Essay®

A Quarterly Publication of Sexaholics Anonymous, Incorporated

P. O. Box 111910 Nashville, TN 37222

September 1997

Ten Years of Anonyme Sexaholiker in Bonn, Germany

Soon after I got out of the Clinic in Bad Herrenalb in 1986, I moved to Bonn. I knew there was a male and a female SA member there and I got in touch with them. After speaking to my church minister, we had a meeting room. Thus, our first SA meeting took place on November 26, 1986 in Bonn.

A short while later there were four of us and we stayed that size for a long time. Often there were only two of us, but we could feel how the meeting was helping and only once did we have to cancel the meeting because of lack of attendees.

After a year we handed out service positions at our business meeting. The group atmosphere was best, we found, when every member had a service position. We started carrying the message as a group, starting early on with regular business meetings, which became the backbone of a stable group. Monthly business meetings, monthly Step meetings, and having those with more than 30 days' sobriety speak in the first half of the meeting still mark the spirit and essence of SA in Bonn.

Conducting our first information meeting was not easy for us. We started organizing it at the end of 1987 and it finally took place a year later in October, 1988, after a couple of detours and clumsy organization.

Since then we have held information meetings every two years with very different results. One of our information meetings was attended by a prison official who robbed us of the illusion that we could do 12th Step work in prisons, like AA.

At the time of our first information meeting, we had five or six group members. Some came from Cologne, who were beginning to form a meeting there. A year later, the establishment of the Cologne meeting was announced at the business meeting of the Germanspeaking convention in November, 1989. We had been asked to organize this convention. To accomplish this, our group held three business meetings a month. After this convention, we hosted conventions in May, 1992, and in May, 1995.

The group has continued to grow.

About 10 people have been coming regularly for a couple of years now. In addition to the regular information meeting, the group holds an info meeting for the local hotline organization, and we can be reached via the local self-help group coordination center. Learning from our experiences, we again conduct two screenings for newcomers. It doesn't seem to be enough to do just one screening. Our SA sobriety definition seems to demand

two screenings.

With the help of the Higher Power, our group hopefully will go on meeting for a long time to come and thereby fulfill its task of carrying its message to sexaholics who still suffer.

Derk S., Bonn, Ger.

(Editor's Note: Beginning this issue, contributors to the Essay will be identified by first name, last initial, city and state. This change is in keeping with other 12-Step fellowship publications and is intended to allow readers to more easily identify contributors to the Essay. If a contributor requests that their identity be withheld, however, they will be identified as "Anonymous," but readers who wish to correspond with contributors so identified may do so through the Central Office.)

In This Issue

- Becoming the Man He
 Wants Me to Be
- Pray for the One You Resent
- Canadian Conference
 Report

January 16 - 18, 1998,

SA/S-Anon International Conference, Daytona Beach, FL.

Theme: Our Primary Purpose, To Carry the Message to Those Who Still Suffer.

Contacts SA: Allan B. at 904/767-2322, George F at 904/277-4041, or Jeff B. at 904/532-5118

Contacts S-Anon: Betty R. at 904/676-0367or Mary Lee F. at 904/277-4041.

Calendar Of Events

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

September 12 - 14, 1997, SA/S-Anon Retreat, Calgary, AB, Canada. Theme: The Road of Happy Destiny - Keep on Trudging. Contact Jamie S./SA, or Claire S./S-Anon, at 403/256-0503.

September 13, 1997, SA Autumn Workshop, Wexford, PA, sponsored by Pittsburgh SA.
Theme: What Is My Lust Trying to Fulfill?
Contact Tri States SA at 412/224-0877.

September 19 - 21, 1997, SA Fellowship Weekend, Monbulk, SA Australia.

Contact SA Australia at 61(3)9506-6719.

September 26 - 28, 1997, SA/S-Anon Southern California Unity Conference, Orange, CA. Theme: Working With Others.
Contact Gary W. at 909/865-1645.

September 26 - 28, 1997, SA/S-Anon Pacific NW Regional Fall Retreat, Kwomais Camp, Surrey, BC, sponsored by Vancouver, BC fellowship.
Theme: Recovery Slogans: Back to Basics.
Contact Vaughn, SA, at 604/535-2928, or Crystal, S-Anon, at 604/254-3096.

September 27, 1997, SA/S-Anon Marathon, Scarborough, ON, sponsored by SA/S-Anon Toronto. Theme: One Day at a Time. Contact Byron, SA, 905/686-4465, or Cec, S-Anon, at 905/889-2882.

September 27, 1997, SA One Day Conference, sponsored by SA - Long Island Intergroup.

Theme: Making the Real Connection.

Contact Rich at 516/666-3747.

October 3 - 5, 1997, South Midwest Regional Family Reunion, Spiritual Life Center, Wichita, KS.
Theme: Came to Believe.
Contact Paul F. At 405/233-1881.

October 4, 1997, SA Marathon, Millvale, Prince Edward Island, Canada. Contact Paul at 902/836-3518.

October 10 - 12, 1997, Ireland Convention, Grace Dieu Retreat House, Waterford, Ireland. Theme: Quality Sobriety. Contact Cathal at 011 353 094-26297 or Tom at 011 353 091-75675 in Ire.

