

Essay®

A Quarterly Publication of Sexaholics Anonymous, Incorporated

P.O. Box 111910
Nashville, TN 37222

December 1998

You Don't Have to Slip

(The following was first published in the AA Grapevine in September 1955, when AA was 20 years old.)

The newcomer hasn't been in our group very long but he has heard a good deal about slips and has begun to worry about himself. Someone should inform him emphatically and authoritatively, "You don't have to slip!"

There are a few other members, not newcomers but men and women who have been around six months to two years, who periodically B every few months or every few weeks B go off on a little binge. Nothing serious, understand, but they evidently are not getting the program, and certainly are not getting all the benefits of continuous sobriety. These lapsing members are worried and perhaps a little ashamed. Someone should take them aside and shout po-

lately, "You don't have to slip!"

One of the persuasive bits of evidence that slips are unnecessary is the simple fact that thousands of members have two, six, ten, and more years of uninterrupted sobriety. Some of them are not very smart B maybe not as smart as the slippers B but they are sober.

While it is easy to say that slips are unnecessary, how do you avoid them? After observing hundreds of AA members over a period of nine years, I have the feeling that continuous sobriety is, in part at least, a matter of attitudes and that those attitudes can be cultivated by the member who really wants to stop drinking. The

(Continued on page #3)



IN THIS ISSUE:

- **Breaking Through the Lust Barrier**
- **Members News**

- **Overcoming Low Self-Esteem**

Calendar of Events

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

January 8 – 10, 1999. SA/S-Anon International Conference, Sacramento, CA, sponsored by Northern CA Intergroup SA and S-Anon. Theme: Stepping into Recovery. Contact: Brian 916/729-5044, SA; Saras, S-Anon, 510/547-5847

March 7, 1999 SA/ S-Anon Spring Conference, Manhattan, NY, sponsored by SA NYC Intergroup. Theme: Sobriety First. Contact SA NYC Helpline at 212/459-4044.

April 9 – 11, 1999 SA Family Reunion Retreat, Wichita, KS, Contact 316/266-8125.

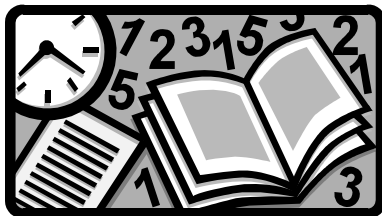
April 16 – 18, 1999, AS German speaking, Worms, sponsored by Frankfurt and Mainz groups. Contacts: Doris, 06132-59976; Reinhold, 06151-52838; Yuval, 069-4980461.

October 22 – 24, 1999, SA Family Reunion Retreat, Wichita, KS.
Contact 316/266-8125.

July 9 – 11, 1999, SA/S-Anon International Conference, Cleveland, OH. Theme: How It Works. Contact Ed N. at 216/371-2206 or Peg V. at 216/731-4030.

Special Note: How it all began. Akron, OH, the home of Dr. Bob is only 25 miles away. Dr. Bob's home is a museum open daily for tours with no admission charge. This home and other sites in Akron where AA (and all Twelve Step programs) began can be toured.

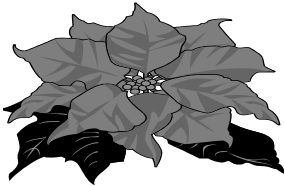
[Please note: Since international calling codes differ from country to country, we include only the country codes, area code, and local number for all contacts. Please call your local operator for guidance on making international calls.]



(Continued from page #1)

member who does not want to stop drinking should go elsewhere for advice.

What are those attitudes? They may vary with the individual but the following pattern should fit a good many cases.



ATTITUDE I. *Sobriety Must Come First B For Me.* The member who tries to make AA a second- or third-class hobby usually has trouble. We have a number one problem and we have to treat it as such. Sobriety cannot defer to job, family, friends, neighbors, pain, embarrassment, anonymity B or to anything else! If we do not have sobriety we ultimately will not have any of the things we hold dear. While the high-bottom drinker may not have lost much of anything B yet B some day he may lose everything if he continues to drink. If he gets sober and stays sober then everything else usually falls into place and the more he has of other things the more he can enjoy them.

