper. No contacts yet, but we're in no way discouraged. D.P.

## Member News

### The Bottom Line

My addiction had reared its ugly head in many ways over a long period of time. Before sobriety I could look back on over 40 years of living the addict's secret. The only bottom line I would dare claim is what I did not do in acting out. Moments of honesty about my addiction make me ask why I did not do what was left undone. Fear of being seen created a pseudo bottom line.

Being aware that people thought poorly of certain actions kept me clean. Shame kept me from doing openly what lust was teasing my sexual drive to do. Serious sin was my bottom line. An unhealthy fear of God kept me from doing with another what I thought God would punish. As I look back over the years, I see I made few confessions that did not have impurity as their principal subject matter. Masturbation was out of control in my younger years and this graduated to touching by and of others.

Looking back with a few years' sobriety, I find it no surprise that as the years went by, others became involved in my sexual behavior. Acting out with others forced me to seek treatment. I had to take ownership of how I acted out with myself and finally with others. The cumulative history of what my addiction had done in the lives of others, and to myself, made me aware of how serious my addiction was. Sobriety depends on this awareness. Treatment was necessary if I ever was to control my addiction. Treatment brought me to the bottom line of Sexaholics Anonymous.

Sobriety speaks for SA and says the program works. When sobriety touches a person's life, there is born an intuitive

awareness of a bottom line. What an addict would *not* do begins the definition of a bottom line. It unfolds in words of the sober experience echoed again and again in meetings.

No one person speaks for SA. The sober words of members after reading from the book and sharing experiences of sobriety teach a newcomer what a bottom line must be. The authority of the book is in the sobriety and recovery of the members. The meeting is about the walking of the talk of sobriety and not the talking of the walk.

Meetings put words on what my heart tells me I must do to be sober. I have to believe sobriety is possible. No one can work my program for me. Seeing the program work in others is the connecting link between what the book says and what I can do with the book.

Experiences of sobriety set the tone of meetings. "If you can do it, so can I," is the subconscious hope born in each sharing. What is shared by many is much more sobering than the opinion of any individual member. Listening to others and reading and underlining important words focuses the experience of sobriety. Sharing what those words mean teaches sobriety by focusing on what we should do. Awareness of what would be the equivalent in AA of "taking a sip" shows what a bottom line must cover. We need a bottom line that does not permit the teasing of the addiction.

The bottom line fences the boundaries of sobriety. The addict without a bottom line does not have control over self. Memories of past partners in addiction, visiting places of former acting out or seeing or imagining former tools of addiction are all capable of bringing on lust attacks. The bottom line gives definition to boundaries about all behaviors that once entered into sexual play.

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Our sobriety is born, nourished and protected in our definition of sobriety. When the bottom line of SA is challenged by the newcomer, it begets health in the fellowship because we remember the pain of white knuckling, and we are compelled to look at why we buy into our bottom line. Each new living out of our bottom line strengthens our sobriety. *Our bottom line of sobriety has no exceptions.*

Acting out in any form excluded by our bottom line kills sobriety and means a new start is needed. Sooner or later the addict realizes one cannot play with the fires of addiction without getting burnt. Acting out has a ripple effect which leads to acting out in more serious and dangerous ways. Sobriety brings clearer insights into what is necessary for our personal bottom line. Nothing in our behavior escapes our sober gaze. All the paths leading to the grand canyon of our addiction are cut off. Our bottom line grows in the honesty of sobriety. J.M.

## Step 1 -- Internet

I am completely powerless over pornography of all kinds on the Internet. This includes pictures and words. Something inside of me cries out against making this admission, even now. I don't want to give up my independence. I want to believe that I can control and enjoy it. I want to believe that I can get on the Internet and not go to the wrong sites. I want to believe that I can have the Internet on my computer and not use it to go to the pornographic sites, but it is not true.

I cannot trust myself with Internet access. At any time, lust can trick me into believing that I can handle it for a few moments, a few minutes, a few hours. And then I will act out again.

My recent acting out started innocently. I was listening to the radio and getting on the web (an appropriate

name) to download a file I needed. The radio host mentioned a famous actress and I searched on her name. After looking at one picture, I was hooked. I gradually went down the path to look for more pictures. Then explicit pictures. I was gone.

There was not a particular trigger. I just had some extra time. Not really. I took time I did not have. I just got started and couldn't stop. I said, "I won't store any on my hard drive." But, I ended up storing over 100 pictures. Then I used software to edit the pictures. I couldn't stop. No way. I drank the pictures and fantasized heavily. Lust took me to the land of impossible dreams. Then it was masturbation, bookstores, videos, and a prostitute.

I was only able to stop the day of a meeting. I called my sponsor and another friend in the program. I went to the meeting and started over. I installed software that blocks "those" sites. I copied the access software to diskette and then deleted it from my hard drive. The diskette is in another part of the house.

So my main problem is that I sometimes still believe I can lust and get away with it. I can be tricked into thinking I can just peek at an attractive woman on TV or in a newspaper ad or on the Internet and not get burned. I can know the truth today and be tricked into falsehood in two weeks. I need to finally realize that I must work the program every day regardless of how I feel, which for me means doing five positive program things every day. It involves calling someone I know in the program every day. It involves talking to many different people around the country every week. God has me working a more rigorous program than in the past, which is helping a lot.

V.J.

## Feedback Corner

Invariably I find *Essay* to be a very helpful series of personal sharings. In the last issue [Dec. 96], the article, "How I Deal with Romantic Lust" was one that helped me considerably. J.R., who wrote it, made an excellent contribution to the basic understanding of our deadly disease.

The significant part of J.R.'s comments relates to the fact that no human being by himself knows what's good for his soul. Only *God* through *his* infinite wisdom can direct our thoughts and intuitions, enabling us to enter the long, painful and at times very difficult process leading to the second birth. M.G.

**Your feedback,  
articles,  
comments  
here**

Submissions for JUNE 1997 *Essay*  
are due to SAICO by May 1, 1997

## 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. A 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.

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## Alcoholic Sexaholic

I never knew I was a sexaholic. In the six weeks between the time I heard of Sexaholics Anonymous and my first meeting, I did a lot of honest soul-searching. I was working the program in AA and considered myself safe from the dangers of other addictions. I wavered between ignorance of my sexaholism and denial of what I did know. Denial was my first reaction to everything.

For years my drinking covered up my sexaholism and confused people who tried to help me. It took a low bottom and a spell in a drying-out unit for me to seek help for my drinking. I couldn't see how an alcoholic could live a normal life without drinking. As long as I could deny it, I had a chance of beating it. Once I admitted it, I'd have to put myself in the care of the psychiatric community. Even if I admitted it, there was no guarantee I'd be free of it.

