

Essay®

A Quarterly Publication of Sexaholics Anonymous, Incorporated

P. O. Box 111910

Nashville, TN 37222

Summer 1999

Trudging the Road of Happy Destiny

(The following talk was given by Barry at the 5th SA Conference in Australia, held on April 23-25, 1999 in Sydney.)

Every time we say—and it sounds contradictory, doesn't it?—we are trudging the road of happy destiny, trudging sounds like a burdensome sort of thing, and happy destiny a bit odd, too. And every time we say that, which is at every meeting, there's a sort of a snicker, or you feel a heaviness, or there's a bit of a smile as you say trudging the road of happy destiny.

That's after five years, and there're people who have been in the program a bit longer than me [who are] trying to come to terms with trudging the road of happy destiny. Looking at that I get emo-

tionally involved. Sometimes the tears or emotion that comes up in me—and I'm sure it's part and parcel of all of us—is the pain of the past, we've been on such a tragic road that spoils relationships and perhaps even spoils the healthy sort of life. And maybe we've had such little control over it that there's a bit of anger there as well. So it's pain about the past, perhaps a sense of unworthiness, certainly on my part, that here I am, that I really don't think I deserve this opportunity to turn my life around.

I suppose the other part of the tears would be something about the awesomeness of the future, that somehow I've been granted an opportunity to get it together again. And that's trudging the road. We know where we've been;

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Calendar of Events

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

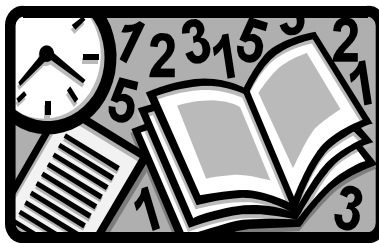
[Please note: Since international calling codes differ from country to country,
we include only the country codes, area code, and local number for all contacts.
Please call your local operator for guidance on making international calls.]

June 19, 1999, Second Annual Marathon, Perrysburg, OH, sponsored by Toledo SA. Theme: Victory through Surrender! Contact Toledo SA at 419/660-0810.

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.

September 1, 1999, Fourth Annual Pittsburgh Autumn Retreat, Wexford, PA, sponsored by Pittsburgh SA. Contact Barney W. at 724/224-0877 or Larry H. at 724/733-5156.

September 17 – 19, 1999, SA Pacific Northwest Retreat, Camp Don Bosco, Carnation, WA, sponsored by Puget Sound IG. Contact Don L. at 360/371-2276.



Calendar of

Events

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.

How to Contact SA

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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.

October 8 – 10, 1999, Fall Unity Conference, Orange, CA, sponsored by Southern California Area Intergroup. Contact Gary W. at 909/865-1645.

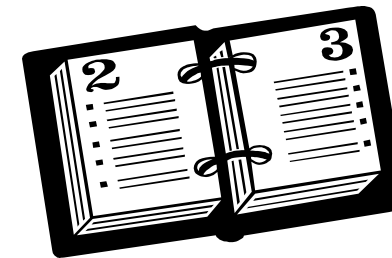
October 22 – 24, 1999, SA Family Reunion Retreat, Wichita, KS. Contact 316/266-8125.

January 7 – 9, 2000, SA / S-Anon International Conference, Nashville, TN, sponsored by Nashville Intergroup. Theme: Together 2000. Contact SA Nashville at 615/251-7516.

July 7 – 9, 2000, SA / S-Anon International Conference, Detroit, MI, sponsored by Detroit area SA / S-Anon groups. Theme: Practice These Principles in All Our Affairs. Contact for SA: Gary at 810/756-4793 or SA Detroit at 810/997-7518.

January 2001, SA / S-Anon International Conference, Los Angeles, CA, sponsored by SCAI. Contact Southern California Area Intergroup at 213/480-1096.

July 2001, SA / S-Anon International Conference.
To be announced at the Cleveland Conference.



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we also know where we are, and there's a awesomeness and an unknown quantity about what the future holds for any one of us.