Hence, the member who really wants to stay sober should place sobriety as his first objective and then rearrange his life accordingly.

Slips often occur when a member

does not feel well. He is nervous, jittery, about to explode. A second situation that prompts a drink is one of expected personal embarrassment. The alcoholic is out with friends or business associates and he just cannot say "No." The next two attitudes relate to these frequently-encountered situations.

ATTITUDE II. *I Will Suffer This Pain. It Will Pass. Even If I Die Now I Will Die Sober.* The nervous situation is the basis of many slips. The alcoholic begins to shake mentally and sometimes physically. He gets so excited he nearly loses his reason. He feels as though he might go right through the ceiling. Physical pain may also be in the picture. Relief from physical pain sometimes seems to be an excuse to drink B not a sufficient excuse of course B but it serves the alcoholic who wants a reason.

This kind of nervous or painful condition is familiar to most alcoholics. Some who have been dry many years have to put up with it from time to time. They recognize the situation, however, and know that the feeling will pass. Newer members may not be so sure, but they should resolve not to drink even if they are going to die on the spot. Not many alcoholics actually die in this manner, but when you are willing to die for your sobriety you will probably stay sober.



A T T I - T U D E

III. *I Will Suffer Any Embarrassment For My Sobriety.* Fear of what friends or associates will think or say has led many alcoholics to take a drink. They fear the pink ears and burning cheeks. They conjure up in their minds all the accumulated ridicule of their colleagues. This type of situation is a great mental hazard for many new members and others not so new. They can survive these situations if they will cultivate the following line of thought:

"I've suffered terrible embarrassment in the past because of my drinking. If I drink again I will suffer still greater embarrassment in the future. So why not suffer a little embarrassment for sobriety? I will refuse that drink even if a dozen people point to me with scorn. Even if I fall down in confusion and disgrace, I will not drink!"

Actually, the frightful embarrassment with which the alcoholic mentally wrestles practically never occurs B but the alcoholic must be prepared for it. If he resolves to die of embarrassment rather than to take a drink he will almost certainly stay sober.

ATTITUDE IV. *Sobriety Must Be Earned.* Sobriety cannot be bought with money. Many of us tried that to no

avail. But sobriety has its price and if we try to buy it too cheaply it may elude us.

Hence, if I attend two meetings a week and do not get sober I will step up my program to four or five meetings and also increase my other AA activities: work in the kitchen, chauffeur others to meetings, go to lunch with other members, help at intergroup, make hospital calls, read AA literature a few minutes each day, use the telephone more (particularly if I am debating about a drink) and so on.

This intensification of activity has particular applicability to members who have been around some time but with limited success. They may be trying to buy sobriety too cheaply. It usually can't be done. Sure, Joe stays dry without going to many meetings. Some few stay dry on their own . . . *but what has that to do with me?*

If a member finds he is not "getting the program" he should consider whether he ought to increase the volume of his AA activity. In other words, give B not money B but of himself, more generously. Naturally this fuller scope of activity may mean some sacrifice. Perhaps that too is necessary.

ATTITUDE V. *Try To Put Greater Emphasis on Personal Contact with That Higher Power.* Some new members may not be ready for those Steps which relate to the Higher Power. For them the cultivation of Attitude V may have to be delayed; but they can probably read this short section without do-

ing violence to their principles.

Some of us who enjoy sobriety ask that Higher Power each morning for grace to get through another day. "*No matter what happens, don't let me take that first drink today B no matter what happens!*" At night we give thanks for the day just gone and look forward to the morrow, humbly asking him "for twenty-four more hours of sincerity, sobriety, and serenity"; asking his help tomorrow to "*improve the quality as well as to increase the quantity*" of our sobriety.

We don't feel compelled to limit our requests to the morning and evening. When we enter that restaurant with the boss and two VPs, when we walk off the eighteenth green and head for the clubhouse, when we feel alone in that distant city B what is wrong with repeating, "No matter what happens, don't let me take that first drink!"

That is conscious contact with God! It is as simple as that. And it won't do the slipping agnostic or atheist much damage. Who knows, it may get him sober. Nothing else has, so what has he to lose?