I started drinking in my late teens, mostly to relieve inhibitions I had with girls my age. I had been acting out sexually since I was 14, having discovered masturbation by trying to steal sex from my younger sister in her sleep. Later I molested both of my younger sisters. At 14, my selfish pursuit of sex already had caused a major split in my relations with God, my family and my peers. It's either God or masturbation, my religion seemed to say, and I chose masturbation.

Since I was 10 or 11, I had been acting in, entertaining fantasies of romance, dependency and sex in order to escape a fear-filled family atmosphere. In school I avoided work and looked forward to the day when I could escape geographically.

When I was old enough to move out, instead of becoming self-sufficient as I had planned, I started to drink heavily. It was the late sixties and there seemed to be a great, liberating cultural revolution going on. I moved to the anonymous big city and hung around the periphery of the hippie scene. I read a lot and liked to think

I was well connected and could procure anything. Dope smoking became for me a point of rebellion against authority. Prolonged use of dope made me uncomfortable but didn't stop me using.

People sometimes told me I should watch my drinking. This never got the desired reaction from me. I even felt a perverse satisfaction. I had fooled them. No one ever confronted me about my acting out, either because they didn't know about it or didn't consider it to be acting out. I worked hard at balancing my use of drugs. Alcohol was keeping my life manageable, I thought, while lust was saving me from alcoholism. Lust kept me sociable, while alcohol gave me something to blame if I made a fool of myself trying to connect. I drank so that people wouldn't want to get to know me, or if they suspected there was something wrong with me, they'd think it was my drinking. I convinced myself of this also. In the end I was a public and a private drunk.

I tried another geographic cure, moving to a foreign country where I knew only a few people. My life changed when I got a job that gave me security and a future. For the first time I tried to stop drinking. I decided my real problem was the anxiety I felt when I wasn't drinking, but when I talked to professionals I was careful not to mention drinking lest they think I was alcoholic. According to some alcohol consumption tests I did secretly, I was already in the chronic stage. To get my drinking under control, I'd have to treat the anxiety. I considered group therapy and tried forms of self-hypnosis and bio-feedback, but stopping drinking completely wasn't on my agenda.

Despite a career and friends that cared about me, my drinking and sexing got worse over the years. Inside I was terrified. I felt a growing awareness that no amount of alcohol or sex would make me the person I wanted to be: confident, self-sufficient, someone with nothing to

prove. Somewhere I had taken a disastrous turn in my life and there was no going back and no one could help me. I had turned 30. I could look back on the 1970s -- my twenties -- as a lost decade. Secretly I would have given anything to regain control of my drinking. As for my masturbation with the girlie magazine I had stashed under the mattress, I was too foggy and ashamed to even ask myself why I hid this from everyone. But it was becoming more and more my secret world. I had even started to fall in love with the models in the magazines. Once I looked for a phone listing of a porn magazine with the idea of tracing one of the models in its pages. Fortunately I didn't go through with this.

I tried to write pornography. I thought this would solve my masturbation problem by putting me in touch with people I could act out with. Fortunately I didn't get very far with that idea either. Daily masturbation had me riddled with guilt and drinking was taking a terrible toll on my physical and mental health. Mornings I was usually sick from the previous day's drinking and would practice "my stomach exercises" in the bathroom, trying to throw up. At work I would leave my desk to lock myself in the bathroom where I would drink from a flask and sometimes masturbate to a lingerie ad. I used antacid medication for my stomach and toothpaste to get rid of the smell of alcohol. Evenings I would go to the bars with friends from work. I lived like this for years. Eventually my health gave out -- for a long time I had been suffering from sleep apnea without realizing it, and I had the beginnings of liver disease.

I stayed sober on "the doctor's opinion" for nine months, at which time I thought I'd try some controlled drinking. I sincerely tried to watch myself, carefully avoiding my old haunts, but it wasn't long before the old drinking patterns came

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back. I would stash bottles in my apartment, even though I was living on my own. One morning I woke up sick and decided to take the advice the doctor had given me months before and go to AA.

My first AA meeting had a profound effect on me. It was the first time I had ever sat among a group of people who were there for each other to solve a common problem that they couldn't solve alone. No last names and no keeping tabs on attendance. No dues or fees or discussions. No authority figures monitoring the proceedings. No anxiety or attempts at rationalization when it came to talking about their drinking. People were using a word to describe themselves that I thought I could never get past my lips -- alcoholic. Then they looked at me in a way that suggested they expected me to do the same. As soon as I admitted it it changed my life all right, considerably for the better. The only way I can describe the effect of my first AA meeting is to say I haven't found it necessary to take a drink since that evening, 14 years ago at the time of writing.

The effects were immediate and dramatic. Discovering I was an alcoholic was like having my hearing restored in an ear that's been blocked -- except this happened on a level of awareness. It was true I had the problem, but now I had the solution, too. I had something concrete that I could work on. For the first time in ages I didn't feel crazy. I had a primary purpose, something I could live up to.

I was learning what it meant to share my life. I stopped feeling lonely. AA was like an underground army of kindred spirits looking out for each other in an unfriendly world. My wife, at the time my girlfriend, noticed a profound change in me from the first meeting.

Even the Steps started to work me. One afternoon a couple of months after my first meeting I was on my way to the pub to watch a soccer match and have a few beers when I stopped in my tracks, remembering that drinking and AA didn't

mix. I was crushed. It was not possible to go through life without a drink, I thought, so why am I trying to fool these AA people? I decided I'd have the few beers anyway and simply admit it at the next meeting. What would they do, kick me out? As I pictured myself admitting this to the group, I remembered that AA doesn't expect me to stop drinking for the rest of my life, but just for one day. I knew I could abstain for one day.

Without realizing it I had just taken the Second Step -- Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity. My thoughts had turned to a power greater than myself -- in this case the group -- and I was relieved of a compulsion that had dogged me all my life. It was probably the first time in my life I denied myself something in the name of a higher power. As a drinker I was no stranger to the day-at-a-time philosophy, telling myself for years "I'll quit tomorrow."

It was suggested to me in AA that I let go of any prejudices I might have against spiritual principles. When I did, I started to appreciate the AA literature for the first time. I especially identified with the hopeless alcoholic in the Big Book who places himself in the care of a "celebrated physician" (*There Is A Solution*). It corresponded with my own experience. A psychiatrist I took great pains to see told me what Carl Jung told the early AAs -- that it would be impossible for me to recover unless I found God, and that as an alcoholic I belonged in AA and nowhere else. I had to hear this from a psychiatrist, not just from AA, to believe it.

That I couldn't take responsibility for myself is something I suspected when I reread letters I sent to psychiatrists. What can I honestly expect anyone to do for me that I can't do for myself is a question I wasn't able to ask myself. What can anyone tell me that I haven't heard from parents, teachers, books, friends?