It reminds me of a story of the fellow who died and went to heaven, and God said, "here's 57 videos of your whole life"—he lived 57 years and there was a video for each year—"I want you to go through the whole 57 videos and I want you to make a 10-minute video for me. You're dead now and you have all the time you want and I want you to make a video of 10 minutes of your life." So he set about the task of cutting and after a long time God came back and the man said, "here it is," and God said, "I don't want that, you keep that, I want the rest of the stuff you threw away." (Laughter)

And that's a little bit of the story of us all. Most of us want to throw away all those bins full of our life's story, but somehow because of blessing and because of strange coincidence, because of a whole complexity of issues, we've come here and somehow been presented with the opportunity through this particular program, not just to say to God, "well all right you take them away," but for us to face that with our God. Because the program has something to do with a spiritual awareness, we try and fill the vacuum that's been created by not acting out, to

look at life anew and face up to our fragilities and our brokenness and our humanness—and sinfulness, if you want to look at it in those terms—and God's there with us, and that's an awesome part of the process too, because we're really not too sure.

The happy destiny is really about integrity, making not just the 10-minute tape that we wanted to give to God, but to try to make the rest of the 57 years fit, put it together and say, "look, I want you to walk through this with me." I believe deep down that God is going to continue and has walked with me through that 57 years, but my god I suppose was a god of lust or a god for what I wanted, a god of selfishness, a god of me getting what I wanted, a god of my void being filled, a god of my personality coming together. But instead of it coming together on my terms it was really splintering and becoming more dissipated, disjointed and dysfunctional.

The trudging of the road is the fact that we know, I know, we all know that we've been over these 57 years of trudging, and if you're walking the same path for 57 years it is just mud and slush. Because we know it's brokenness, it has hurt us so bad and it's hurt so many people, probably the people we least want to hurt are the ones we've hurt the most. And those people who are married and those of us who are single and those of

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.

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.)

us who have been in some sort of friendship and relationship, we know how destructive, how cunning, powerful and baffling our disease has been on others, because they haven't been able to work us out. They sort of looked at us and said, "I can't believe this, he's just not present, he's just not there."

And that's my story as much as it's everybody else's. So the trudging really is going through the mud and the slush that we've sort of worn over or tracked for 57 years, if you want to take the story of God and the videos. So it's for us to set off on a new path that this program has provided for me and provides for us—as a new path of course it's untrudged, it's not slush, it's not mud, it's something we've got to do that hopefully, maybe, idealistically-speaking most people have done since the day they were born. But I don't think there are too many people around who have not created some sort of mud and slush around themselves. I think that's the course of us all but certainly we try in the program, or the program tries to get us to look at the mud and the sludge and what we're trudging through. So the happy destiny is to somehow say, "all those pieces of 10-minute tape plus the other 57 years, God we ask you just to be with us to put it together."

Because of our sexaholism, because of my sexaholism, my personality split into more disparate characters. It was 5 percent brokenness, and secrecy and darkness and in many degrees I suppose pornography and filth. My basic addiction was to same sex. For 40 years I tried to get that little piece of my personality to wed the other 57 years of all the rest of this big lie I was living, which to all intents and purposes everybody looked at and said, "he's a reasonably well together human being." But deep inside I was the most immature person and most insecure person you could possibly imagine, because I was frightened of this little 10 minutes of video or 10 percent or 1 percent of my personality that had the capacity to destroy the whole other 97 or 90 percent. It had that capacity because I knew there was this deep dark secret that was within me.