October 10 - 12, 1997, SA Fall Retreat, The Stronghold, Oregon, IL, sponsored by Chicago IG.
Theme: Trudging the Road of Happy Destiny.
Contact Allan A. at 847/705-5777.

October 11, 1997, All Day Marathon, Cleveland, OH, sponsored by Northeast Ohio Intergroup.

Theme: Maintaining Sobriety.

Contact Larry N. at 216/766-8476.

October 24 - 26, 1997, AS/S-Anon Fall Conference, Höchstenbach, Germany, by AS Deutschland. Theme: Gib Dich ganz in die Hand Gottes wie Du Ihm Verstehst (Abandon yourself to God as you understand Him). Contact Helmut at 011 44 (0)02361/33 911. In theUSA, Ed G. 503/655-0641.

October 25, 1997, SA/S-Anon Fall Marathon, Annapolis, MD, by MD/ DC/ VA Intergroup.
Theme: Trust God, Clean House, Help Others.
Contact Kevin at 410/560-1246.

October 25, 1997, SA/S-Anon Boston Conference, Theme: Roots of Recovery.

Contact New England Intergroup at 617/499-9450.

November 7 - 9, 1997, SA Fellowship Weekend, Minniewater, NSW, Australia. Contact Patrick at 61 (67)522-970

November 14 - 16, 1997, Austrian SA Convention, Vienna. Contact Eva at 43 222 89 36 155, or Markus at 43 2782 32 78.

May 1 - 3, 1998, Southeast Regional Conference SA/S-Anon Atlanta. Theme to be announced. Contact Steve at 404/371-0941.

Future Sites for SA/S-Anon International Conferences

July 1998 Newark, NJ
(Registration forms available from SAICO)

January 1999 Sacramento, CA
July 1999 Cleveland, OH

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.

Group News

Just wanted to send you a note about our area's "Sharing of the Fellowship" retreat May 31. This was our fourth annual retreat and it was an especially wonderful experience of fellowship and recovery.

The Wheeling, WV, and
Steubenville, OH groups are part of the
Pittsburgh, PA., Tri-State Intergroup.
For the past four years our groups have
hosted the Pittsburgh area's Spring
Retreat.

As always, the theme of our retreat was "Sharing of the Fellowship." We spent a day at a local park in the Wheeling area, hearing what it was like, what happened and what it is like now from several speakers.

This year we tried something new -- an old-fashioned barbecue luncheon as well as a fellowship fireplace sharing after the formal retreat. It was a wonderful time of getting to know old friends and meeting some new ones.

I am always amazed at the lengths to which people will go to get sobriety and recovery. Two members traveled eight hours, four miles of that on foot, since their religious tradition didn't allow them to travel by car. Such sacrifices remind us that we must be willing to go to any length to get recovery.

I am also glad to report that we recently received a call from someone who attended who told us that because of something he heard at the retreat, he moved back into his home and recommitted to working the program.

Our area groups would like to extend a personal thanks to the 28 SA members who attended and made it such a wonderful time. We would also like to extend an invitation to the fellowship to join us next spring for our fifth retreat. May God continue to lead you and bless you in recovery.

Shawn S., Steubenville, OH

Physical Healing from Sexaholism

The Solution states that "We saw that our problem was threefold: physical, emotional and spiritual. Healing had to come about in all three." A number of us have found that the emotional and spiritual are well dealt with in meetings and in the literature, but that there is not much discussion on the physical aspect of recovery.

From the Physical Healing Break-out meeting at the Regina International Conference, a number of themes emerged:

- * Physical problems caused by acting out (including depression, fatigue, chemical imbalances);
- * Physical harm and danger of harm from acting out;
- * Dealing with health problems while trying to work the program, such as low energy, depression, or anxiety, making working the program difficult and slow;
 - * Abuse trauma;
- * Over-attention to physical attributes, such as self-image and perception of other's appearances;
- * Neglect of our physical well-being because of the acting out;
- * The physical aspect of praying.

There are some of us who have experienced these aspects of physical recovery and healing and we would like to communicate with others with similar experiences. If you are interested in physical healing, please contact: Mike O., c/o Central Office.

New Groups

Augusta, ME
Columbus, GA
Duncanville, TX
Elmira, NY
Ft. Wayne, IN
Kona, HI
Spokane, WA

Member Stories Becoming the Man He Wants Me to Be

As a shy and overweight teenager, I retreated into a secret world of masturbation. This covered feelings I couldn't handle and made me feel good about myself. It was my first drug: medication through masturbation.

At 16, I dropped out of high school and ran away from home. I wanted to live a life of sex, drugs and rock-androll popular in the early 1970s. We called ourselves hippies. I was too shy to have sex with girls as some of my friends did. This lack of sexual conquests reinforced my feelings of inadequacy and feelings that I didn't measure up to other men sexually. I acted out secretly with fantasy, pornography and compulsive masturbation.

An older friend of mine ran the town's adult movie theater and he would let me in to watch the movies, even though I was underage. Watching these movies was like pouring gasoline on the smouldering fires of my disease. I couldn't stop watching. It was the most fascinating thing I'd ever experienced. The images were burned into my brain. To this day, I can recall the contents of some of the movies.