Our troubles, the Big Book said, are basically of our own making. It took the evidence of God-power working through

others to convince me of this. I'd had it all back to front. It would take years of therapy to get to where AA members started -- if I lived that long. I had been prepared to take steps so that I could regain control of my drinking. AA brushed all that aside and said the first thing for the alcoholic is to put away the drink. I considered it a stroke of good fortune to have found a psychiatrist who considered therapy to be worthless for the alcoholic. After I left this uncommon treatment, I went to AA meetings, got a sponsor and worked the Steps. At this stage my wife was in AA also. Sometimes we'd drive for miles to a new meeting.

All this time my sexaholism was progressing. Without alcohol, lust hits were more intense. But without alcohol, lust hangovers were more intense. I was still masturbating and I always had my eye out for stronger forms of pornography. It was never my style to buy girlie magazines -- the cashier might think I was a pervert -- but I hung out with program friends who had stashes and watched the occasional porn video with them. Sexual relations with my wife weren't right. She was the one to initiate sex and since I had usually masturbated within the last 24 hours, I would have to resort to fantasies to complete the sex act. Talk of marriage made me uncomfortable. I fantasized that my wife would run off with someone in the program, then I wouldn't have to tell her I couldn't handle intimacy and I'd be free to act out uninhibited. Other times I was afraid this might happen. I sent her mixed signals all the time.

Without drink I had more time on my hands. I used to watch a woman across the street, waiting for a glimpse of nudity. This form of acting out had only started since I stopped drinking.

One night at an open AA meeting after three years in the program a young man beside me introduced himself as an Al-Anon and a sexaholic, and I was proud of myself for not bursting out laughing.

(continued on page 9)



*(continued from page 8)*

The next I heard was that there was a group meeting on the premises that called themselves Sexaholics Anonymous. What next?

I was feeling righteous and superior until I met some other AAs who I considered to have solid sobriety who were also members of SA. I was taken aback when I tried to go to one of their meetings only to be told, politely but firmly, that their meetings were closed. Would I like to come to an information meeting? At the information meeting two SAs told their stories briefly and I wasn't able to identify with either.

During the weeks that followed I thought a lot about my sexual acting out but couldn't find a reason to get on my knees in gratitude for SA. My Fourth and Fifth Steps -- moral inventories of my life and admittance of my wrongs to a sponsor -- were replete with my sexual acting out. I had had an affair with my sister, for which I made the best amends I could and was willing to do anything more that was needed. That was in the past. I had acted out anonymously with men, but I didn't need willpower to stop. As for masturbation, that was just letting off steam.

I read SA's 20 questions. Then I turned to the back of the brochure to see how high or how low I'd scored, expecting to be told I definitely needed Sexaholics Anonymous if I answered a certain number of questions with a yes.

There were questions on the list that gave me pause, however. Did I still resort to images during sex? Did I want to get away from my partner quickly after the sex act? Did I still resort to masturbation, even though I was having as much sex as I wanted? It wasn't so much that the answer for me was yes. What pulled me up short was that the questions were asked at all. Only a group that was dealing honestly with the answers had the right to ask these questions in the first place.

Having a functioning SA group in the

vicinity did more than anything to make me take a fearless moral inventory of my sex life. It meant the jig was up for me if for no other reason than that the jig was up for them. What would the therapeutic community tell me if I brought my secret story to them? Ironically, I discovered later that two therapists whose opinions I most respected were members of SA.

I didn't make much progress on why I might need SA until one day a friend of mine from AA, who was also a member of SA, told me that the key to the thing was lust. For him, it started with sexual fantasies which he said actually affected his metabolism. Lust acted like a narcotic in his bloodstream and once under the influence of lust, he had no choice but to act out.

This hit me. I could easily relate to this. I could be intoxicated on lust without acting out. It would only be a question of time before I needed stronger forms of lust. I couldn't lust safely. Even if things didn't get any worse, lust was already making my life miserable and unmanageable. It wasn't surprising that a fellowship had grown up around the idea of too much sex. What was surprising was that a fellowship had identified the first drink and declared its powerlessness over that. Deep down something told me I had known it all along.

It took some time for me to digest all this. To admit this was to admit I was out of control, and to be out of control in the sex area is to out of control as a person.

It was a bitter pill to swallow. But it was the truth and the truth promises to set us free. Discovering I was a sexaholic was like taking a punch on the jaw. It left me reeling but it got rid of a bad tooth. There was a line in the book that summed it up perfectly for me: "We were free to see and admit what we really were inside because we were finally free from having to act out what we were." (White Book, p.84). This described my AA experience also. I saw the need to quit masturbating and give up all forms of girlie magazines. Since my wife and I weren't married it

meant we had to stop having sex. When I told her this she was none too happy. What bothered her more than not having sex with a sexaholic was having the sexaholic tell her when she could and couldn't have sex.

I got an SA sponsor and called him every day. We would get current and then he'd suggest we pray, as his sponsor had prayed with him. This felt uncomfortable in the beginning, just as saying the Our Father after AA meetings had felt uncomfortable.

After three months of sexual sobriety I was able to give up smoking. I had smoked for 25 years. I figured I couldn't feel any worse than I did, and I was right. There are many similarities between quitting smoking and quitting lust. The first day is the hardest. The second day is the second hardest. The third day is the third hardest, and so on. The point is it never gets harder than at the beginning. It can appear harder if I haven't surrendered. But there the similarity ends for me. It has been many years since I had the craving to smoke, but I don't believe I'll ever get to the place where I'm no longer tempted to lust. SA, more than any other, is a program of repetition.

I set myself priorities I could handle, putting first things first. In the morning I would tell myself that the only thing I had to do that day was drive defensively and not smoke. Getting to SA meetings, wherever available, took preference over everything else. My wife and I discovered we really didn't miss sex. We grew closer together by being less dependent on each other and by my staying away from my drugs. I was free to be honest with her and free not to manipulate her for sex or other favors. I missed masturbation and picture women, but I had my SA group.

After two years, my wife and I got married. In marriage, we continued to use abstinence as a tool. Going back to sex after such a long absence was a let down to both of us. Sex wasn't optional -- it simply wasn't possible at times.

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I owe the life I lead today to a loving God that works through Sexaholics Anonymous, and most important, to its definition of sexual sobriety. Left to my own devices, and their name was legion, I would never have found this on my own. And it goes without saying that for me, there would be no sobriety from alcohol without sexual sobriety. Similarly, I don't believe my sexual sobriety would last very long if I were to try controlled drinking. My drinking, although it clearly took on a life of its own, initially was something I did to compensate for what I saw on the inside of the cup. Today the cup is open to inspection and alcohol has no place in it.

I'm beginning to enjoy life in a deeper way. I'm back in a line of work I gave up 15 years ago. "What used to be the hunch or the occasional inspiration gradually becomes a working part of the mind" the AA Big Book tells us (p. 87) and I'm amazed that this is increasingly true for me. I'm also grateful for the ability to do the work and the progressive ability to relate to people.