The happy destiny is that I can integrate those things, not by my own power—my own power got me into this program, me thinking that I was God got me into this program, lust being my god got me here—my happy destiny is that I can say, "Look, I'm not together." The program encourages me and encourages everyone else to be honest and open, and say, "this is where I'm weak." I can focus on my strengths anywhere

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else, and other people can focus on my strengths, but I don't have any other place to go and focus on my weakness, so I've got to find a 12-Step program like Sexaholics Anonymous to say, "these are my most fragile points, these are the parts of my personality which are so destructive, and so powerful, and cunning and so baffling for me and for everyone else, that they can destroy anything that's good." I never believed anybody who said I had anything good about me at all, simply because deep within me I was saying, "you don't know me, you wouldn't know me from a cake of soap or a bloody broom in a cupboard." And they didn't. Because they weren't aware of this little percent that was there that was so powerful and so destructive.

So the trudging of the road. It sounds like a slog, and to some degree it is a slog. Even today with five and a bit years of sobriety, of not acting out, I know I've got this well-worn track of 57 years, and now I've got to find a new path. So I've got to stop doing what I was doing and put myself into neutral gear and say, "I'm faced now with a vacuum, what do I do?" In all that 57 years, I had a God, I had a family, I had everything that was around me, but I also had the addiction, and that

was the destructive aspect of me. Now I've had to sit myself into the vacuum; fortunately the program has facilitated me doing that, and say, "all right now, how do I fill that vacuum up?" And that's been to find a God, not a God of my understanding, because the God of my understanding before was a lust god—"I'll get what I want, and no one's going to stop me. If you try to stop me, I'll steal it, I'll invade your personality. I'll invade your person. I'll invade your space, and I'll take what I want because this is what I want." That's how ruthless and that's how powerful, and that's the mud and the sludge and the trudge I've had to go through. And that's the 57 years of the stuff I want to put in the wastepaper bin. But I also know deep down inside me that that's where my gold is. That 10 percent or that 10 minutes of video that I wanted to give up to God really wasn't the gold because that's probably the common denominator we have with everybody. The gold's really in the rubbish bin that I wanted to throw away and God was saying, and continues to say to me through the program that you can turn this around, you can turn all this around, all those wastepaper bins—that other 57 years minus 10 minutes—you can turn it into your gold. Because it extracts

your story regarding any editorial changes and copyright release. All stories submitted will become the property of Sexaholics Anonymous, Inc. and may be used in other publications such as *Essay*.

Please send your story before September 30, 1999, to P.O. Box 111910, Nashville, Tenn. 37222, or e-mail it to story@sa.org.

Voting at Intergroup

Recently a motion at my local Intergroup almost failed to win approval. Had it failed, two members with less than 30 days' sobriety would have provided the margin for defeat. By comparison with AA, on whose experience the Traditions are based, the sobriety of AA representatives to Intergroup is generally measured in years. At the group level, many SA groups require members to have 30 days' sobriety to vote at business meetings. Intergroup reps should have at least the same length of sobriety to vote.

Most SA meetings adhere to the suggestion in the White Book that speakers in the first half of the meeting have 30 days or more of sobriety to share. This is done to help set the tone of the meeting on program and recovery, and to carry the message that lust in all its forms is unacceptable, and that there is a solution. Should not this also be carried over to the service structure, whose purpose also is to carry the message to the sexaholic who still suffers?

I am not advocating that members with less than 30 days' sobriety be barred from speaking at Intergroup, just as members with less than 30 days are not prevented from speaking at meetings. But to protect groups, Intergroup should count only the votes of those

with 30 days' sobriety.

Intergroups should also set appropriate sobriety requirements for service positions and hold regular lust inventories, just as groups do. While the quality of the individual member's sobriety can be between him and his sponsor—but should be shared with the group for the member's own sobriety—the nature of the trusted servant's sobriety is also the Fellowship's concern. And Intergroup members should be as familiar with each other's struggles and recovery as they are with the struggles and recovery of members of their home groups.

Intergroups should ensure that the message they carry through the group conscience is one of program and recovery.

yey!

New Groups

- Blacksburg, VA
- Cochise, AZ
- Columbia, TN
- Ogden, UT
- Philadelphia, PA
- Rockford, IL

with over 30 days' sobriety. Sean K.

