



*God grant me the serenity  
to accept the things I cannot change,  
courage to change the things I can,  
and wisdom to know the difference.*

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www.sa.org

2002, Issue Two

# Essay®

A Quarterly Publication of Sexaholics Anonymous, Incorporated

## WELCOME HOME

My story is not unique, and for that I am grateful. When I discovered I was a classic sexaholic, I became hopeful, realizing my problem had a classic solution. Hope and honesty were small words in my vocabulary and an even smaller part of my life before I came to SA.

My grandfathers were alcoholics and possibly sexaholics. My family did not foster any visible signs of affection, but today I thank my Higher Power for the strength He gave my folks, as immigrants to America, to make the best life they were able for themselves and their children. I now see how hard that must have been.

That was not always my attitude. I was a demanding and emotionally needy child. I demanded far more than my parents could give and I grew up feeling deprived. I constantly com-

pared myself to others and was extremely sensitive to and envious of what others got. Theirs was always better. I held that against my parents and so justified not being part of their lives. I isolated and effectively grew up without a family while I suffered the great pain of self-pity.

I was interested in sexual things from a young age. Today I believe it was part of me from the start. At the age of six, I was involved in childhood sexual experimentation with an older neighbor girl. My father caught us and made a big deal of it. While the girl got in trouble, I got the message that we did something dirty. Around the age of nine, I was lured by a thirteen or fourteen year old neighbor boy. There was secrecy and hiding, but his father caught us in the act, and he was beaten

*(Continued on page 3)*

**IN THIS  
ISSUE:**

Step Two  
The Easier, Softer Way  
SA in Albion Prison

This is SA's meeting in print. We need your group news, articles, and personal stories.

## Sexaholics Anonymous...

is a fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength, and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover.

The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop lusting and become sexually sober. There are no dues or fees for SA membership; we are self-supporting through our own contributions.

SA is not allied with any sect, denomination, politics, organization, or institution; does not wish to engage in any controversy; neither endorses nor opposes any causes.

Our primary purpose is to stay sexually sober and help others to achieve sexual sobriety.\*

Sexaholics Anonymous is a recovery program based on the principles of Alcoholics Anonymous and received permission from AA to use its Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions in 1979.

*\*Adapted with permission from the AA Grapevine, Inc.*

## Share the Message Share your Story

Dear *Essay* Reader,

As we move toward summer and possible vacation plans, we hope you will take this issue of the *Essay* along on your travels. Like our sister publication *The Grapevine*, our goal is that you will be taking a “meeting in print” with you. With *Essay* contributions from you, sharing the experience and hope of your recovery in Sexaholics Anonymous, each issue can move closer to reaching that goal.

SA members can subscribe individually and through their groups. One year (four issues) costs \$10.00 US. A group subscription of 10 or more copies sent to the same address is \$8.00 US each. Payment can be by credit card, check or money order. An order form and return envelope are enclosed with this issue. Soon, you will be able to subscribe through our website at [www.sa.org](http://www.sa.org).

The first two volumes of **Quintessential *Essay*** are available from the SA International Central Office. These contain respectively six Member Stories and five Practical Recovery Tools from recent issues of the *Essay*. Their cost is \$5.00 each. We believe you will find these useful.

You can contact us at [essay@sa.org](mailto:essay@sa.org) or by mail at *Essay*, PO Box 111910, Nashville, TN 37222-1910.

Thank you for your support of *Essay*.  
Sincerely,

*Essay* Editorial Committee

## Essay Editorial Guidelines

The *Essay* is answerable to the fellowship as a whole. 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 SA International 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 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. We like to receive articles electronically for ease of editing. Send articles to the SA International Central Office, attention of the *Essay* editor. E-mail should be addressed to [essay@sa.org](mailto:essay@sa.org). All articles need to be in English. All articles must contain an address, telephone number, or e-mail address so that authenticity can be verified. This information will remain confidential. 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.

with a leather belt. These episodes were shot through with fear of exposure and excitement of secrecy.

I taught myself masturbation at the age of ten by using an instrument. The event was overwhelming. I became addicted immediately. I knew from past sexual experience that what I was doing was dirty and would get an explosive response from adults. The fear of being caught only heightened the excitement. Dishonesty grew as my secret became harder to protect, and it spawned the double life I led for many years.