I could tell about how SA has grown in numbers and in sobriety and organization where I live. I could tell about the love and respect that has grown between my wife and me and the intimacy that's possible between us. But I couldn't tell about any of this if I didn't believe that what I have is made available by a loving God to all who are willing to work this program in sobriety.

## Shipping and Handling

There have been many questions about shipping and handling charges. About a year ago, SAICO noticed that SA was constantly out spending its postage budget. A survey of packages mailed out revealed that the amount we were charging for large shipments was inadequate to pay for the shipping charges. We revised shipping and handling charges to reflect a more accurate picture. Larger charges for larger orders. We now base charges, not on the dollar amount of the order, but the weight of the order and the distance it is travelling.

Some advantages to this system include:

The Group discount (20%) usually covers the shipping charges, so that the cost of literature can remain the same.

Larger charges for weight enable Central Office to decide the most cost effective and efficient method for shipping. Sometimes, UPS is less expensive than the U.S. Postal Service. We try to choose the best option every time.

No discussion of shipping and handling would be complete without a few sentences about handling. Handling includes many usually unthought of factors. The box is probably the most expensive item. In addition, there are many packing materials; such as, plastic peanuts to control shifting of contents during shipping, tape, addressing materials, and the invoice. Handling also

includes labor to pack it and get it to the appropriate shipping entity, UPS or the Post Office.

Many old order forms are floating around the fellowship. It is not at all unusual to pull out an order form that dates from '92 or '93. Some old forms had no shipping and handling whatever. One use of group contributions is to cover the S & H shortfall on these old forms--a little Twelfth Step in action. As we strive to be self sustained, we need some adjustments, like the change in shipping and handling. So far, we have held printing costs down, so that the cost of SA literature has been the same for many years.

The order form in March 1997 *Essay* (Page 19) goes into effect immediately. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Central Office



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# SAICO

## SA INTERNATIONAL CENTRAL OFFICE

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### Highlights from the Oklahoma City January '97 Conference

The following information comes from the meetings of the SA Board of Trustees, the General Delegate Assembly, and the SA Business Meeting (called "SA Today" at the conference; audio tape of the same name available from Glenn K Audio Tapes, 800-257-TAPE):

The SA General Delegate Assembly elected the first four non-sexaholic members of the Board of Trustees at its Oklahoma City business meeting. The non-sexaholic members can provide a different perspective on SA operations, and are a legacy from AA passed to our fellowship.

SA's non-sexaholic trustees are:

Fr. Emmerich Vogt  
Frank Cardona  
Don Arnold  
Michael Alvarez

(See "Meet the New Trustees," pg. 15)

If you know of anyone else who would qualify as a future non-sexaholic trustee, please inform the Nominations Committee via SAICO. Criteria for non-sexaholic trustees can be found in the March 1996 Essay.

The following Committee reports were presented at the "SA Today" meeting:

#### Bylaws

The General Delegate Assembly approved the bylaws of Sexaholics Anonymous, Incorporated. Since SA is now incorporated in the State of Tennessee, SA is legally required to

have bylaws which govern the operations of the Board of Trustees and the General Delegate Assembly. Copies of the bylaws are available from SAICO by request.

#### Literature

The pamphlet "Practical Guidelines for Group Recovery" is available from SAICO. Cost is \$1.00 each. This piece will be placed on the order form.

Jess L. described the primary function of new literature as twofold:  
(1) to meet needs that are currently lacking, and  
(2) provide a diverse expression of voices for needs that are being or have been met.

The four primary needs that the Literature Committee is trying to fulfill are:

1. Group inventory guidelines;
2. Standard letter for the professional community, e.g. for therapists and clergy;
3. Guidance for SA telephone "hotlines";
4. Guidelines for prison service.

*Groups or intergroups which have any existing literature on these four topics are asked to send a copy to SAICO for the Literature Committee.*

The Spanish SA Big Book will be in a fully bound format shortly, whereas currently it is loosely bound. If anyone is interested in translating SA literature into another language, please contact the Literature Committee via SAICO, or your Regional Delegate to the General Assembly. Your help will most certainly be appreciated. The Literature Committee will then seek the approval of the Board of Trustees.

#### Intergroup

The Intergroup Committee is trying to obtain an updated list of intergroups throughout the world, including correct mailing addresses and phone numbers. SAICO only has information on 34 intergroups as of January 1997. If your intergroup is not registered with SAICO or has changed its mailing address or other contact information, please contact SAICO with the appropriate details, earmarked for the Intergroup Committee.

#### Regional Realignment

Any feedback on the regional alignment of intergroups, e.g. if you believe your intergroup should be in a different region, should be sent to SAICO earmarked for the Regional Realignment Committee.

#### Site Selection

The following sites are confirmed for upcoming SA International Conferences:

- July 1997: Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada
- January 1998: Daytona Beach, FL
- July 1998: Newark, NJ

The following locations have submitted bids for upcoming conferences (tentative and subject to change):

- January 1999: Sacramento, CA
- July 1999: Cleveland, OH
- January 2000: Nashville, TN
- July 2000: Toronto, Ontario, Canada and Minneapolis, MN

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## Essay

Increased production costs, especially for paper and printing, have forced an increased subscription cost for the *Essay* Newsletter. As of September 1997, individual subscriptions will cost \$10 a year, \$8 for groups of 10 or more.

Please encourage all in your groups to subscribe to the *Essay*: it is the ONLY method of communication available to all of SA. Also, consider creating an *Essay* representative position at your meetings to raise awareness of the *Essay*, facilitate subscriptions, and receive group and member input on ideas for the *Essay* (see March/May 1995 *Essay* for more information).

Finally, the *Essay* needs more submissions from members and groups.

## Internet

SA now has a WorldWide Web site at <http://www.sa.org>.

Although many at the recent Oklahoma City conference shared how easy it is to fall into the dark side of the Internet, the new SA site uses the Internet in a positive manner as an outreach to the sexaholics who still suffer in cyberspace and elsewhere. On it are a number of SA readings from our meetings, as well as information on how to find SA through SAICO.

In addition, an E-Mail SA group has formed and is available to any member who wishes to send E-Mail and join. Send your request to [saico@sa.org](mailto:saico@sa.org) (SAICO's e-mail address). You will soon receive a reply welcoming you to "our permanent closed SA meeting in cyberspace." The intent of the group is primarily for group sharing, but one-on-one communication is possible. As of March 1997, over 60 members from the USA, the UK, Canada, Japan,

Spain, Ireland, Norway, and Central and South America share their experience, strength, and hope on-line, causing the group's trusted servant to state, "there should always be someone available in the world of sobriety and recovery."