I fell in love with one of the girls who was sleeping around in my circle of friends. Unlike me, she had quite a bit of sexual experience. She was not satisfied with me and let me know. I felt humiliated and ashamed. I thought that my performance was in sharp contrast to the men in the porn movies I was watching. She ended up leaving me for an older and more experienced man. I was very hurt when she discussed my sexual performance with other men.

At age 18, I found prostitutes. I thought I had it made. All I had to do was hand over some cash and I'd get a good-looking girl to do anything I wanted. The problem was I could never figure out why I could be with a prostitute in the afternoon and be masturbating to pornography that evening. Obviously my appetite couldn't be satisfied. Acting out in that way just made me want more.

After a year or two of the hippie lifestyle, I went to college to make something of myself. I met a girl who gave me sex and satisfied my sexual appetite most of the first three years of college. We lived together and much of the time were very happy, but sex was always the basis of the relationship. I started getting restless during my fourth year of college and discovered how to meet men through the writing on public restroom walls.

I was soon having regular sex with men in restrooms. This type of sex was stimulating because of the mixture of danger, fear, forbidden activity and sexual excitement. It provided a real high. But it was also very shameful afterwards. I remember one experience that left me on a smelly bathroom floor, having satisfied another man. I felt filthy. But that didn't stop me for very long. I continued to seek new experiences in that type of acting out, expanding to movie theaters and rest areas. I was out of control and powerless to stop.

After college, I married a woman I had sex with on the first date. She was in a desperate situation as a single mom with few financial resources. I had her where I wanted her. I also dated another older woman at the same time who gave me sex whenever I wanted it. Those two situations introduced a new aspect of my disease: taking advantage of women who were vulnerable. I would date and have sex with older women, married or not, who I perceived as being desperate or more open to having sex than young, good-looking women.

This worked for me because I really didn't think much of myself and thought I'd only have a chance with women who were in a disadvantaged situation or not very good-looking. I thought that only that type of women would put out for me.

Sexual acting out continued at a low level through my early marriage and career years. Eventually I was visiting adult bookstores again and masturbating daily. I would carry porn playing cards in my wallet just so I would always have my "drug" accessible. I would even take the risk of carrying porn magazines in my car even though my family rode in the car all the time.

At age 32, my disease progressed even further. I had the career position I had dreamed of for years, working as a technical manager for aerospace projects. Traveling alone on business trips allowed me to visit prostitutes, strip bars and adult bookstores. About the same time, I made a conscious decision to enter the world of hard core drug use. For several years, I lived in a world of prostitutes, IV drug use, and adult bookstores while trying to hold my career and family together. I was living a double life.

On the one hand, I was a husband and successful career man. On the other, I was trapped in a life of secret sleazy sexual acting out that I could not stop. The combination of coke and prostitutes led me to an in-hospital drug treatment program. I was fired from my job in public disgrace. I lost my car for not making payments and my home was entering foreclosure. I was hitting my first bottom.

The hospital treatment was based on the first three Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous. We had prayer and meditation every morning. They told us

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(continued from page 4) to ask God for help. No knowing much about God, I turned to the God I had heard about in church growing up --God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Unfortunately, I ran away from the program and slipped back into drugs and prostitutes. But about a month later, I was at a friend's house, looking at job prospects, when he asked if I'd like to learn about the Bible. I said, sure. I had plenty of time and had always been curious about Jesus and the Bible. After going through the book of John with my friend, I asked God into my life and stopped using drugs and alcohol. After 20 years of using, I got away from the drugs and alcohol pretty easily, by the grace of God. I didn't even masturbate for two months. I just didn't feel like it.

Over the next year, I let sexual acting out back into my life. First it was masturbation, then I was back to prostitutes and acting out with men in restrooms. I quickly returned to the level of my first bottom and more. I was hitting my second bottom.

I tried everything to get free of the sexual acting out. It was really difficult to be living this new life with God and acting out at the same time. The guilt was enormous. I tried prayer, fasting and talking to leaders in my church. I was back to living that shameful double life again.

Within a week, a policeman spotted me having sex in a public park and I had a slip with cocaine and prostitutes. My life was completely out of control again, just as it had been two years before. That scared me so much that I became willing to go to any length to get free of the acting out. I even discussed castration with my pastor. He said that he thought God had other things in mind for me. He told me to find a recovery group for sex addiction.

My initial step of surrender was to seek out an SA meeting. I made a call to a man who would later be my

sponsor. I will always be grateful that he was put into my life at just the right time. We talked for quite a while during that first call. That was when I first heard the slogan "progress, not perfection." I felt like he knew me by just talking to me on the phone.

Another step of surrender was turning all of my finances over to my wife. To this day, in my sixth year of sobriety, the family checking account is in her name only. That works for me because quick access to money was always such a large part of my acting out with sex and drugs. When I walked into my first SA meeting, I felt accepted. I saw sympathy in the eyes of fellow members. I knew I was in the right place. I knew I could get help here. I identified with the others in the meeting as they "told my story." Previously, I had assumed I was the only one that felt like I did and that nobody else had these uncontrollable thoughts and actions. The program showed me I was not alone.