These five attitudes by no means tell the whole story. Some members may have to think through other approaches for themselves but these five are basic to a wide range of cases. They emphasize to us that sobriety must be our first concern and that to obtain it we should be willing to suffer any pain or embarrassment. We try to earn our sobriety by giving of ourselves generously

rather than stingily and we maintain close contact with that Higher Power through supplication and thanksgiving.

You don't have to slip B and if you cultivate these five suggested attitudes, you probably won't!

It's worth a try, anyway.

Copyright (c) by The AA Grapevine, Inc.; reprinted with permission.



Breaking Through the Lust Barrier

I was born to and reared by two sexaholics. By the time I left home, I was consumed by lust energy. It was all I had known since puberty. It defined me, I thought.

After I got into SA and began progressive victory over lust, I found that this energy was stronger and more pervasive than anything I could imagine ("cunning, baffling, powerful!"). No matter how many years I spent stuffing my head with proper SA thinking, as soon as I got around other sexaholics, I wanted to "lust and be lusted after." Even when the insan-

(Continued on page #6)

(Continued from page #5)

ity became openly obvious to me and I would have "serious talks" with myself and my sponsor about my behavior, it was stronger than anything I could affect. My relationships with my Higher Power is still not as strong as it needs to be.

It was only after an extended period of having to "get outside myself" that I could finally achieve some success over my lust energy. I had to tell myself continually that my responses were insane and would destroy me if I keep following them. I not only needed discipline for my addict -- to detach myself from the power temptation had over me -- but I had to have mercy for my addict, as we must for newcomers. Yes, I didn't get enough love at home or effective role models. Yes, I got neglect and/or abuse. But SA offers me a life of contentment, joy, and peace that I never dreamed was possible for me if I am willing to give up lust at all levels B to go through the lust barrier and the barrier of fear of intimacy.

True intimacy is something I couldn't even imagine or imagine was possible for me until I got into SA and started working the Steps and toward progressive victory over lust. As I see it, getting into recovery requires total humility before God. It requires admission of powerlessness that makes us feel like children before him. The spiritual awakening means that I am reborn as a totally new person, someone I was not when I first entered SA's doors.

Lust energy will destroy us if we let it, but God was kind enough to give us an answer to our dilemma. If we don't admit the problem for what it is B lust trying to control our lives B we will remain in bondage forever. We must see the enemy for what it is B lust B and not distract ourselves with petty arguments that keep us from what God has so generously given us. **Anonymous**



Over-
coming Low Self-Esteem

I was plagued all my life by low self-esteem.

Working my Fourth and Fifth Steps I realized my low self-esteem came from my ego, that is, from the same character defects I was identifying and acknowledging and becoming willing to surrender in recovery. My pride and self-centeredness were deeply involved.

My pride: I had spent my whole life setting impossible goals for myself and not achieving them or avoiding responsibilities in order not to fail or not to be seen as a failure by others. I was terri-

fied of being criticized or rejected.

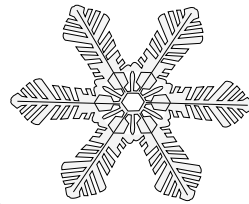
My self-centeredness: I compared what I saw inside myself, or what I thought I saw, with the exterior of others. My self-centeredness prevented me from seeing the reality of others -- even from just seeing the others. I lived inside myself in a fantasy world of my own creation. The ego-deflating process of working the Steps gave me enough humility to stay sober, gain progressive victory over lust and give me a degree of peace and serenity I had never thought possible for a guy who spent his life either depressed or drunk on euphoria.

I can see today that for me, my low self-esteem was closely related to my lack of humility. Humility for me is the solution. The AA Twelve and Twelve says that humility, or at least some degree of it, is necessary to stay sober (P.70), and that it is a healer of pain (P.75).

When I am humble and I surrender my character defects, I don't compare myself with others. I don't feel either more or less. I can accept both my limits and assets. When I am humble I feel comfortable with other people. And I can develop a good relationship with God. Being powerless over my ego and my character defects, I need a Higher Power strong enough to take on himself the burden of my wrongs and my lust. Intellectual knowledge, a better philosophy, self-will, etc., don't work for me. Asking God in desperation and surrender do.