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participate in a meeting of an SA group that meets twice a week in the prison. There are 20 - 30 inmates who are members of this group. We also plan to attend an SA meeting of men on probation later in the afternoon in Lancaster.

If you wish to participate, please e-mail us at sacc@sa.org or call us at (U.S.) 425-644-1597. We need your full name and social security number as soon as possible so you can receive clearance to enter the prison.

SACC Literature

The SACC is developing two forms and literature for use by SA members who want to participate in prison service work. Both forms have helpful guidelines regarding correspondence between members and inmates. We also have a sample letter that an individual, group or Intergroup can use as a model for writing a letter to prison officials to introduce them to SA. You can request these forms by contacting us at the above e-mail address or phone number, or by writing to us at SACC, P.O. Box 283, Bellevue, WA. 98009. The SACC sends out a letter to each inmate who requests our literature, describing the services we do and do not provide to inmates.

SACC Contributions

The SACC is in need of contributions to its fund. The Trustees and Delegates hope the Fellowship will contribute \$8,000 to the fund this year. In the first quarter, we received \$800. Please pass on this information to your local groups and Intergroups. Any donations may be sent directly to the International Central Office, earmarked for the SACC. Our outreach to prisons

depends on your support and we thank you for it.

Call for Member Stories 2000

The last edition of Sexaholics Anonymous Member Stories was published in 1989. We currently sell about 500 copies of this every year. The SA Literature Committee intends next year to publish a new volume tentatively titled Member Stories 2000.

This is a call to members of the Fellowship to share their experience, strength and hope with other sexaholics. We currently have several stories collected over the past two years and some from the previous edition. We are especially interested in adding stories from outside North America and from women, minorities and youthful sexaholics. The time-tested format is "what we used to be like, what happened and what we are like now." As applicable, how you have progressed in your spiritual life, relationships and sobriety will be especially interesting.

The Literature Committee asks that recovery stories be sent by regular mail or e-mail to the International Central Office. We ask that the stories be from persons with three or more years of sexual sobriety as SA understands it and that the stories be reviewed by your local group, Intergroup, or regional assembly. If you do not have access to a group or Intergroup, or if you have less than three years' sexual sobriety and want your story considered, please send it through your sponsor with a letter explaining the particulars of your situation. In any case, be sure to tell us how to contact you.

After review we will contact you if the Literature Committee wishes to use

from you, it adduces from me and from you a sense of compassion and understanding that everybody's on exactly the same journey, a sense of service, that the best way I can serve humanity is by getting my life together.

But I can't leave it there. The program doesn't let me leave it there, because the Steps continue to remind me that there's another Step to go and that's one of service. And part of that service in practical terms is coming and sharing my story, listening to other people's stories, of empathizing with their pain and somehow say, "I can't take your gold from you because it's your gold. And it's my gold, you can't take it from me either but you can help me appreciate that it is the gold." And that's the painful part because it can lead me to want to suicide. I tried to suicide. It can lead me to jail, it can lead me to drink, it can lead me to all sorts of broken relationships, but still that's my gold and that's the trudging thing because I've worn that path so long and so often and in so many different disguises and in so many different ways over such a long period of time that it's very simple for me to say, "I can't cope with it any more. This group is too small for me. I want the world to be my oyster." As if it was the oyster. It was really the bloody hard shell. Even the pearl that comes out of the oyster is imperfect. Have you

ever looked at a genuine pearl? It has always got little bubbles in it, little crevices in it. And that's the way we are.

Thank God this program, that by saying trudging the road, don't go back that way, be aware of where I've been and continue on forward, recognizes there's gold in that path, and the biggest part of the gold is not to return there, and I'm not going to return there if I know that I've got people like you who are going to say, "all right, Barry, I'll sit with you, we'll sit with you and 57 years of wastepaper bins full of your stuff, and help you to appreciate that there's gold in them." Thank you.