The SA program gave me the keys to make my existing spiritual program work. It gave me freedom from the shame and guilt which had gotten in the way of my relationship with my Higher Power. I now walk with him on a daily basis as he strengthens me and helps me be more of the man he wants me to be. I put the program first. I was willing to do anything to get free of the acting out. I knew that if I didn't find a solution to my problem, I'd either be dead, in jail or in an insane asylum. I worked the Steps all the way through.

I've learned that life is not always black and white, that there are plenty of grey areas. I've found that it's not my job to fix other people or complain about the state of the world. I don't need to carry the weight of the world on my shoulders. Instead, I can relax because God is in charge and I can Let Go and Let God. I stopped trying to figure out how the program works and instead just did the next right thing one

day at a time. Since my best efforts got me to the program -- they didn't work very well -- I have stopped figuring I know what's best for me and for others.

The SA program brought me out of my isolation. I can discuss anything with my sponsor and closest SA friends. There is no secret too shameful or too dark to be exposed to the light through the fellowship of the program. Isolation has been reduced and I've been set free from the prison house of self. I've been given purpose in life and have seen how my experience can help others.

I came to SA asking for deliverance from sexual acting out. I got much more. One of those things has been the healing of my marriage. My wife stuck by me through all the acting out with sex and drugs -- she is the same woman I slept with on the first date 19 years ago. I am totally undeserving of such a wonderful woman in my life. We have been given a second chance to build the future God has for us together. Since entering recovery, I've come to see more of her good qualities. I see the pretty little girl in her, filled with joy and excitement. I feel warmth in our relationship and now see us growing old together. Sex is indeed optional, even in our marriage. I would continue to love her at a deep level, be committed, and serve her, even if we could never have sex again.

My best friends are my fellow program members. They are real friends who know my whole story and know me at a very deep spiritual level. At first, I was surprised that when I told the truth about myself, others did not reject me. In fact, it drew us closer together.

I've learned that if I face my fears and talk about myself with honesty and humility, the things I'm afraid of lose their power over me. I have a daily prayer and meditation time; I journal, take inventory, make amends quickly,

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Member Stories

(continued from page 5) and work with others. I'm far from being perfect. There's lots of work left to be done. As I go down the road of recovery, God continues to point out areas where he wants to make changes. Defects are being repaired with his help and the help of the program.

(Editor's Note: Member stories published in the Essay were submitted to Central Office in response to an appeal from the Lieterature Committee for a new group of member stories. The guidelines for those submissions stated that the stories would be read "blind" by the Literature Ccommittee, and the author's identity would not be made known.)

Member News

Pray for the One You Resent

That's what the man on the SA tape told me to do for my boss. My boss told me I was a "permanent temporary" and that I wouldn't be hired as a permanent employee. When he told me that, I had been on the job about a year As I went through the and a half. Steps again, I prayed for the people on my resentment list. The man on the tape told me to pray for them until I meant it, and I did. A few weeks later, after I was done praying for my boss, he and I went to the mountains together to work on some cabins. We talked fishing and cars and stuff. It was the first time we had ever talked beyond a few words. My resentment was gone. A few weeks later a co-worker put in his two weeks' notice. My old attitude came back. "He'd better hire me this time, or else." I went to my boss's boss and asked him to put in a word for me.

I can't stay a temporary for ever, I thought. I was angry.

Then I realized I was back to my stinkin' thinkin.' I was trying to run the show, get things to go my way, trying to control.

I let it go. I told God if he wanted me to be a temporary forever, then so be it. I turned it over. My serenity returned and I was at peace.

About a week later, my boss came to me and told me to put an application in. I was hired as a full-timer shortly thereafter.

My sponsor tells me I'm the only problem I've got and that God will bless me as fast as I am willing to do the work. It works if I work it. Jason F., Greeley, CO.

Before Making Amends, Listen to your Sponsor

I have been coming to SA for over two years. I am now 150 days sober. I believe that my history of achieving a few months' sobriety and then slipping lies with my ego. I seem to lack humility, which causes me to believe too much in my own way of seeing the world, no matter how painful that is, rather than accepting other people's guidance and support.

Recently I decided to do another Step Eight list. This was without any prompting from my sponsor and without any consultation with him. I constructed a list of people I had harmed or misconnected with in the past. However, I decided not to share this list fully with my sponsor and galloped on into my way of working Step Nine.

This is where the trouble began. A lot of the people on my Step Eight list were people I had worked with in a professional capacity. I decided that I had to go to each of these people and make profound apologies and admissions of wrongdoing regardless of whether this would be of any help to

them or actually make up for any wrong behavior.

As the prospect of making these apologies loomed, I started to shout at my wife, threatened her when she would not leave me alone and isolated myself. Her advice had been to drop the whole idea of making apologies to these people, saying it would do more harm than good. She also pointed out that I could get myself into deeper water at a professional level.

My sponsor and other members of SA with long-term sobriety also had counseled me in the past that the amends process is about reconnecting with others and that amends in my professional life lies in a new, positive attitude in which I work hard, behave professionally and surrender resentment and hostility as they come up.