The humbler I am, the stronger my recovery gets. The more I take credit for my own recovery, the worse my recovery gets, and the less I like myself. It's paradoxical. The humbler I am, and the more I give to others, the more self-esteem I have.

A Selfishness -- self-centeredness! That, we think is the root of our troubles. @ AA Big Book, (P.62). And it has always been the root of my self-esteem, too. **Jose Maria R.**, Spain.



Members on Meetings

S h a r e

My acting out includes masturbation with pornography, affairs, voyeurism, and anonymous sex with prostitutes. I've been attending SA meetings for six years, and only two weeks ago fully worked by "first" First Step. Based on my experience I'd have to say that meetings work. Period! I mean any 12-Step meetings.

Having said that I also have to say that, for me, right now, it's very important to remember that it was the problem that finally drove me to see my powerlessness, to see the unmanageability of my life, to believe that a Power greater than me could restore me to sanity, and to decide to turn my will and my life over to that Power.

(Continued from page #7)

I ask God every morning to help me to think clearly, to remain sober, to ask him and a fellow SA member for help when I need it, to be there to help another SA member when they need it, and to never ever forget what it feels like to be ashamed of, remorseful over, disgusted with, and terrified about the consequences of my acting out behavior.

I have to agree that I need to make every meeting I can. Sure, it will be good for me, but when I don't think I need it I need to remember that I don't go only for me. I go for the other SA members too. I read in my spiritual readings today that God made us in his own image. Well, it occurred to me that the incredible sense of peace, love and serenity I've been feeling over the past two weeks while attending meetings once or twice a day might be the collective effect of all of us in those meetings being the image of God for one another.

What a gift SA is to me! Two weeks ago I was wondering why I even bothered to go to meetings, and today I'm struggling to go to enough and still tend to the other things in my life that deserve my attention, like my family and my job. When I'm in a meeting with you, I'm face-to-face with God. I need that. I also need to be alone with God in prayer and meditation in the morning and evening. God has given me a gift called SA, and I don't intend to ignore it. **Anonymous**



Meetings are a lifeline for me, so I am committed to four each week. For a long time I went to meetings nearly every day. All the people I admire in recovery participate in several meetings a week. I have no earthly idea how anyone can flourish on less. You see, I am no longer interested in merely surviving the ravages of this disease. That's what I was like in my addiction. I worked my addiction hard. I gave it huge gobs of my time, my energy, and my money. I went to any lengths to stay inebriated. I am going to any lengths to pursue the happy, joyous, and free life which is the fruit of recovery as I understand it.

We have seven meetings a week in Oklahoma City, and each of them focuses on the SA White Book. Each member reads a paragraph and is free to comment, after which other members are free to comment before we move on in the reading. There is beginning to be a restlessness about this "routine." Some of us would like to make one of the meetings an AA Big Book study and another of the meetings a Step study from the AA Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions.

Our meetings focus pretty much on the solution. Occasionally newer members do some dumping or whining, but usually a more sober member shares something that tends to cut that off, while avoiding crosstalk, of course.

All our meetings are followed by fellowship at a local restaurant. On Monday nights, for instance, as many as 20 or more of us go to a nearby eatery where we have supper or coffee or just water. This practice really helps build the fellowship. I thank God for wonderful meetings here in OKC. **Jack F.**, Oklahoma City, OK

Having experienced hundreds of meetings in other 12-Step fellowships, one of the things I have noticed is that "good" meetings come in all shapes, sizes and colors, which is a very good thing given the fact that one size surely doesn't fit all.

Some meetings are good because they are so well organized and contain all of the elements one could want in a good meeting. Others are good because there is a small core group of very committed and focused veterans who invest in other people's recovery. Others are good because newcomers are drawn in numbers, for whatever reasons.

Some meetings are especially good for me. It seems to me that some constants are (1) I get out as much as I put into it; (2) "recovery" meetings and "enabling" meetings are not the same; (3) I am better off focusing on *my* inventory than focusing on the *meeting's*

inventory; (4) if I want to add something from my experience, strength and hope to a meeting, I usually can, and (5) any meeting is better than no meeting.

Russ M.