Web site: <http://www.sa.org>  
E-mail: [saico@sa.org](mailto:saico@sa.org)

## Nominations

Please forward any nominations you have for SA Board of Trustee members (5 years of sobriety required) or for non-sexaholic trustees to SAICO earmarked for the Nominations Committee.

## Legal

SA is looking for members who are attorneys and who would be interested in serving on its Legal Committee. If interested, contact SAICO or your Regional Delegate.

## International

No delegate currently represents the International Region. If interested, please contact SAICO. Also, if you are interested in chairing or serving on the International Committee, please contact SAICO.

## Loners

Loners with E-Mail access are encouraged to join the E-Mail list (see above). Many, however, remain to be reached by telephone or letter, and requests for contact exceeds the assistance available. Please consider donating just 15 to 30 minutes a month keeping in contact with one or more loners in 18 countries and 26 states. Contact Michael J., Loners Committee, P.O. Box 322, Fairless Hills, PA 19030.

## SA Corrections Committee

An even more overwhelming number of requests are received by the SACC. Many, many more prisoners write to SA than there are members who can answer them; therefore, many of their letters go unanswered. Please consider donating 15 - 30 minutes each month to reaching out to those behind bars who have done many of the same things we have done and need our help. Contact Steve O., SACC, P. O. Box 768, North Arlington, NJ 07031.

NOTE: Many of these service opportunities have no major sobriety requirement. In fact, the 12th Step service could help you stay sober! The Board suggests coordination with your sponsor in helping with either the Loners or the Corrections Committee.

## NOTE TO REGIONS

The hope of the Board of Trustees and the General Delegate Assembly is that each region would have its representative on each SA committee, or at least a contact (for the SACC and the Loners Committees, for example). Please consider naming such representatives from your region and making them known to the various committees. Consider doing this on intergroup level as well for the benefit of the region.

Example: A prisoner in Illinois writes to the SACC. In order to find out which group can best meet his needs, the SACC Chairperson contacts the North Midwest Region's SACC representative, who, being closer to the prisoner's area, can better assist him.

## Central Office Management Committee (COMC)

SAICO reports that the credit cards purchase program is going well!

SAICO plans to get a second computer and a refurbished copier.

An SA Archive is being created.

The cost of bulk mailing from SAICO should drop with SA being approved for non-profit bulk mailing status with the U. S. Postal Service.

The SA Big Book, the brochure, and Member Stories have been reprinted. There is plenty of stock on hand to fill orders for the new members.

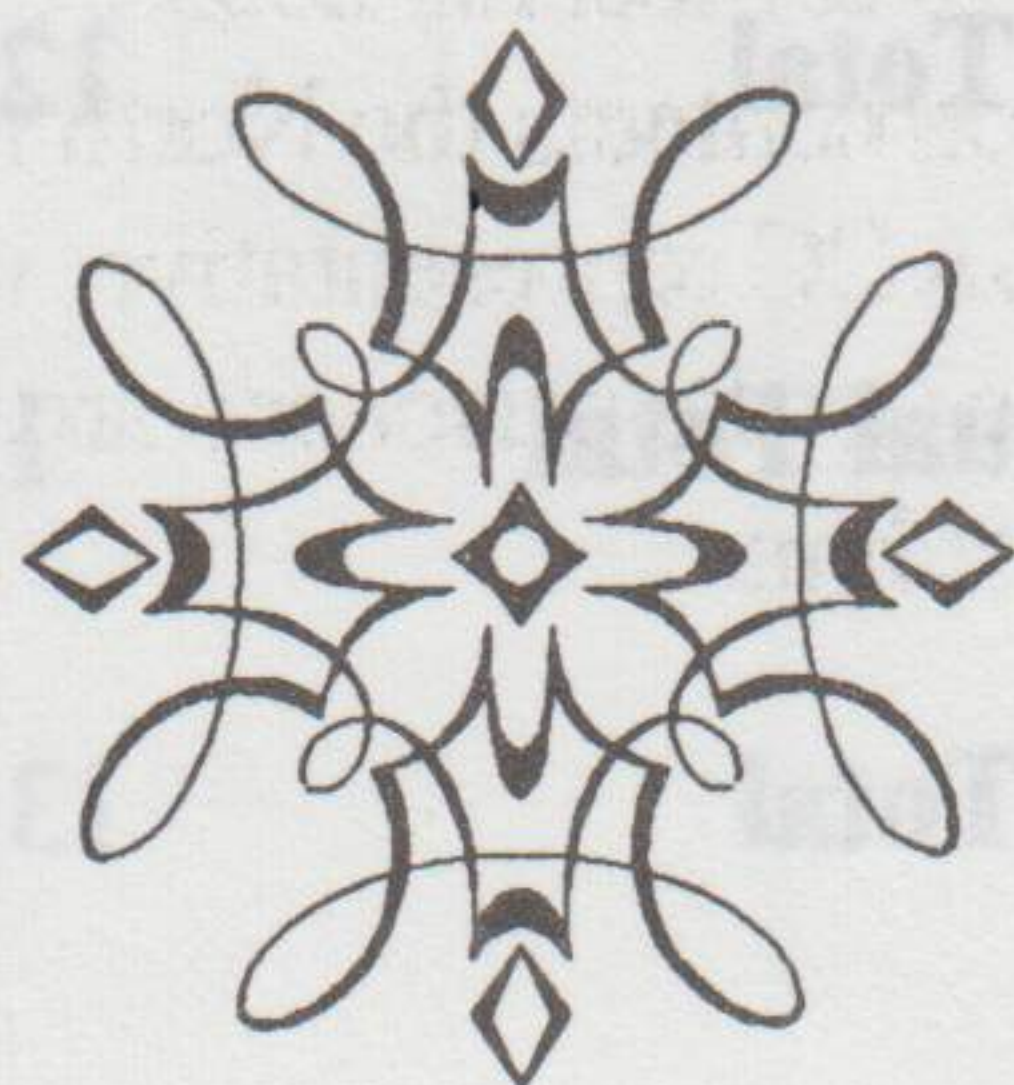
**DID YOU KNOW?:** Each SA Big Book actually costs about \$2.00 to produce.

So, why is the price \$10?

Unrestricted donations comprise less than half of SA income; the rest comes from literature sales (see "Self-supporting through our own contributions?" by Jess L., *Essay*, December 1996).

*Please support SAICO financially through your groups and intergroup.*

Otherwise, SA will have to continue to charge top dollar for literature.



## Finance SA 1997 Budget

Here is SA's financial snapshot for 1996 and 1997

Revenues	1996	1997
Contributions	\$ 56,606	\$ 65,000
Literature Sales	63,210	66,810
Total	\$119,816	\$131,810
Costs	\$ 94,078	\$130,800

Costs for Committees were not broken out before 1997.