Luckily I have a great deal of respect for my boss. My sponsor suggested that I discuss the situation with her. I did so and she told me that my ideas were probably attempts to dump my guilt and would have no benefit for those I was about to approach. She said I should concentrate instead on making amends to people I had really hurt -- my wife and children. Funny, this is precisely what my wife, sponsor and other SA members had been telling me all along. I finally dropped the apologies idea.

Moral of the story -- I should have listened to my wife, sponsor and trusted members of the SA fellowship. If I have an idea that is driving me crazy, I should check it with my sponsor. The amends process is about repairing the damage I have done to my wife and children by selfish, angry, disturbed behavior and lusting. Recovery through the amends-making process is about healing and the re-establishment of right relations with others. Brent P., U.K. (From SAUK News,

July 1997.)

Serving on Intergroup

It's 11:15 a.m. on the second Saturday morning of the month in Silver Spring, MD, a suburb of Washington, DC. The regular Saturday morning SA meeting has let out and the Maryland/Washington DC/Virginia Intergroup meeting is about to begin. I drove 35 minutes to be here; others came from as far away as the Maryland-Pennsylvania border or Fredericksburg, VA., both well over an hour's drive away. A few live nearby, while the rest come from scattered locations in, around and between Washington, DC, Baltimore and Northern Virginia. Anywhere from five to 20 members attend each month, although ideally each of our more than 30 groups should be sending a representative.

So what am I doing here, representing my Tuesday night meeting when I could be doing a number of different things? For one thing, I am seeing how the SA fellowship is so much larger than my regular groups. Issues of concern to one group may have a bearing on the group I represent. If so, they are discussed here. Perhaps others have a take on the 12 Traditions that I do not, and vice versa. In any event, I believe that I serve on Intergroup so that I can serve my fellow meeting members and impress upon them the importance of the SA fellowship as a whole. Although my meeting is indeed autonomous, it is not alone and does not operate in a vacuum. I need to remember, therefore, that Intergroup also exists to handle matters that individual groups cannot handle by themselves, such as planning our annual one-day marathon or creating our fledgling Intergroup newsletter, The Real Connection. I believe that a good way to get an Intergroup started is to plan just such a special event in order for a number of groups to work together toward a common goal.

I crave the fellowship of other SA members who I don't get to see on a regular basis. So from a strictly social perspective I enjoy participating in Intergroup. I enjoy hearing about what is working well in areas such as Twelfth Step work from placing ads to operating telephone "hotlines" to mailing information to those who may come in contact with prospective sexaholics. Even when our discussions get heated, or I come out on the short end of several votes on issues, I am almost always able to leave the meeting with a peaceful spirit and realize that our Higher Power spoke through the Intergroup conscience. We have managed to place principles before personalities for the most part. But do we ever have personalities!

Maybe it's because we crave this fellowship that sometimes our meetings run over their allotted time. We also can get bogged down in what seems at times to be hairsplitting over various matters. Then again, we're still getting our procedures settled. For years, only a handful of members came to Intergroup. Therefore, we have a number of issues to struggle through yet, but it is from this struggle that Intergroup unity is being forged.

Finally, with the advent of the Mid-Atlantic region service structure, our Intergroup is beginning to reach out to other Intergroups. We hope to foster awareness among our members about the need for a regional identity, and we hope to begin holding annual or semiannual regional conferences soon. Many from our area who visit other Intergroups report that it was just what their personal recovery needed.

As I drive back toward Baltimore, I admit I am relieved that Intergroup has been taken care of for another month, but I feel even more connected to SA in my region, and that connection helps me to stay sober for another day. For me, that reaching out is utterly essential for my life, the antithesis to my selfindulgent disease. I only hope other members will look at the opportunity to provide selfless service through Intergroup as an aid to their personal SA recovery.

Paul T, Glen Burnie, MD

Feedback Corner

Self-Supporting through Profits on Newcomers?

An article in the December 1996 issue of the Essay mentioned that while it only costs three dollars to publish a copy of the SA White Book, we charge ten dollars in order to raise enough funds to keep SA operating.

Since most books are purchased by members, this is not a serious problem. Concerning sales to non-members, however, especially newcomers whose lives may depend on getting a copy of this book, I believe it is inappropriate to sell these books at over a 300%

mark-up.

Tradition Seven states that SA groups themselves ought to be fully self-supported by the voluntary contributions of their own members. If our own members cannot support their own groups, then the groups ought to disband. We should not continue at the expense of the poor sick newcomers.

In my home group, I expressed my concern that from now on newcomers should receive books at cost. I offered to pay the difference myself if the group had any reservations about the expense. The group conscience decided that newcomers to our group will be given the opportunity to purchase a book for two dollars.

Over the years I have been in SA, I have seen many newcomers come and go -- and some come back! Many have balked at the price of ten dollars for a book. Some simply didn't have the cash on them and planned to buy the book

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Feedback Corner

the following week when they returned. Some never made it back. Others took a book promising to come back next week and pay for it. And some of them never made it back. Do we need to add the burden of a stolen book to the other baggage they are carrying? Our purpose as a fellowship is to help other sexaholics, not add to their suffering.

I encourage those in SA to consider this issue and to encourage members to throw more in the basket. You get what you pay for. If a dollar's worth of recovery is all you want, go ahead and throw your buck in the basket. If you want to take another step toward wellness, start being responsible and donate a reasonable amount each week in order to help our fellowship continue to exist in a healthy way. We should not be relying on newcomers and other non-members to meet our financial needs.