Group News

Just to let you know that SA in Montreal is still going good. We have one meeting every evening except Thursday and one noon meeting downtown on Friday. We started a Couples meeting last summer and last meeting there were six couples attending. The Couples meeting is every third Saturday of the month. Also, the S-Anon meeting is still going on Monday night. Thanks to SA I took my three-year sobriety chip last September and one day at a time I get better with the help of God and the brotherhood in SA.

Andre G., Montreal, Canada

(Continued from page #9)



When I came to the program I had a lot of religion but I didn't know or have God. The only real power I believed in was my power to control. I always wanted God to just zap me and take all my sex problems away. I really had to come to believe in a Power greater than myself. We had a man in our group who used to say we had to be careful about wanting a power greater than ourselves because our addiction was a power greater than ourselves, but that it was a power greater than our addiction that we needed to seek.

It was in the program that I found God because I was willing to believe he could and would help if I was willing to go to work on me and trust in him. Over the first few years in the program I began to understand how important it was to work with him in turning my whole life around. I came to truly believe that sobriety was the cornerstone of building the trust in God and the willingness to work on my problems.

I found God here and have come to know he is the same God I had in my

religion; the difference is that my attitude has changed about him and me. I have reaped and continue to reap great rewards in my life because of this. The most wonderful journey I have ever taken in life is the one I am on in this program and it is the most satisfying way to live. **Richard B.**

When I hit the bottom and crawled into the rooms in February 1990, I was a crawling contradiction. On the one hand, I was -- as I learned painfully in the following months -- spiritually bankrupt. However, I believed I was spiritually put together. Didn't I know all about God? Couldn't I teach others about him? Hadn't I established an identity as a religious person? The sad truth was that I knew a lot and understood nothing.

Spiritual growth for me has been, since then, a slow and sometimes painful process of learning bit by bit the truth about me and the truth about God. Some catalysts have been the Steps, connections with recovering people, the Steps, meetings, the Steps, service in the program and in my church, the Steps, serving as a sponsor, the Steps, program literature, sacred literature, the Steps, good teaching, staying sober, the Steps, experiencing true intimacy, the Steps, having spiritual mentors and sponsors, the Steps, the Steps and the Steps.

For all of that, I understand only a little, certainly nowhere near as much as I thought I did back in February of 1990. But I found out that a little bit of something real is a million times better than a lot of spiritual bull. And I found out that the journey is worth taking, one day at a time. **Russ M.**

The more I am in the program, the more I see that this is a God-centered program. I am not only powerless over lust, I am powerless over people, places and things. When I depend on them, sooner or later they will disappoint me.

The other day I learned that a person had been doing things just the opposite to what I thought he should. I didn't like the idea and I felt resentful. I could see at that moment my "happiness" depended on what that person was doing. That I was "allowing" that person to control my life.

What could I do? I am powerless. I don't have the strength on my own not to want to control. So I acknowledged my powerlessness. "Yes, I want to control that person." Yes, I want to change that person." "Yes, my happiness, just now, seems to depend on what that person is doing." Knowing that self-help books, knowledge, and self-will never helped me much, I asked God to come into my misconnection with that person and fill the void inside.

I was misconnecting with that person, using him to fill the void inside. I

was making a god of that person. So I had to accept my lack of power, let go and let God inside. I asked God to come and fill the void inside. I am so grateful for this God-centered program. I can't, but God can. I am seeing in me and in others who work the Steps in SA that the solution to my dependency is not to become "independent" but to become dependent on God. And God can do the things I cannot do for myself.

Sometimes when I am running the show, I dilute my program by trying to reduce it to what is humanly possible for me: the easier, softer way. I turn my program into a sort of "self-help" program. But doing that doesn't work and at the end I have to turn to God and find the fulfillment I cannot find elsewhere. And thank God for that!

Yesterday I read in the Big Book: "Lack of power, that was our dilemma. We had to find a power by which we could live, and it had to be a Power greater than ourselves. Obviously. But where and how were we to find this Power? Well, that's exactly what this book is about. *Its main object* is to enable you to find a Power greater than yourself which will solve your problem" (p. 45—italics mine). Have you read it?—*its main object!*

Jose Maria R., Spain



SA Around the Globe



SAICO

Fellowship News

Implementation of the Newark motions

As the *Essay* goes to press, groups around the country are voting for the second time in the history of Sexaholics Anonymous on matters concerning the Fellowship's sobriety definition and the interpretation of the words "marriage" and "spouse."