Estimated Costs for 1997

Central Office		\$100,610
Major cost centers		
General & Administrative		52,860
Legal		3,000
Printing Literature		15,200
Rent		5,000
Telephone		3,600
Postage & Freight		11,800
Computer		4,000
Copier		5,000
Travel		1,000
SACC		7,100
Legal		5,150
Literature		7,060
International		1,900
Internet		2,400
Essay		6,070
Board		9,450
Site Selection		85
Amendment		60
Nominations		350
Loners		250
Regional Alignment		110
Finance		40
Intergroup		25

Copies of the 1997 Budget are available from SAICO, upon request.

## Donations for the Fourth Quarter

Akron, OH	\$ 60.00	Hacienda Heights, CA	50.00	Springdale, VA	28.00
Alhambra, CA	143.00	Irvine, CA	240.00	Springfield, VA	30.00
Anaheim, CA	48.15	Lancaster, CA	50.00	St. Charles, IL	45.00
Annapolis, MD	35.00	Long Beach, CA	80.00	St. Louis, MO	163.00
Arlington Hts, IL	40.00	Manhattan Beach, CA	71.79	Stamford, CT	80.00
Arlington, VA	150.00	Menlo Park, CA	50.00	Steubenville, OH	11.00
Asheville, NC	200.00	Milwaukee, WI	319.00	Sudbury, ON, Canada	20.00
Atlanta, GA	75.88	Mt. Clemens, MI	53.05	Syracuse IG, NY	55.00
Bannockburn, IL	100.00	Nashville Intergroup, TN	300.00	Tacoma, WA	25.50
Barrie, ON Canada	100.00	Nashville, TN	153.23	Tamuning, Guam	20.00
Beaver, PA	16.00	New England IG	87.50	Torrance, CA	50.00
Birmingham, AL	50.00	NJ/Eastern PA IG	478.50	Tri State IG, NY	150.00
Bozeman, MT	71.00	North Canton, OH	60.00	Troy, MI	200.00
Brea, CA	50.00	North Hollywood, CA	287.60	Tucson, AZ	177.75
Calgary, AB, Canada	518.44	Northeast Ohio IG	80.00	Twin Falls, ID	30.00
Camarillo, CA	97.00	Oklahoma IG	740.02	UK Intergroup	162.85
Cambridge, MA	30.60	Omaha, NE	78.00	Vienna, VA	260.00
Carol Stream, IL	40.00	Palm Desert, CA	200.00	Villa Park, IL	19.00
Centinela, CA	60.00	Pasadena, CA	159.10	Warner Robins, GA	25.00
Centreville, VA	17.15	Penn Hills, PA	320.00	Washington, DC	280.30
Chicago, IL	237.00	Philadelphia, PA	61.00	Wauwatosa, WI	31.50
Chino, CA	92.00	Pittsburgh, PA	30.30	West Los Angeles, CA	365.00
Colorado Unity	82.57	Plainview, NY	80.00	White Rock, BC, Canada	45.00
Corona, CA	69.52	Pleasanton, CA	74.00	Wichita, KS	150.00
Crystal Lake, IL	160.00	Portland, OR	97.85	Willow Creek, IL	635.00
Dallas, TX	40.00	Puget Sound IG	50.00	Woodbridge, VA	24.50
Dayton/Cincinnati, OH	40.00	Racine, WI	22.50	Yardley, PA	12.00
Daytona Beach, FL	100.00	Ravenswood, IL	50.00		
Downers Grv, IL	164.23	Redlands, CA	20.00	<b>Group Total</b>	<b>12,223.50</b>
Elk Grove Village, IL	213.00	Rochester Intergroup	286.00		
Elmhurst, IL	50.00	Salem, OR	20.00	<b>Individual Total</b>	<b>1,454.55</b>
Encinitas, CA	39.30	Salt Lake City, UT	260.06		
Erie, PA	75.00	San Bernadino, CA	40.00	<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>13,678.05</b>
Fremont, CA	80.00	San Diego, CA	60.88		
Georgia IG	95.75	Saskatoon, SK, Canada	21.00		
Grand Junction, CO	100.00	Seattle, WA	45.00		
Grand Rapids, MI	87.00	South MW Retreat, KS	367.13		
Gurnee, IL	7.00	Springbrook NW, OR	50.00		

## Meet the New Trustees

At the most recent Convention in Oklahoma City, the SA General Delegate Assembly elected four non-sexaholic professionals to the SA Board of Trustees. Each of the four nominations was approved unanimously by the General Delegate Assembly and the Board of Trustees. They will serve staggered terms as the historic first non-sexaholic trustees and are eligible for re-election. Following is some biographical data on the new trustees and written responses to the Board's questions.

### **Don Arnold, 1997 -1999 three year term**

*Are you a member of any of the sex addiction fellowships?* No.

*Are you sex, lust, or relationship addicted?* No.

*Briefly describe your recent occupational history. Your education.*

From 1961 - 1994: Administrator and clinician in the Alcoholism, Drug Addiction, Family Recovery Treatment field, in and outpatient treatment centers. Specialized training in the A/D Treatment field. Certified as NCAC II and CADC III on the National and State levels. In retirement I continue to counsel private clients, and do an out patient therapy program at Recovery Services Center. I am on a Critical Incident Response Team at Via Christi Regional Medical Center, serving as a debriefer for trauma victims, i.e., tornadoes, plant closings, industrial fatalities.

*How do you understand sexual addiction?*

Sexual addiction is a demand for sex stimulated by the obsession of lust, and then combined with a compulsive acting

out in a sexual manner. This acting out brings about guilt, fear and a sense of spiritual isolation or loneliness.

*How familiar are you with SA?*

I have read the SA White Book, I know several SA members, and I have made professional referrals to the SA 12-Step program.

*The other S-fellowships?*

I am not familiar with the other S-fellowships.

*What is your opinion of SA's definition of sexual sobriety? SA's concept of lust?*

Lust becomes the addiction, so sexual sobriety is a progressive victory over the drive of lust. I believe SA is stating to the members that no other options prevail. This is valid and I accept/endorse the SA concept of sexual sobriety and of lust. In the SA book, members believe that there is a deeper spiritual significance in sexual sobriety. This is truly "they key to a happy and joyous freedom we could otherwise never know." (SA Book, page 2)

*What do you think is SA's place in the sex addiction recovery movement?*

SA is a viable program for a sexaholic's opportunity to effect a meaningful recovery from sexual lust and related sexual issues. Involvement in SA can result from a voluntary request for help, or from a professional referral of an individual so as to utilize the spiritual, emotional and physical process for sexual sobriety.