Richard P., Portland, OR

Reproduce Loose SA Literature for Sale to Other Members

I was reading the article about increasing the *Essay* circulation on Page 1 of the March 1997 issue. I would suggest that the loose literature be photocopied and sold at SA meetings. The proceeds could then be sent back to the SA Central Office. It could be sold for a little less than by Central Office, since there is no post and packaging involved. I'm thinking especially of:

- Essay;
- Notes on the Early Origins and Growth of SA;
- Personal, on the Physiological Aspects of Male Sexual Abstinence.

This literature has helped me a lot. I

thought I could only take so much of it at one time, but now I read it regularly. I look forward to receiving the *Essay*. The "Notes on the Early Origins and Growth of SA" gives me a sense of being part of something alive and growing and it gives me great hope. The "Guidelines for Group Recovery" have been helpful to me personally, although it didn't help me very much when I tried to push them on someone else.

"Some Opinion, Medical and Personal, on the Physiological Aspects of Male Sexual Abstinence" reassures me that abstinence is not abnormal and that I won't die without sex.

I have yet to read all of "Discovering the Principles," but we had occasion to refer to it a couple of times at our intergroup and I found it very useful. All these have helped enormously, but some members are still unaware they even exist.

Dara M., Co. Cavan, Ire

Children at Conferences?

I would like to address the issue raised in the March 1997 Essay regarding the restriction on allowing children at SA conferences.

I share the writer's concern that this might not have been a fellowship-wide decision. Indeed, it seems that SA as a fellowship has not done a good job of taking business matters to the entire fellowship. I would therefore hope that this issue be decided by the fellowship as a whole somehow.

And when it is, I would like to see children remain excluded from SA meetings and conferences. I attend another 12-Step fellowship where children are allowed to attend meetings. What is a convenience for the parent or guardian is a distraction for many who are there. A crying or unruly child threatens our common welfare (Tradition One) and distracts us from our primary purpose, i.e., carrying the

message to the sexaholic who still suffers (Tradition Five).

Furthermore, children do not qualify for SA membership, in accordance with Tradition Three, unless they are of the age at which they can articulate their need to be there. Finally, the decision for a member to have a child, which I believe is laudable, is still an outside issue on which SA should have no opinion, except when it affects SA groups or SA as a whole, as this issue does. SA has no business being involved in a parent's responsibility.

I need a safe haven where I can face myself. Children in meetings threaten that safety. I have no problem with child care being provided for certain meetings or events, however.

Paul T., Glen Burnie, MD

Appreciating Beauty

I have a concern about something I read in an *Essay* of a year or two back. A member related that after 10-plus years of sobriety, he could now look a woman in the face and appreciate her beauty, without repercussions to his sobriety or serenity.

Is this the kind of ideal we want to supply to the fellowship? That you can, after 10-plus years of sobriety, actually start to enjoy looking at beautiful women?

I recently realized that one of my biggest triggers is beauty. I always get really scared when another program member speaks of a woman's beauty. I fear that I will rationalize my own thoughts on beauty. My last binge was totally predicated on the beauty ideal. I don't even want to try to describe it. It's very close to the seat of my addiction.

I also see others that I feel are still going through the very same feelings about beauty that I had (and still do), and I get very afraid for them. Some are slipping constantly, rationalizing beauty as if it were like a beautiful

(continued on page 9)

Feedback Corner (continued from page 8)

flower. We are not floweraholics, we are sexaholics. The beauty myth is deadly to us.

My concerns about beauty have raised a storm of debate, but I must raise my hand and stand fast. Discussions about anyone's beauty, and beauty appreciation, have no place in this group.

Mike O., Toronto, Can. (June 1996)