Some members who joined the Fellowship since 1991 report they are finding the process to be painful, but ultimately rewarding; many members who voted in 1991, on the other hand, said they felt frustrated, but were willing to see it through.

The process is proving to be less simple than anticipated when the SA leadership decided in July to poll the groups to see if clarification to the SA sobriety definition was needed. According to delegates and groups who reported their progress to the *Essay*, all members are not "reading from the same page," and the current vote is therefore unlikely to definitively re-

solve the dilemma.

"No one could agree on how to implement the motion in a uniform way, said the national delegate for the Southwest region. "It was decided that each delegate would poll their region in the way they saw fit. If it's not being done in a coherent way, it's because we couldn't agree on the method."

The Secretary of a group in Oregon said it found the clarification process to be "confusing and divisive." A simple "yes" or "no" vote on clarification is itself open to interpretation, the group noted. To some, "yes" could mean a vote to make the definition explicitly conservative, they said, while to others the same vote could be intended to liberalize or broaden the definition. A vote in the current survey, the group decided, could be interpreted to mean the opposite than that which it was intended. The group therefore "unanimously voted to table any voting on the sobriety definition."

A Virginia group, which voted in favor of clarifying the words "spouse" and "marriage," rejected both options for clarification offered on the ballot and voted "other." Some who voted

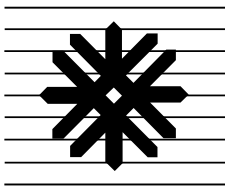
Seventh Tradition

Donations for Third Quarter

Albuquerque, NM	30.50	Grand Prairie AB Canada	41.16	Portland IG, OR	208.55
Alhambra, CA	65.00	Green Bay, WI	135.00	Portland, OR	100.77
Anaheim, CA	50.00	Greensboro, NC	20.00	QCSA Davenport, IA	50.00
Annapolis, MD	60.00	Greenwich, CT	225.00	Redlands SACC CA	21.00
AS Deutschland	560.86	Hacienda Hgts, CA	100.00	Regina, SK, Canada	191.65
Atlanta, GA	133.00	Herndon, VA	171.00	Rochester, NY	361.82
Atlanta Hope Conf.	1,050.00	High Point, NC	20.00	Salt Lake City, UT	113.50
Baltimore, MD	75.36	Houston, TX	20.00	San Diego, CA	42.00
Bannockburn, IL	370.00	Jacksonville, FL	50.00	Saskatoon, SK Canada	7.50
Beaver, PA	59.00	Kansas City, KS	200.00	Seattle, WA	55.00
Bend, OR	40.00	Knoxville, TN	20.00	Seattle SACC WA	10.00
Berkeley, CA	146.25	Lancaster, OH	25.00	Silver Springs, MD	410.00
Bethel, PA	49.51	Laurel, MD	41.00	South Barrington, IL	200.00
Boston, MA	58.00	Lincoln, NE	4.50	Springfield, VA	111.00
Bozeman, MT	10.00	Long Is. IG, NY	1,500.00	St Charles, IL	25.00
Calgary, AB, Canada	53.56	Los Altos, CA	60.00	St Louis, MO	70.00
Cambridge, MA	65.00	Madison, OH	125.00	St Louis IG	190.00
Central VA IG	75.00	Manhattan Bch, CA	4.00	St Louis SACC	100.00
Centreville, CA	152.00	McLean, VA	143.00	Steubenville, OH	23.20
Cerritos, CA	65.00	MD/DC/VA IG SACC	20.00	Syracuse, NY	86.00
Chicago IG	43.00	Midlothian, IL	60.00	Syracuse SACC	86.00
Chicago SACC	500.00	Mill Creek, WA	19.00	Titsville, FL	26.00
Chicago, IL	51.00	Milwaukee, WI	160.00	Torrance, CA	22.00
Chino, CA	120.00	Montreal, PQ, Canada	20.00	UK Intergroup	200.00
Chula Vista, CA	67.57	Nashville IG, TN	400.00	Vancouver, BC, Canada	100.00
Colorado Spgs, CO	1,199.00	New England IC SACC	80.00	Vienna, VA	291.31
Corona, CA	30.00	New England IG	40.00	Washington, DC	457.00
Corona SACC CA	30.00	New York SACC NY	100.00	W LA, CA	197.28
Crystal City VA	88.00	New York, NY	50.00	Wheeling, WV	210.00
Dallas, TX	40.00	New York SACC	40.00	Wheeling/Steubenville	26.00
Darien, IL	50.00	Newark Intl Conference	6,900.00	Willow Creek, IL	395.00
Darien SACC IL	24.00	Newberg, OR	60.00	Woodbridge, VA	60.00
Daytona Beach, FL	113.70	North Canton, OH	50.00	Yorba Linda, CA	25.00
Denver, CO	50.00	North Hollywood, CA	185.00		
Detroit, MI	200.00	NE Ohio IG	100.00	Group Total	23,260.67
Elk Grove Village, IL	150.00	Painesville, OH	100.00	Individual Total	1,773.88
Erie, PA	20.00	Palm Desert, CA	50.00	Grand Total	25,034.55
Essington, PA	58.00	Pasadena, CA	280.00		
Fairfax, VA	193.00	Pearl River, NY	25.00		
Falls Church, VA	100.00	Penn Hills, PA	100.00		
Fargo, ND	12.00				
Federal Way, WA	18.00	Pittsburgh Southside, PA	92.48		
Florence, AL	70.00	Pittsburgh, PA	55.00		
Fremont, CA	70.00	Pleasanton SACC CA	26.65		
Glen Ellyn, IL	138.00	Portland IG SACC	158.25		