*How do you relate the Twelve Step program and therapy/medicine?*

I believe the 12-Step program and

therapy are two distinct modalities. I believe an individual could enter the 12-Step SA fellowship and affect a meaningful recovery from the addiction. I believe some individuals can benefit from therapy/medicine and START recovery, but treatment in and of itself is not sufficient without an on-going involvement with the SA 12-Steps. George Vaillant wrote in his *Natural History of Alcoholism*, page 314, "bear powerful witness that alcoholics recover not because we treat them but because they heal themselves." I believe this quote applies to sexaholics, and where best to do this healing than in the spiritual program of SA.

*What are your feelings about the relation of the Higher Power to this fellowship?*

I feel strongly that any sexaholic has the right to recovery. Regardless of a person's religious belief, or lack of one, the spiritual program of SA can provide an answer to their addiction of lust and acting out. A Higher Power prevails in all 12-Steps. When Bill W. wrote the 12-Steps from the original six, he subtly, divinely wrote Step 2 to include "Higher Power." Had he mentioned GOD, most of us would have turned and run. He didn't, but clearly states GOD in Step 3. Bill W. and I talked personally in 1963 and 1968, and I am ever grateful for his explanation.

*In your personal life?*

In my personal life I pray and meditate to a loving God daily. I came to AA as an agnostic and as Dr. Wm Silkworth states in the AA Big Book, "some will remain to pray." My spiritual journey and belief in the 12 Steps have resulted in over 40 years of sobriety from my alcoholism, one day at a time.

*(continued on page 16)*

(continued from page 15)

**Why are you interested in being on the Board of Trustees?**

I am interested and humbled because Michael B. cared enough to ask me to consider the awesome responsibility.

**What would you like to see happen on the Board of Trustees, and in SA?**

The Board of Trustees needs to guide, not govern the growth of SA. The Trustees needs to be a clearinghouse so pertinent issues or concerns can be addressed for the common good of SA groups and members.

**How would you like to relate to the Board and SA?**

My relationship to the Board would be decided by your process of selecting non-sexaholic trustees. If selected, I would bring the best of who I am to your world services. I believe it would be a learning experience for all.

**Are you willing to be interviewed and to attend SA functions?** Yes.

**Are you able?** Yes.

**Fr. Emmerich Vogt  
1997 -1998, two year term**

**Are you a member of any of the sex addiction fellowships?** No.

**Are you sex, lust, or relationship addicted?** No.

**Briefly describe your recent occupational history. Your education.**

I am a Catholic priest belonging to the Dominican Order of the Western Province. In the recent past I was a parish priest at the Holy Rosary Church in Portland, OR. I also work for Mother Theresa's Missionaries of Charity,

teaching the Sisters the 12-Steps. Last year I began working for our Preaching Band -- a group of priests who give parish missions. I had been working a lot with lay people and the 12-Steps and desired to spend more time doing this. I was given permission last year, and so for the past year I have been going from city to city, state to state, giving 12-Step Missions to lay people. Regarding education, after receiving my Master of Divinity Degree from the Dominican School of Philosophy and Theology, I was granted an MA degree in theology from the Graduate Theological Union (GTU) in Berkeley, Calif., and a graduate degree in Near Eastern Religion from the University of Calif. at Berkeley. I taught Hebrew at the GTU and taught at Holy Rosary College in Fremont, Calif. for five years.

**How do you understand sexual addiction?**

My understanding of sexual addiction is not unlike that of alcohol or food or drug addiction. Anytime human behavior becomes a habit it soon becomes a need: 'I've got to have it' and a person loses control of himself where the addiction becomes more powerful than he is. He is now powerless over lust.

**How familiar are you with SA? The other S-fellowships?**

SA is the only S-fellowship that I'm familiar with, having been introduced to it (six years ago) by a parishioner who belongs. I trust this individual a great deal and through him learned more about SA. He gave me the SA book and I began subscribing to *Essay* and buying the other literature. Over the past six years, then, I have told many people about SA, especially through the Confessional when it seemed someone had a problem with lust. The people that I sent to SA and that took the program seriously, had a wonderful experience.

**What is your opinion of SA's definition of sexual sobriety? SA's concept of lust?**

I'm in total agreement with SA's understanding of sexual sobriety and lust addiction. In my own experience as a priest, I have found that SA's understanding is the one that best expresses reality. I had a young man who I encouraged to go to SA, but he didn't like SA's definition of sexual sobriety and ended up in a group that permitted masturbation (I don't recall the name of that group). Six years later I ran into him and he is now paying for male prostitutes.... I believe with my whole heart in SA's definition of sexual sobriety.

**What do you think is SA's place in the sex addiction recovery movement?**

I think that in these times of sexual license, SA has to simply witness to the truth as it is understood. I personally believe that soon more and more people will awaken to the devastating effects that sexual addiction has had on their families and their relationships and they will be looking for the truth. As a priest, I think that it is time that church-going people heard the SA message. I am thankful as a priest that SA exists and I can recommend it to the many people I meet who lack a genuine understanding of true intimacy. I found that sincere people (people open to the truth) take to the message. From my perspective, as a priest, I feel SA needs to be heard in the churches. When I give a Parish 12-Step Mission I always bring up sex addiction and recommend SA literature (which I offer to them during the Mission). Many are eager for this literature, but no one has ever heard of SA. So I feel I can, as a priest who does so much confessional counseling, alert people to the existence of SA so that they can have a supportive, anonymous fellowship where recovery can take place.



***How do you relate the Twelve Step program and therapy/medicine?***

Having been involved in Al-Anon for 10 years, I have met many people who, prior to finding Al-Anon, were involved in therapy. From these people I have so often heard that they never received in therapy what they received in Al-Anon. They may have been given certain insights into themselves through therapy but not the depth of understanding that came from [the] non-professional setting of a 12-Step meeting. Likewise I have experienced individuals who have been given medicine by doctors to control depression (and I'm not saying that such medicine wasn't necessary at a certain point) but were given no understanding as to the causes of the depression and how to change a behavior pattern that leads to depression. This they found in the 12-Step program. Then they were able to be weaned from the medicine. What I do is to try to get them to an appropriate 12-Step program so they can learn about healthy and unhealthy behavior.

***What are your feeling about the relation of a Higher Power to the fellowship? In your personal life?***

As a priest I have surrendered my whole life to a Higher Power. I grew up in a one-parent family with a very devout atheist father and saw that atheism didn't work, that there was a need for belief in a power greater than any human power in order to heal human hearts. And so I am an ardent believer and have seen first hand what such a belief can bring about in the lives of broken people. I do believe that such a belief must be in a truly *Higher Power*. A crystal ball, for example, is not greater than human beings, but in some 12-Step meetings I have seen individuals resorting to rabbits' feet, etc., as a Higher Power which, I believe, denigrates the dignity of the human person. A Higher Power has to be a *Higher Power*.