Donations for the Second Quarter

Akron, OH \$220.00 Greater Kansas City, KS 95.00 Salt Lake City, UT 168.00 Albuquerque, NM 50.00 Greeley, CO 25.00 San Diego, CA 32.50 Alhambra, CA 90.00 Hacienda Heights, CA 65.00 Seal Beach, CA 25.00 Anabeim, CA 50.00 Herndon, VA 32.00 Silver Spring, MD 250.00 Arlington Hts, IL 70.00 Irvine, CA 200.00 South Barrington, IL 150.00 Atlanta, GA 138.41 Jacksonville, FL 20.00 South Barrington, IL 150.00 Atlanta, GA 138.41 Jacksonville, FL 20.00 South Barrington, IL 150.00 Atlanta, GA 138.41 Jacksonville, FL 20.00 South Barrington, IL 150.00 Atlanta, GA 138.41 Jacksonville, FL 20.00 South Barrington, IL 150.00 Atlanta, GA 138.41 Jacksonville, FL 20.00 South Barrington, IL 150.00 Atlanta, GA 138.41 Jacksonville, FL 20.00 South Barrington, IL 150.00 Atlanta, GA 138.41 Jacksonville, FL 20.00 South Barrington, IL 150.00 Atlanta, GA 138.41 Jacksonville, FL 20.00 South Barrington, IL 150.00 Atlanta, GA 138.41 Jacksonville, FL 20.00 South Barrington, IL 150.00 Atlanta, GA 158.41 Jacksonville, FL 20.00 South Barrington, IL 150.00 Atlanta, GA 158.41 Jacksonville, FL 20.00 Statford, VA 30.00 Alberton, PA 145.00 Loral, MD 75.00 St. Louis, MO 48.00 Birmingham, AL 55.05 Lindenhurst, IL 21.00 Statford, VA 33.00 Boston, MA 45.00 Long Beach, CA 60.00 Statford, VA 33.00 Bozennan, MT 145.00 Loral, OH 20.00 Syracuse IG, NY 75.00 Bozennan, MT 145.00 Loral, OH 20.00 Syracuse IG, NY 75.00 Alsoy, Mansfield, OH 227.00 Tamuning, Guam 50.00 Calgary, AB, Canada 68.85 MD/DCVA IG 200.00 Tarentum, PA 31.00 Cambridge, MA 25.00 Mello Park, CA 20.00 Tarentum, PA 31.00 Cambridge, MA 25.00 Mello Park, CA 20.00 Torronc, ON, Canada 198.00 Central Utah 30.00 Milwaukee, WI 92.50 Troy, MI 427.00 Chicago, IL 90.00 Nashville Intergroup, TN 370.00 Tucson, AZ 63.00 Chicago IG 150.00 Nashville Intergroup, TN 370.00 Tucson, AZ 63.00 Chila Vista, CA 218.51 New York City IG 150.00 Washington, DC 427.50 Chilayton, MO 47.00 Newberg, OR 35.00 Woodobridge, VA 171.00 Davenport, IA 50.00 Palam Desert, CA 100.00 Washington, DC 427.50 Claumbia, SC 25.00 North Hollywood, C	Almon OU	\$ 220.00	Crooter Vences City VC	05.00	Calt I also City I IT	160.00
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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. 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.

(The Twelve Steps and Traditions are reprinted 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.)

SAICO

SA INTERNATIONAL CENTRAL OFFICE

Highlights from SA Today Meeting, Regina, Canada, July 1997

SA to Increase Dialogue with Other "S"- Fellowships;

Correspondents are always needed. The

The new Interfellowship Committee will communicate with other "S"- fellowships. A member of each of the other "S"-fellowships will be invited to attend the SA Today meeting at the next International Conference.

Special Needs Addressed

I am the chair of the ad hoc, or temporary, Special Needs Committee of the SA Board of Trustees. We are interested in encouraging members to get involved with committee. Issues that we are addressing include the following: how to deal with minors in an SA meeting; meeting the needs of visually- or hearingimpaired persons; how to support the physically challenged, and especially to provide access to meeting places; meetings supporting parents (child care); and the needs of gays and lesbians. There may be other individuals or groups with special needs about which we are unaware; if so, please contact either myself or Michael Alvarez, one of the non-sexaholic trustees.

The minors in meetings issue is our committee's "top plate." We are interested in hearing about how, meetings are handling this potentially difficult issue. We have noticed that each state's laws may approach this differently. For instance, the Pacific Northwest tends to have strict court-ordered monitoring of sex offenders that could prohibit minors attending SA meetings (in some situations). We need to hear the groups' experience, strength and hope. Thank you so much.

Please respond to Special Needs Committee, c/o Central Office Katherine D., Olympia, WA

The Special Needs Committee will study the needs of those having difficulty in ateending SA meetings. It will then make recommendations to the fellowship.

SA members interested in serving on these new committees or any committee should contact Central Office. Your service is welcome.

Conferences are Autonomous

In response to recently raised issues, the Board reaffirmed that each SA International Conference is autonomous. Policy issues sould be referred to the General Delegate Assembly through your region's delegate.

COMC Central Office Mgt

In order to cover the increased cost of publishing *El Libro Blanco*, in Spanish, the funds currently allocated for the Spanish version of *Recovery Continues* will be reallocated.

Essay will not separate business news from the rest of the newsletter.

Negotiate a new rental contract for office space for Central Office.

Finance Committee

The current fiscal status of SA is assessed as excellent! (Thank you for the good Seventh Tradition work!)

and hope with others who want to start

Kay, our hardworking SAICO office manager, will receive a modest salary increase.

process. Figure dinect was suppristed to

Internet Developments

The Internet Committee has these projects under development.

- Spanish web site
- Online order entry
- SA Net Group. The Enet group has about 100 members, and growing. It is open to all SA members. Just send Email to saico@sa.org, This is a great tool for loners who have Email access.

New projects for the Internet Committee include:

- Add SAICO phone and fax numbers to the web site.
- Study other 'S fellowship web sites to gather ideas for improvements.
- Add the Calendar of Events to the web site (without names and phone numbers.)
- Add an advertisement for Essay.

Intergroup Committee Looks for Local SA Groups

Your intergroup is your source of information about the rest of the fellowship. It is your connection to SA as a whole. The intergroup is your pipeline to the Regional Assembly. Intergroups were formed in order to facilitate two-way communication between local groups and the Regional Assembly.

If you would like to be a part of this service structure, please consider joining or forming an intergroup. The Intergroup

Committee will be glad to help in this process. Please direct your inquiries to the committee through Central Office.