(Continued from page #12)

“other” favored recognizing same-sex marriages as sober in SA, while a majority favored a stricter, more defined version of marriage between a “man and a woman in a vowed state of matrimony.” Although the vote was inconclusive, members said they found the discussion to be welcome and cathartic. Many members, including some with over two years of sobriety, said the discussion was the first opportunity they had since joining the Fellowship to express themselves at a group level on the sobriety definition.



Some national delegates said the ballot overstepped its bounds.

“If you put the second question on the ballot [How would your group express clarification?], then you’re expecting the answer to the first question [Does your group feel the meaning of the words ‘spouse’ and ‘marriage’ need to be clarified?] to be ‘yes,’ the national delegate for the North Midwest said. This put the ballot in technical violation of the motion, which asked only if clarification of the sobriety definition was needed,

he said.

After the delegates failed to reach agreement on the method of the survey, the delegate from the Southwest discarded the disputed ballot and instead sent a mailing to some 90 groups in the region asking that they reaffirm the sobriety statement as clarified by the 1990 - 1991 “Sense of Fellowship” statement. This reads: “Regarding SA’s definition of sobriety, ‘married’ means traditional, legal, heterosexual marriage, and ‘spouse’ does not include ‘committed relationships’ with either the same or opposite sex.”

This statement stems from the sobriety survey of 1990 - 1991, which was conducted after some groups unilaterally altered SA literature to reflect broader definitions of “marriage” and “spouse.” The 1990 - 1991 survey was not taken as a group conscience, but carried out on the recommendation of SA’s legal counsel to assess where the Fellowship stood on sobriety in the face of the copyright threat posed by the break-away groups.

Seventy-five percent of responding groups in 1990 - 1991 affirmed the statement; 19 percent did not, and 6 percent choose “not to respond.” Some dissenting groups left SA to join Sexual Recovery Anonymous, which allowed committed relation-

ships in its sobriety definition.