I used masturbation to solve all of my problems. As they increased, my masturbation increased, at times to the point of physiological exhaustion. The toxic effect appeared in my early teens. My fantasies were insufficient. I wanted pictures and desired to act out with my friends. Hard-core pornography was not available then, but there were books with pictures and masturbation took on new importance. I wanted to act out with all my friends and I was constantly scheming to see them and touch them sexually.

Voyeurism now became an important component of my disease. I would find myself in places like public restrooms for hours on end, bored out of my mind, just to catch a sexual glimpse of a man. The rare times I "scored" served to feed my fantasies so I could continue masturbation as my means of coping.

I disconnected from reality, and turned so far inward that I really did not know who I was any more. I

latched on to friends and acquaintances, attempting to be with them just to have some kind of identity. My silent demands on them to be everything to me only put me in a position to be hurt. Making these people my gods only made things worse because being hurt ruined my trust, which further isolated me, thereby completing the cycle to start the process again.

My insatiable need to be superior supported my belief that I had discovered something unique. Since sex was not discussed at home, I understood only that sex was dirty, forbidden, loaded with euphoric pleasure, and took away the world. This solution was short-lived and posed a problem because it had to be repeated, *ad nauseam*, to fill the terrible emptiness from my isolating attitude toward, God, family and peers.

I found a beautiful woman whom I loved, and we married. The transfer of her attention to her family and our first child gave me the excuse I needed to fulfill my fantasies by acting out with men. Pornography shops were just opening, and hard-core films were being shown. My first movie was like a bomb exploding in my head. I was changed forever. My innocence was completely gone. My fantasies became more intense, and my addiction deepened. Dishonesty took on new importance as I took advantage of my employer's trust in me and took time from my job to act out. I lied to my family, using a side business activity as an excuse for my late returns home.

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*(Continued from page 3)*

I attended the new porno shops, spending the family money on books and movies, and bomb after bomb exploded in my head. I learned about bath houses, which I perceived as an endless supply of lust objects. At last my fantasies could be realized and I didn't need my wife and family any more. But, as before, the toxic effect appeared. I needed more and more to satisfy less and less, and I began to realize that something was dreadfully wrong.

My solution was simple: go to a therapist, place my money on the table, and sit back and relax while I got fixed. Over a ten-year period, I went through seven therapists and three priests, all of whom practically begged me to stop acting out so I could get to the issues at hand. Each week brought the same story until they got bored and let me go. I even suggested to them that I was addicted and needed something like AA, but my quest for the easier, softer way blinded me to the true solution, even as it was at my doorstep.

The disease escalated. I took more risks with my personal safety and that of my family by paying for sex and bringing strangers home. I also played roulette with the deadly disease, AIDS.

By now, the dishonesty was rampant as my double life expanded. I presented myself as a moral, righteous person to everyone on the one side, while engaging in shameful, immoral behavior on the other. The guilt was crushing, the pain was intense, and the

energy spent was enormous. I always believed in God, but my faulty thinking kept Him separate from me until I cleaned up my life. I knew in my sick mind He would never come to the filthy places I visited.

My sexaholism progressed to the point where my whole life caved in on me in a church one afternoon. I had the horrifying realization that nothing I was doing made a difference and that I was doomed to a life of acting out and was going to lose all and possibly die. I broke down and cried bitter tears of powerlessness like I'd never felt before. I realized I could not purge this from my life. Then came the sinking feeling that no one else could purge it either, not even God. I took Step One at that moment, but was condemned to terrible hopelessness for four more years because I had not come to believe. My acting out continued, the disease progressed, and the pain and guilt became very more intense. The solution, as I then saw it, was to take a drug to kill my sexual appetite for a time, to try life without lust and sex.

As God ordered things, someone with whom I had acted out in a porno shop and who shared my problem, became a connection to SA two days before my first injection. I read that wonderful SA brochure and cried again, this time with tears of hope. I was excited about going to my first meeting, but feared I would find a den of lust. Instead, as I told my story, they heard my desperation and they said the golden words to me that I shall always

*(Continued on page 5)*

## The Twelve Traditions of Sexaholics Anonymous

## The Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics 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 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, films, and television.
  12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.
1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon A.A. 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 A.A. membership is a desire to stop drinking.
  4. Each group should be autonomous, except in matters affecting other groups or A.A. as a whole.
  5. Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.
  6. An A.A. group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the A.A. name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.
  7. Every A.A. 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. A.A., 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 A.A. 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, 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

## The Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1) We admitted we were powerless over lust — that our lives had become unmanageable.  | 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.  | 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 <i>as we understood Him</i> .   | 3) Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God <i>as we understood Him</i> .   |
| 4) Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.  | 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.  | 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.   | 6) Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.   |
| 7) Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.   | 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.   | 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.   | 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.   | 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 <i>as we understood Him</i> , praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out. | 11) Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God <i>as we understood Him</i> , 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.                            | 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. ("A.A.W.S.") Permission to reprint and adapt the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions does not mean that AAWS has approved the contents of this publication, nor that AAWS 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, or in any other non-AA context, does not imply otherwise.*

treasure, "Welcome home." It was then I realized how lost I was and it was then I took Step Two. God came to me and I knew it.