Essay

In 1998, the format of Essay will change to a magazine format. Comments on, or suggestions for the new format should be sent to the Editor, c/o Central Office.

If you are reading this, please remem-ber to foster awareness with your group of *Essay* as a communication tool for the fellowship.

As always, *Essay* needs for you to submit your group news and thoughtful articles about your experience, strength, and hope in SA.

Literature Committee

The Literature Committee is working on many exciting projects, brochures for the professional community, newcomers, and for SA phone service.

Any SA member with an interest in helping with this vital committee--as writers, readers, editors, or any other capacity, should contact Central Office.

Legal Committee

The Legal Committee has been working of ways to track and safeguard our valuable copyrights. International copyrights are difficult to enforce; however, there are definite steps that can be taken to protect USA copyrights.

Nominations Committee

The next sexaholic Trustee election will be in January 1998. The Nominations Committee is seeking candidates for the position of Trustee. Candidates should be recommended by their intergroup, group, or region and should submit a service resume to Central Office.

Nominations will be open until the election. Candidates should be available to

be interviewed in Daytona. The term of office begins at the end of the July 1998 Conference in Newark, NJ for a period of four years.

Regional Re-alignment

The Regional Re-alignment Committee is studying the current perimeters of SA Regions. We are asking for your input.

Are these boundaries meeting your needs for communication, distance and intergroup involvement? There have been suggestions that some boundaries present obstacles.

If you prefer being involved in a different region, please send your thoughts, experience, and ideas to the Regional Realignment Committee, c/o Central Office.

Role of the Non-sexaholic Trustee Clarified

The non-sexaholic trustees serve on committees and at the national level.

As non-sexaholics, they can do service work, but not Twelve Step work.

If invited to meetings by the members, they may attend, but they are also free to decline these invitations.

The non-sexaholic Trustees are free to leave SA Conferences after the Board and Assembly meetings, if they choose.

Non-sexaholics trustees can speak on behalf of SA, but not for SA.

The fellowship will continue to look for other, creative roles for our non-sexaholic trustees.

SA Corrections Committee Chair is Open – Ideas Sought

The position of the Chair is open; a new Chair is being sought among the fellowship. The Board is working up a job description for this position.

The Board is asking members, local groups and intergroups that do prison service to share their experience, strength and hope with others who want to start

some sort of prison service. Correspondents are always needed. The variety of experience can vary so widely from state to state and region to region that it could render national guidelines unworkable. Still, this service is valuable and necessary. Our SA members in prison thank you for caring and remembering.

Please send your thoughts and ideas to SACCm c/o Central Office.

Fellowship Issues

During a wide-ranging discussion, several issues were brought forward. The Delegates shared their experience and were charged to return to their regions looking for solutions that can be shared and that can lead to recovery.

One of the most immediate critical needs is for sponsors for women, especially in groups where women members are few.

Relationship of SA to the Rest of the World

Now, more than ever, there is a need for each member to carry the message person to person around the world.

International Commitee

The Board expressed the gratitude of SA for the work done by Indrei and Jose Maria on the International Committee. Any International members wishing to help out on the International Committee should contact Central Office.

Loners Committee

There is a continuing need for SA members to write or call other SA members who are in isolated areas, areas where there isn't a meeting, or where they cannot get to a meeting as often as they would like. SA members interested in this area of service should contact Central Office.

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. Check, Money Order, MasterCard, or Visa

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Sexaholics Anonymous Manual { \$10.00 English } Full Cover	LEASE COMPLETE _ First Order _ Repeat ORder _ Payment enclosed _ Check _ Money Order _ Credit Card ee reverse side of form. hipping and handling is alculated by Zone & eight of package. ackages over 1 lb up to lbs can be sent by riority Mail to most cations in the United ates within three orking days. every case, the most st effective method of ipping will be chosen. your package needs ecial handling, please of your package needs entral Office of your quirements.

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Shipping and Handling Chart

WEIGHT	RATE	ZONE	MILEAGE
Less than 1 pound	\$ 1.50	Postage plus packing	
Over 1lb up to 2 lb	3.50	Priority Mail	
Over 2 lb up to 3 lb	4.50	Priority Mail	
Over 3 up to 5 lb	5.50	Zones 1 – 3	0 - 250 miles
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	10.50	Zone 6	1201 – 1700 miles
	11.50	Zone 7	1701 – 2000 miles
	12.50	Zone 8	2001 + miles

For shipping and handling over 15 pounds, contact SA International Central Office for rates.

These rates are applicable in the United States only. For International orders, appropriate shipping and handling charges will be added to each invoice.

NOTE: These rates are intended to make shipping and handling a revenue neutral item, a charge that pays for itself. Any additional donations to the Shipping and Handling Fund are dedicated to shipping packages to the sexaholic who still suffers.

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HOJA DE PEDIDO (Order Form)

P. O. Box 111910

Nashville, TN 37222, Estados Unidos de América tel. 615 3316230 FAX 615 3316901

Los pagos se han de efectuar en dólares USA. Aceptamos tarjetas de crédito MasterCard y Visa.

Por favor, escriba con letras mayúsculas o a máquina.

Nombre y ap				(first and last name)			
Dirección				(add	dress)		
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