Member News

Surrendering Relationships

I have been sober in SA for a little over four years. I would like to share some things that have worked for me as a single sexaholic:

1. I surrender relationships and my behavior with women to sponsorship. I rely on God to speak through my sponsor when it comes to my relations with women.
2. Give God total control of every area of my life. Let God

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manage the world around me and focus instead on changing myself. I can't manage it myself.

3. Let go of my wants, except one—to do God's will. Be content with what I have (need).

4. Keep focused on staying sober, staying in the moment and detaching from my misconceptions—not escaping.

Women and sex are my drugs. I must find in God the comfort, love and relief I looked for from women, lust and sex. In order to do that I must find a new way of life.

It's about action. **Jason F.**, La-Salle, Colo.

Surrender—Winning by Losing

For me, the concept of SA surrender calls to mind the image of a balloon being inflated. As air surges into the balloon, a battle begins. The air, called lust, says, "Ever see a balloon burst? It doesn't have a small, neat hole in it. It is totally blown apart. I'm going to burst you into tatters and shreds."

The balloon says, "I'm going to keep my perfect form so that not even the tiniest hole mars my appearance. Furthermore, in doing so, I will compress you, air, into a tiny, unnoticeable space inside me. You will be impotent and unseen!"

The battle begins. As air is pumped into the balloon, it starts to feel an unbearable pressure until it is stretched to its absolute limit. Finally, it knows it will explode

into pieces at any second. The fear of this is overwhelming. Then, out of the corner of its eye, it glimpses God in the form of a long shiny needle. This is naturally unnerving and threatening to a balloon, but it knows this is a caring needle which, if invited, can penetrate its neck so gently and carefully that it can let out the air while making only the tiniest, invisible holes.

"But this would be giving up. This would be losing. Wouldn't that make the air the winner? Well, it certainly wouldn't be getting its way by blowing me to pieces," the balloon thinks.

In an instant it is done. And the relief, the let down of stress that begins slowly but steadily is so much better than its alternative! And the balloon just lies there with a needle sticking in it, able to see all its innermost dark secrets, and yet not be destroyed.

This begins to feel like winning. **Simon T.**, Newcastle, Australia.

Staying Sober as a Loner

My story of sexual sobriety is like an exodus story. In May 1997, I left familiar surroundings and boarded a flight to Rome. On that day I surrendered everything to God—my addiction to lust, my life and work as a priest, my objects of sexual obsession and emotional dependency, lustful movies, pornography, inappropriate touching of minors and women on public transports, having to resign from a