Step Three was not yet for me because I had to test my solutions once more. After two and one-half months, I acted out one more time. It was then I realized that I would lose my last hope if I didn't become honest, and turn my whole life and will over to God. I thank Him for the willingness to make that decision, for without it, there would be no program, and what I wanted most, sexual sobriety, would be nothing more than wishful thinking.

I see today how far God has brought me. Steps Four through Twelve have shown me how much humility I must have to stay sober and what a long way I must journey in recovery, one day at a time. This gives me peace because my life today has purpose and direction. The awesome power of God through this program has restored in me an innocence my sexual addiction had taken from me. The Twelve Promises are coming true for me today, and I cling to my Higher Power as tightly as I am able, for I have been shown that without this life-saving program I have no God, and without God I have nothing.



## Essay: Future Issues

The SA Literature Committee is preparing a pamphlet on our SA Fellowship's experience with the Twelve Traditions. The Editors of the Essay would like to devote a future issue of the Essay to our experience, strength and hope with all of the Traditions.

We need your help.

In addition, the SA Literature Committee is charged to prepare a pamphlet on our Fellowship's experience in recovery with same sex lust issues. The Editors of the Essay would like to devote a future issue of the Essay to our experience, strength and hope with same sex lust.

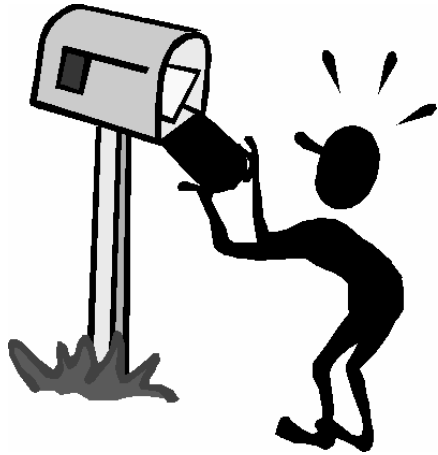
Please send your writings, experience and thoughts to us at:

SAICO – ESSAY,  
PO Box 111910,  
Nashville, TN 37222-1910 U.S.A.

With anticipation and thanks,  
The Essay Committee

# LETTERS & FEEDBACK

LETTERS, WE GET LETTERS!

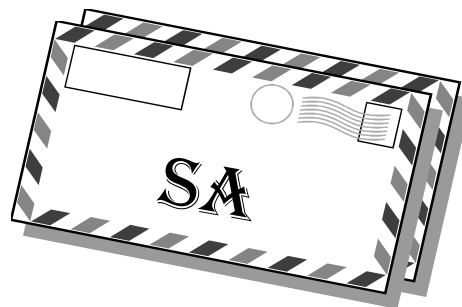


Letter to the Essay  
Conference Tapes

Dear Editor,

I never go to conferences because I am most vulnerable when I am out of town, regardless of the setting. As a result I make it a point to listen to all the tapes from each of the conferences. I was so happy to be able to hear [the tapes] from Atlanta. Thank you [all] for sharing your recovery.

Anonymous



March, 2002

Letter to the Editor,

Thank you for sending the Essay. I continue to read them and what has happened in other people's lives. I want to thank you for keeping me informed and I want to wish you the best.