***Why are you interested in being a Trustee? What would you like to see happen on the Board of Trustees, and in SA? How would you relate to the Board and SA?***

I am interested because I am profoundly interested in helping our sex-addicted brothers and sisters find sobriety and the immense joy of non-sexual bonding. I see the terrible harm inflicted on our families and on our young people by a sexually addicted society that has lost any operational understanding of true intimacy, where one's affection for members of the same sex is suspect, where every affective relationship is thought to be sex-centered -- only because of a lack of understanding of true intimacy, the nature of affection, and sexually healthy behavior. I would like to help SA grow and reach more and more people with its message. As a non-sexaholic trustee, I could promote the SA message and SA program.

***Are you willing to be interviewed and to attend SA functions? Are you able?***

Yes, I am willing to be interviewed. I am able to attend SA functions if I am given ample notice, for I have my life pretty well mapped out in advance, knowing several months in advance what parishes I will be presenting the 12-Step Mission to.

**Michael L. Alvarez, M.S.  
1997 - 2000, four year term**

Objective: A growth position which benefits from Counseling, Coordinative and Administrative expertise.

Summary of Qualifications: Offering 20 years progressive experience in the study and application of behavioral sciences, with emphasis in both private and clinical applications for resolving internal and interactive conflicts. Key strengths involve civic relations through diverse

media; excels in identifying and delineating problems of common interest. Articulate: accustomed to researching and conducting effective presentations relative to dependency issues. Professional background encompasses marital, family and child counseling, drug and sexual addictions, group and individual therapy. An effective communicator; bilingual, English/Spanish. Fully familiar with contemporary administrative functions, including scheduling, business development and the employment of diverse automated systems in records management, report preparation and comparable organizational functions.

**Professional experience (Extract)**

1990 - Present: Program Director, Del Amo Hospital - Torrance, Calif. Coordinates all facets of sexual dependency program, overseeing research, evaluations, treatment assignment and progress for a wide array of individuals. Accountable for recruiting, hiring and monitoring qualified personnel; maintains full fiscal responsibility. Initially hired to provide psychiatric treatment for adults, adolescents and children, and adult/adolescent chemical dependency treatment. Additional duties include serving as group therapist for adolescents and young teens, focusing on daily group efforts and multiple family relations. Further endeavors involve promoting clinical advancements by way of publications, medical media and national speaking engagements.

1987 - 1992: Counselor, Suncrest Hospital, Torrance, Calif., Charter Hospital of Torrance, Calif. Assessed, prescribed and participated in treatment for an array of individuals in need of support. Duties involved:

**In-patient privileges:**  
-- Adult, Adolescent and Child Psychiatric Treatment;

*(continued on page 18)*

(continued from page 17)

- Adult and Adolescent Chemical Dependency Treatment;
  - Adult Multi-family Group Therapy;
  - Adult and Adolescent Daily Group Therapy;
  - Adult Anger Management Group Therapy;
  - Adolescent Sexuality Group Therapy.
- Out-patient Privileges:**
- Individual, Group, Marital, Family and Child Counseling (Private Practice).

Education:

University of Southern California, Los Angeles: Master of Science, Counseling Psychology.

University of California, Irvine: Bachelor of Arts, History.

*Michael answered the questions at a teleconference interview with the Nominations Committee. The meeting was not taped. The Committee reported themselves satisfied with his answers. The Board and the Assembly, likewise, found his responses forthcoming and responsive to the purpose and needs of SA. --Central Office*

**Frank Cardona, Ph.D.**  
**1997 - 2001, five years.**

*Are you a member of any of the sex addiction fellowships?* No.

*Are you sex, lust, or relationship addicted?* No.

*Briefly describe your recent occupational history. Your education.*

I have been a clinical chaplain, psychotherapist, and group therapist with specialties in alcohol and other drugs, and sexual addiction. I have trained in Golden Valley sexual dependency unit. My degrees are an M.A. in Counseling Psychology, M.Div and Ph.D. in Education.

***How do you understand sexual addiction?***

Sexual addiction is a pathological relationship to a mood altering experience. It is self-seeking, lustful and ultimately destructive to self and others affected by the disease.

***How familiar are you with SA? The other S-fellowships?***

I have taken clients to SA open and closed meetings. The fellowship is energized with spirituality and 12-Step focus. There are other fellowships, such as Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous and Sex Addicts Anonymous, which vary in their approach to the program.

***What is your opinion of SA's definition of sexual sobriety? SA's concept of lust?***

I believe it is correct because it helps clients understand that sobriety constitutes no sex with self and others -- outside of their spouse or their significant other (sic). This is a powerful tool in establishing intimacy in self and family.

The concept of lust is a strong component of SA fellowship. It is my belief that lust plays the major role in sex addiction. I concur with this concept and believe it is central to helping clients gain spirituality and [a] healthy sexual lifestyle.

**Children at the Conferences?**

I have been concerned about a policy of our international conferences and feel a need to address this in a forum permitting the greatest participation possible. That issue is the prohibition of children from any official gathering at the conferences, a policy that has been in place for the past two years. ...

The problems I have with this are both procedural and substantive... Procedurally, I feel that ... this was not founded upon a group conscience of any sort, except perhaps that of the area intergroup sponsoring the conference. It appears that all subsequent conferences have continued this...without any thought of whether this actually represents the group conscience of SA as a whole. ...

One of the substantive rationales for prohibiting children, and even infants, from meetings is that sex offenders in our midst cannot be around children legally, or for other personal reasons. ... Sex offenders must be in public places or conveyances, such as a shopping mall, a bus, or other public place. In meetings that are considered open, such as speaker meetings, wouldn't it seem that the listener is not going to hear anything except "what it was like, what happened, and what it's like now?" Certainly, breakout meetings of SA are, and should be, closed meetings. I am not opposed to a selective application of this policy. Yet it seems thoughtless and even harsh to apply it across the board.

Personally, ... I never thought that in almost 14 years of recovery ... that my gift of family in sobriety would be considered off-limits for conference participation. It's not that child care isn't an option; it is, but it can be very expensive and for me, it would be inappropriate for an entire day for a nursing newborn.

I'd like to propose a solution: a Special Needs Committee to address a variety of responses to this issue. ... Please remember that the "sexaholic who still suffers" can be sober, yet still not feeling included because of hastily thought out policies. I believe SA and the God who keeps us sober can help us create a workable solution for this issue. **K.D.**

*[Please address your comments to Essay and send to Central Office.]*

**SEXAHOLICS ANONYMOUS**

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	7.50	Zone 4	250 - 650 miles
	8.50	Zone 5	651 - 1200 miles
	9.50	Zone 6	1201 - 1700 miles
	10.50	Zone 7	1701 - 2000 miles
	11.50	Zone 8	2001 + miles
Over 10 lb up to 15 lb	7.50	Zones 1 - 3	0 - 250 miles
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	9.50	Zone 5	651 - 1200 miles
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