Seventh Tradition

Albuquerque, NM	54.50	Glen Ellyn, IL	641.00	Sacramento Intl Conf	3427.19
Anaheim, CA	40.00	Grand Rapids, MI	31.50	Salem, OR	24.50
Atlanta, GA	373.17	Greenwich, CT	200.00	Salem SACC	37.00
Aurora, IL	12.00	Herndon, VA	171.00	San Diego IG, CA	600.00
Baltimore, MD	76.00	High Point, NC	30.00	San Diego, CA	187.39
Bannockburn, IL	90.00	Idaho Falls, ID	160.00	Seattle, WA	63.15
Barrington, IL	260.00	Irvine, CA	100.00	Seattle SACC WA	21.10
Barrington SACC	75.00	Jersey City, NJ	25.00	Silver Springs, MD	190.04
Beltsville, MD	130.00	Kansas City, KS	200.00	Springfield, VA	128.90
Boston, MA	44.00	Knoxville, TN	15.00	St. Charles, IL	50.00
Bozeman, MT	38.50	LA Olympic, CA	88.00	St Louis, MO	50.00
Bryn Athyn, PA	600.00	Laguna Niguel, CA	20.00	St Louis SACC	100.00
Buffalo, NY	30.00	Lake Mary, FL	22.00	Steubenville, OH	39.20
Camarillo, CA	82.00	Little Falls, NJ	100.00	Timmonium, MD	197.52
Central VA IG	50.00	Long Island IG, NY	852.27	Titusville, FL	22.00
Centreville, VA	120.00	Manchester, NH	10.00	Torrance, CA	100.00
Cerritos, CA	50.00	Manhattan Bch, CA	45.00	Tukwila, WA	20.00
Chicago IG	702.50	Mid-Hudson Valley, NY	20.00	Tukwila SACC	20.00
Chicago IG SACC	300.00	Milwaukee, WI	109.85	Twin Falls ID	15.00
Chicago, IL	447.00	Minnepolis IG, MN	50.00	Vancouver, WA	25.00
Childs, MD	11.75	Montreal, PQ, Canada	163.35	Washington, DC	770.66
Chino, CA	125.00	Mt Clemens, MI	80.00	Washington DC SACC	100.00
Clonakilty, Ireland	421.00	Nashville, TN	43.50	Waterford, Ireland	131.26
Cochise, AZ	2.00	Nashville IG, TN	600.00	Waukesha, WI	40.00
Colorado Spgs, CO	128.00	New England IG	40.00	West LA, CA	106.58
Columbus, OH	225.00	New York Metro NY	600.00	Wheeling, WV	58.00
Corona, CA	80.00	Newberg, OR	75.00	Wheeling/Steubenville IG	40.00
Corona, CA SACC	60.00	North Hollywood, CA	157.20	Willow Creek, IL	480.00
Crystal City VA	348.62	NE Ohio IG	100.00	White Plains, NY	25.00
Crystal Lake, IL	175.00	Oakland SACC	127.36	Willow Creek, IL	125.00
Dallas, TX	60.00	OKC IG	1000.00	Woodbridge, VA	152.00
Darien, IL	60.00	Orlando, FL	22.00	Yardley, PA	24.00
Darien, IL SACC	45.00	Painesville, OH	50.00	Yorba Linda, CA	125.00
Daytona Beach, FL	52.00	Palm Desert, CA	100.02		
Denver, CO	375.00	Penn Hills, PA	348.33	Group Total	21,500.83
Elk Grove Village, IL	140.00	Pensacola, FL	30.00	SACC Total	948.66
Erie, PA	19.14	Phoenix, AZ	28.00	SA Internet Total	125.00
Essington, PA	72.00	Portland, OR	364.00	Individual Total	933.25
Fairfax, VA	131.50	Portland IG, OR	300.01		
Falls Church, VA	100.00	Portland SACC	48.20	Grand Total	23,507.74
Falls Church SACC	15.00	QCSA Davenport, IA	50.00		
Fredericksburg, VA	216.00	Rochester, NY	378.47		
Georgia Intergroup	797.23	Rochester IG, NY	249.03		

Donations for First Quarter



SA Around the Globe



Group News

Virginia-Washington, D.C.—Over the past months, 12 SA groups in the northern Virginia/Washington D.C. region have voted to clarify "spouse" and "marriage" in the SA definition of sobriety, stating that sober sex in SA can find its expression only in a vowed and legal union between a man and a woman. This clarification now is read at the beginning of these groups' meetings.

The local Intergroup also has voted to clarify. After some false starts and months of discussion, the Virginia/Maryland/Washington D.C. Intergroup voted 14 to five that it understands marriage in SA to be a vowed and legal union between a man and a woman.

Trudging the Road in the Northwest

The Northwest region held its biannual retreat May 23 - 25. There were 70 members of SA and S-Anon in attendance.

I came away from White Rock feeling *part of* rather than *apart from*. I got to thinking about the actions that brought these feelings in their wake. I came to the retreat with six other members. I joined these friends in a walk down to the beach. I went over some Step work on a major resentment with another member of the program. I borrowed another member's cell phone to call my son for his birthday. I adjusted to sleeping in a cabin with six other sexaholics. I participated in leading a meeting. I made some new friends from other parts of our region. I was continuing the "process of

growing up by coming out," as our literature says.

I also came away from White Rock feeling that SA recovery in the Northwest was growing stronger. There were more familiar faces at this retreat as well as those of newcomers to the Fellowship. More of us are using the kit of spiritual tools that give us a daily reprieve from our illness. New leadership is coming forward to assume service roles within our Fellowship. And plans are being made to carry our message to the professional community.