Roman P., TX

## SA Financial Snapshot

2002 1st Quarter March 31		2002 March YTD Budget	
Contributions	18,557.57	Contributions	20,250.00
SACFC	2,614.62	SACFC	1,750.00
Conventions	4,030.00	Conventions	3,100.00
Literature Sales	8,753.41	Literature Sales	1,500.00
Discounts		Discounts	.00
Refunds	.00	Refunds	.00
Interest	579.55	Interest	1,250.00
<i>Essay</i>	975.00	<i>Essay</i>	1,750.00
		Prudent Reserve	.00
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>35,510.15</b>	<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>29,600.00</b>
Bank Charges	.00	Bank Charges	25.00
Credit Card Fees	171.70	Credit Card Fees	25.00
Conference Fees	.00	Conference Fees	1,100.00
Depreciation	431.72	Depreciation	400.00
Interest Expense	.00	Interest Expense	0.00
Liability Insurance	444.00	Liability Insurance	625.00
Legal	658.09	Legal	375.00
Accounting	910.00	Accounting	1,000.00
Literature expense	603.00	Literature Expense	1,250.00
Payroll	16,137.93	Payroll	16,325.00
Payroll Tax	1,011.61	Payroll Tax	1,475.00
Pension	.00	Pension	1,150.00
Postage & Freight	2,020.56	Postage & Freight	1,125.00
Office Expense	291.90	Office Expense	500.00
Printing	3,133.29	Printing	1,250.00
Rent	1,950.00	Rent	1,950.00
Maintenance	318.73	Maintenance	225.00
Supplies	6.58	Supplies	375.00
Sales Tax	8.60	Sales Tax	125.00
Taxes & Licenses	72.68	Taxes & Licenses	50.00
Telephone	1,972.39	Telephone	2,125.00
Travel	4,216.07	Travel	4,250.00
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>34,358.85</b>	<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>35,725.00</b>

## First Quarter Donations January - March 2002

Albuquerque, NM	150.00	Grand Rapids, MI	200.00	SA UK	350.00
Anaheim, CA	95.00	Greenwich, CT	100.00	Savannah, GA	71.50
Ann Arbor, MI	25.00	Halifax NS Canada	32.17	Silver Spring, MD CFC	395.19
Annapolis, MD	50.00	Idaho Falls, ID	95.00	Slovenia	10.00
Arlington, VA CFC	7.00	Jacksonville, FL	100.00	Slovenia CFC	10.00
Arlington Hgts, IL	250.00	Laguna Niguel, CA	125.00	So Barrington, IL	393.00
Asheville, NC	60.00	Lexington, KY	20.00	So Barrington CFC	57.00
Atlanta Convention	4,030.00	Lincoln, NE	14.00	Springfield, VA	100.00
Atlanta, GA	137.82	Little Falls, NJ	150.00	Springfield CFC	34.00
Baltimore, MD	124.00	London, England	139.00	Sudbury ON Canada	30.54
Bannockburn, IL	50.00	Los Altos, CA	150.00	Tacoma, WA	57.00
Bannockburn CFC	25.00	Los Angeles, CA	27.75	Tacoma CFC	38.00
Belfast, Ireland	7.50	Manassas, VA	400.00	Toledo, OH	50.00
Bellevue, WA	19.00	Manchester, NH	50.00	Toronto ON Canada	181.37
Beltsville, MD	55.00	Milwaukee, WI	75.00	Tucson, AZ	600.00
Bozeman, MT	103.10	Monroe, LA	22.00	Tukwila, WA	20.00
Brooklyn, NY CFC	20.00	Montclair, NJ	100.00	Twin Cities, MN	169.00
Bryn Athyn, PA	245.25	Montreal QC Canada	61.08	Twin Cities CFC	43.00
Bryn Athyn CFC	81.75	Mt Clemens, MI	100.00	Twin Falls, ID	20.00
Burke, VA CFC	102.00	Munster, IN	100.00	Vallejo, CA	555.00
Camarillo, CA	25.00	Nashville, TN	330.00	Vancouver, WA	143.00
Chicago, IL	416.00	North Hollywood, CA	239.55	Waldorf, MD	61.00
Chicago IG CFC	232.75	Northern CA IG	1,775.00*	Washington, DC	135.00
Cincinnati, OH	100.00	Ogden, UT	8.00	Washington DC CFC	108.76
Crystal Lake, IL	205.00	Orem, UT	100.00	Westchester, NY	400.00
Dallas, TX	90.00	Orlando, FL	20.00	Westlake Village, Ca	35.00
Davenport, IA	50.00	Overland Park, KS	240.00	Wheeling, WV	72.00
Daytona Beach, FL	22.00	Owensboro, KY	25.00	White Plains, NY	100.00
Daytona Beach CFC	22.00	Paducah, KY	100.00	Windsor ON Canada	100.00
Delmar, NY	50.00	Pasadena, CA	130.00	Woodstock, IL	83.00
Deltona, FL	18.00	Penn Hills, PA (Fri)	147.00	Yardley, PA	70.00
Deltona CFC	17.00	Pittsburgh, PA CFC	25.00	Yonkers, NY	32.00
Denver, CO	57.00	Portland, OR	246.00	Yorba Linda, CA	70.00
Dewey, WI	190.00	Queens, NY	50.00	York, PA	20.00
Downers Grove, IL	36.00	Riverside, CA	100.00		
Downers Grove CFC	100.00	Rockford, IL	100.00	<b>Group Total</b>	<b>17,187.94</b>
Eastern PA IG	1,000.00	Rockland, NY	75.00	<b>Individual</b>	<b>1,537.00</b>
Elk Grove Village, IL	172.00	Roswell, GA	87.00	<b>SA CFC Total</b>	<b>1,771.45</b>
Erie, PA	68.60	Sacramento, CA	500.00	<b>SA Net Group</b>	<b>50.00</b>
Fargo, ND	15.00	Salem, OR	105.21	<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>20,546.39</b>
Franklin, TN	70.00	Salt Lake City, UT	270.00		
Frederick, MD	25.00	San Diego, CA	52.50		
Fresno, CA	100.00	San Jose, CA	50.00		
Ft Wayne, IN	25.00	San Jose CFC	25.00		
Gaithersburg, MD	50.00	Sand Point, ID	20.00		
Glen Ellyn, IL CFC	375.00	Sand Point CFC	70.00		