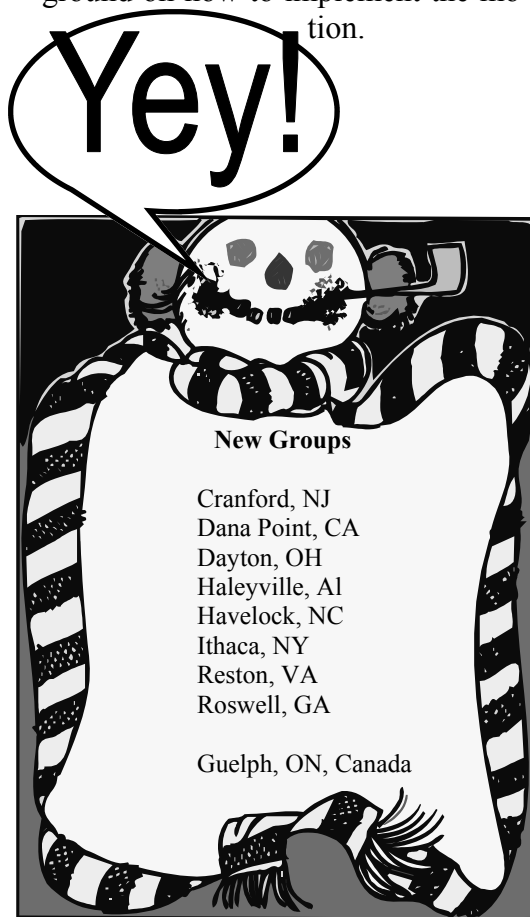
The SA sobriety definition was first approved by group conscience in 1981. It reads: "In defining sobriety, we do not speak for those outside Sexaholics Anonymous. We can only speak for ourselves. Thus, for the married sexaholic, sexual sobriety means having no form of sex with self or with persons other than the spouse. For the unmarried sexaholic, sexual sobriety means freedom from sex of any kind. And for all of us, single and married alike, sexual sobriety also includes progressive victory over lust." *Sexaholics Anonymous*, pages 191-192.

The SA sobriety definition was discussed most recently at the International Conference in Newark, NJ. The SA delegates voted to reaffirm the sobriety definition as stated in *Sexaholics Anonymous* (see above). The delegates also voted to ask the Fellowship if the definition needed to be clarified. (The delegates stressed that the sobriety definition would not be changed. The motion followed a discussion on whether the words "spouse" and "marriage" needed to be clarified.)

The motion states: "Moved to accept the recommendation of the Board of Trustees to seek input from the fellowship, as defined as regions, Intergroups and groups, as to whether

any clarification is needed of the SA sobriety definition. Delegates will communicate with each other about results in two months and one month before the next International Conference."

Implementation of the motion later became a subject of lengthy discussion among the delegates. While the delegates reported their discussion was constructive and respectful, they said they failed to find common ground on how to implement the motion.



The Twelve Steps of Sexaholics Anonymous

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

THE TWELVE STEPS OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS:

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

(The Twelve Steps and 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.)

The Twelve Traditions of Sexaholics Anonymous

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

THE TWELVE 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.

***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.

How to improve *Essay* circulation...

Every group should have a subscription to *Essay* for the members to read, share and pass around. Also, consider group donations of *Essay* subscriptions to members celebrating SA sobriety anniversaries.

Subscribe to *Essay*

A one year subscription costs \$10.00. Group subscriptions of 10 or more sent to the same address are \$8.00 each. Payment can be by check, money order, or credit card, MasterCard or Visa. Send subscription requests to SAICO, PO Box 111910, Nashville, TN 37222-1910.

Rule #62

Wow!
Suitable for
framing!

DEAR GOD,

SO FAR TODAY, I'VE DONE ALL RIGHT. I'VE KEPT MY MOUTH SHUT, I HAVEN'T GOSSIPED, HAVEN'T LOST MY TEMPER, HAVEN'T BEEN GREEDY, GRUMPY, NASTY, SELFISH OR OVER-INDULGENT. I'M REALLY GLAD ABOUT THAT.

BUT IN A FEW MINUTES, GOD, I'M GOING TO GET OUT OF BED, AND FROM THEN ON, I WILL NEED A LOT MORE HELP!

AMEN.

How to Contact SA

Sexaholics Anonymous,
Incorporated
PO Box 111910
Nashville, TN 37222-1910

Phone: 615/331-6230
Fax: 615/331-6901
Web Site: <http://www.sa.org>
E-mail Address:
saico@sa.org

Copyright © 1998
All rights reserved
(Copies of *Essay* may be reproduced
for distribution to other members.)