My experience at White Rock reassured me that I'm not alone. There are many others trudging the same road of happy destiny. And for that I am grateful. **William R.**, Bellevue, Wash.

SA Corrections Committee Report

We are very excited about our upcoming trip to the Southeastern Correctional Facility near Lancaster, Ohio. We purposely scheduled this visit around the SA International Conference in Cleveland on July 9 — 11, as it is our hope some members attending the conference will be able to visit the facility July 9. We will leave the hotel at 10:00 a.m. and return at 10:00 p.m. The facility is about three-and-a-half hours south of Cleveland.

We will meet a prison official who is very supportive of 12-step programs within the prison system and who is looking forward to becoming better acquainted with SA. We will also partici-

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job of trust, loss of trust, dignity and direction, and a cancelled schedule for psychiatric treatment.

I landed in Italy and proceeded to a town where I enrolled in a school of spirituality. Immediately I made connection by mail to my SA sponsor and to the International Central Office, informing them of my new address. I also joined the SA Loners' List. I worked the first 10 Steps of SA with my sponsor's kind and patient companionship. I read with great enthusiasm and openness the AA Big Book, the Twelve and Twelve, some meditation books at my disposal and every issue of *Essay* that arrives.

I humbly followed the advice of my sponsor and wrote to sober and recovering members of SA through the Loners' List. When opportunity allows, I make 12-Step calls to those who are still suffering from lust addition and keep spreading the hope of SA, even if there is denial and ignorance of the deadly nature of the disease on the part of others. Twice I disregarded open lust temptations from women.

I cut my supply of lust through TV, magazines and pictures. On the positive side, I connect to God on a daily basis and during moments of temptations, and thank him at night for his help. I give myself to the person God sends to me during the day without self-interest or self-centeredness. I ex-

perienced on significant occasions the wonder, joy and freedom of connecting with another human being on a deep level of respect, love and unity! Of course I also suffered from and was crushed by memories of the past and visual images of fantasy which came periodically during the first year of sexual sobriety.

I said No to the next drink of lust. I did not die. Instead, I'm very much alive and strong today. Letters from SA loners reveal the fragility of sexual sobriety and the pain of relapses. I share something of my own experience to give a helping hand and spiritual support. The more I gain strength and quality sobriety, the more I understand the seriousness and destructiveness of lust in my life, and the more I see I need God and SA to discover a more useful, happy and fulfilling life.

I can relate very well with the cry of despair of a speaker at an SA conference who said, "Why can't people get sober? Why can't people understand?" In my years of slavery to lust I couldn't stop lusting because I kept practicing the acts and insanity of lust! Only after I mustered my remaining strength to leave behind that world of my illusions and started taking the steps of sexual sobriety and freedom did I begin to understand there is life after lust. The more I stay away from the first

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drink of lust and gain progressive victory over it, the more I come to understand the grace and beauty of my life, which I spend to give love rather than take it, to give hope rather than destroy it, and to believe in the power of God rather than deny him!

After two years of learning how to live a normal life according to the 12 Steps and principles of SA, I hope to return to my home and share the SA message with sexaholics who are suffering. For that, I count on the prayers, unity and support of everyone in SA Fellowship. **Bobby S.**, Italy.

Food for the Soul

It started about eight years ago when several men who were awaiting sentencing began attending local SA meetings. Although I suspected they were attending the meetings in an attempt to influence the court, I gradually learned this was not the primary motivation of all of them.

After sentencing, I maintained correspondence with several of these men, and I got onto the visitor's list for one. (In Arizona, we can only be on one visitor list at a time.) As the initial member moved to a distant prison, I changed to another list, and have now been on several, while maintaining correspondence with four or five.