\*In the last issue, the amount for Northern CA IG was incorrectly reported. This is the correct amount with our gratitude and sincere apologies.

## The Easier, Softer Way

When we come into the program, all we want is physical sobriety. But we quickly learn that not acting out is not enough. Because real sobriety is living "happy, joyous and free." The White Book tells us that to maintain physical sobriety and enjoy progressive victory over lust, we have to face the waves of emotion and constant trials of life we were running from when we came into the program.

Chapter Five of the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous reminds us: "We thought we could find an easier, softer way. But we could not." Oddly enough, we find that working the program on these defects of character actually is the "easier, softer way."

In the chapter titled "Steps 6 and 7" in the White Book, we learn that we have to deal with these ups and downs one moment, one temptation, one wave of feelings at a time.

We continue to watch for the self-centeredness or egotism which causes our character defects. When this is evident, we ask our Higher Power to help us be willing to have it removed.

We avoid hanging onto negative feelings. We can't afford to hold one to anger, resentments, self-pity and fear. We avoid sulking in long silences which can result from pride or vengeance. Any of the behaviors can keep us

off balance and propel us into emotional binges.

We find it is pointless to be angry or resentful towards people who are also suffering from the pains of being human.

We are happier when we can accept responsibility daily for our actions and do not fall back into the pattern of blaming.

When we feel we have failed, we promptly admit this to ourselves and, if necessary, to others. We forgive ourselves and others.

If we try and fail, at least we have tried. It is often through our failures that we learn more about ourselves.

We learn not to take ourselves too seriously. We benefit by gaining a sense of humor. We find that we can laugh at ourselves. Through this process of continual self-appraisal we maintain our honesty and humility. We focus on living one day at a time, and we continue our progress in recovery.  
**Will L and Tom L., Denver, CO**



## Ruminations on Sex, Lust and Victory

Does my marriage permit me to lust, still? Is it my life's equation that marriage = sex = lust?

I suppose that could be. Certainly it would be true for me that there is indeed a very strong association between sex and lust. And if you ask me - "Do you want to be free from lust?" and I was to honestly answer - I would have to tell you, "No, I do not want to be free from lust."

Given this state of affairs - what am I to do? I do desire, at some level, to live a real life, to have a real concern for those about me, to be in the HERE and NOW. But at another level, I resist the spiritual path necessary to get there because I really am afraid success would deprive me of my lust, forever. And for me, in my present state of mind, that would be a kind of death.

Each time we say the Serenity Prayer in fellowship, I have been thinking just how profound it is for such a short prayer. We ask for serenity (and surrender) to accept the things we cannot change. In the beginning, I thought that meant the serenity to accept the things we could not control or change in others. But, lately, I have been asking myself, does it not apply to me and my own disease as well? Maybe I should relinquish my idea of an "absolute" victory - in the sense

that I might one day be free of lust - and set my sights much, much lower. Maybe I should accept (and be serene about) the knowledge that I will always be a sex addict. Maybe I should accept (and be serene about) the fact that I will always be tortured by bouts of lust. In other words, is the Serenity Prayer trying to teach me that my concept of victory should be redefined? Perhaps a simple acceptance of both is the victory I should be seeking.