A couple of years ago, I picked up from prison the first and only

one of this group to be released and brought him to our home for brunch. I still maintain contact with him in another state. Meanwhile those I corresponded with met other prisoners who were interested in recovery. A couple of these men, who I have never met, continue to work the Steps conscientiously by mail. This has been more effective and satisfactory than I expected at the outset.

I have tried twice to get a regular SA meeting established in the Arizona State Prison at Tucson. Both times I have gotten negative responses. I suspect the lack of interest was partly because they had a contract treatment program in operation, and partly because they were not sure of an anonymous program and an unknown leader.

Recently we got a new warden, and the treatment contract was not renewed. Through a friend, I became acquainted with a prison chaplain who decided to pursue the matter. Within the last few months I have jumped through several hoops and the issue is now before the deputy warden.

Through all of this work, I have had to develop considerable humility. But the experience has been good for my soul. **Ray S.**, Tucson, Ariz.

Finding Support

"On the A.A. calendar it was Year Two A newcomer appeared at one of these groups



Dear Roy,

I read with great interest your recent article "The Luster's Fear of Dying" in the [Spring 1999] issue of the *Essay*. Personally I have witnessed this extreme fear of dying while undergoing the detox process of God's powerful grace acting deeply in my being and restoring sanity. The entire body is visited as well as the soul during this spiritual experience leading to new freedom and joy. I am really indebted to SA for the experience.

In Montreal, I meet a large number of newcomers to SA who are totally devastated after stopping lusting and acting out. Some never come back, but many do return and experience less fear of entering this process of detoxification from a very deadly disease.

In your article you put a great deal of emphasis on "progressive *victory* over lust." My own experience with lust and recovery from lust does not corroborate the fact that one gets victory over lust, but gets instead a daily reprieve which perpetuates itself if one does what the program suggests as absolutely mandatory. The AA Big Book, which has been my Bible for nearly 19 years, confirms that an alcoholic doesn't get victory over alcoholism but gets a "daily reprieve" if he keeps spiritually in form.

It has been my experience that none of my other "isms" have been cured by practicing the 12-Step program, they have been kept silent by God's action deep inside, but only if I keep in touch with Him on a daily basis. If I neglect meetings, AA or SA, stop meditating, stop helping others, stop admitting my wrongs and my powerlessness, I am doomed to return to hell. In fact, I have experienced several slips that way. In my case, it takes only one or two weeks away from the program before the old obsessions and behavior return.

You are so right when you say that true recovery over lust is absolutely impossible without the active presence of God and his power to restore peace and joy. This has been my experience over the past seven years with the SA program as well as my 19 years in AA.

Many thanks again for your excellent article.
Maurice G., Quebec, Canada

Dear Maurice,

Your description of the "victory over lust" issue is precisely the way I see it. Being temptable with lust from within ourselves or from without apparently never leaves us. It has never left me, although the number of temptations where I feel the pull has diminished so that I usually can't even remember the last time. The victory is in not having to "drink" on that image, fantasy or memory, not making my spiritual *connection* with lust inside my soul.

Victory over lust does not refer to no longer being temptable or to no longer being tempted, it refers to the fact that in that very temptation we can have victory over it so that we do not have to take a drink from it, take it into our soul, ingest it. This is the way I interpret Bill W's word "victory" in the Third Step prayer. "Taking away" our difficulties is interpreted by the words "victory over them." This is largely misunderstood.

It's like a camera: The lens see everything—my eyes, memory or fantasy see whatever they see—even something evil or lustful in itself. But the film is not exposed and imprinted—until I open the shutter. I am not lusting when I am tempted to lust. I am not lusting when I am tempted to lust and also feel the strong pull to take a drink. That strong pull is not lusting; it is merely being tempted by lust. To put it another way, it's not a sin to be tempted with sin.

Today I can feel the power of a temptation without having to drink. Thanks be to God! And the reason I did not have to drink today is because I asked Him to keep me sober from every single lust today and the Twelve principles are active in me today. So when I experience the temptation, the Shield of His presence was within me and shielded me from my lust and the lust of that other person or image.