Courage. Courage to change the things I can. Courage, indeed. Fear has ruled my life and now I need courage. Courage to give up all those fantasies and acts that corrupt me even as my sexaholism cries out with promises of escape from those very fears, pressures, vagaries and responsibilities of real life that I want so desperately to duck. Even more, I need courage to seek changes in my life that will be profound and fundamental.

Wisdom. Wisdom to know the difference. Not intelligence. Not learning. But wisdom. Wisdom, it seems to me, comes only from experience, from having tried one thing - then the other. Wisdom comes from seeing what then happens. I have tried sexual addiction. I know much about it. I have seen what it does. I know first-hand its power for destruction. I have experi-

## Calendar of Events

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

**June 7— 8, 2002**, Twelve Step Workshop, sponsored by Savannah, GA group. For information, call 615/331-6230.

**June 14— 16, 2002**, SA / S-Anon Westcountry Convention, Somerset, UK, sponsored by SA UK. Theme: The Bridge (to normal living). Contact Brent at 01373 812093.

**September 14, 2002**, One Day Marathon, Pittsburgh, PA, sponsored by Pittsburgh IG. Contact Pittsburgh IG at 724/224-0877.

**September, 2002**, SA Marathon, Toronto, ON, Canada, sponsored by Ontario IG. Contact Intergroup at 416/410-7622.

**October 25 — 27, 2002**, SA / S-Anon Convention, Waterford, Ireland, sponsored by SA Eire. Contact Aidan at 353 86 3925144 or Tom at 353 51 371053.

### Upcoming International Conventions

**July 12 – 14, 2002**, SA / S-Anon International Convention, Portland, OR sponsored by Portland area SA / S-Anon groups. Theme: Discovery. Contact Intergroup at 503/224-9840, or send email to [discovery\\_portland@email.com](mailto:discovery_portland@email.com). Download registration form at [www.saportlandmetro.org](http://www.saportlandmetro.org)

**January 10 — 12, 2003**, SA / S-Anon International Convention, Newark, NJ, sponsored by NJ / NY area SA / S-Anon groups. Theme: Whatever It Takes. Contact IG at 732/886-2142.

**July 11— 13, 2003**, SA / S-Anon International Convention, Chicago, IL, sponsored by Chicago Intergroup. Contact Intergroup at 630/415-0341 or Tom G., 773/274-1088.

*[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.]*



two years, I've heard many First Steps, witnessing men struggle with their addiction. Long term sobriety has become a reality in their lives because of Sexaholics Anonymous. One member has celebrated two years of sobriety; many have a year. I am grateful to be a part of their recovery.

In December, 2000, a year and a month after their first SA meeting, the administration gave permission to have their first SA Marathon / Retreat. I was fortunate to be co-chair of that first SA Marathon in prison. The inmates have just completed their fifth Retreat in March, 2002. Twelve outside SA members from the Erie area attended.

The prison officials have seen the benefits of SA and these Retreats, thus allowing four retreats a year to be scheduled. I have personally attended many Marathons/ Retreats in this area. These at Albion Prison are truly well planned according to all the traditions of good SA recovery.

Because of my positive experience at the Albion Prison I signed up to be a "sponsor by mail." I have found that this too has its benefits and challenges. But I have found that whenever I am corresponding, I am connecting with a fellow sexaholic, which keeps me sober. I know that there are a lot of prisoners who are seeking recovery through Sexaholics Anonymous and they can only receive it if you and I are willing to give it away.

PS: I am willing to help anyone who is interested in prison retreats and/or marathons.

**Tom S., Erie, PA**



Dear Editor,

I thought this report from Paul H. might be included in the next *ESSAY*.

**William R., SACFC coordinator**

## **Corrections activity in Australia**

We've just had an SA National conference here in Australia so I thought I would send an update on what's happening with Corrections here. In Brisbane, contact with individual prisoners has been going on for about three years. One prisoner now has two years sobriety. In Newcastle, a member has just gone into prison for a short stint and members are keeping in contact with him. In Sydney, a member who went into prison about three years ago receives regular correspondence and visits from members. He is talking with prison staff about setting up a meeting inside.

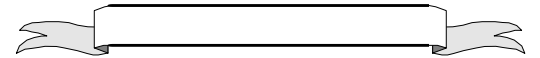
In fellowship  
**Paul H**

enced the self-centered satisfaction that at first satiates - then isolates - and finally destroys the victim-addict. I have experienced the loss of control that characterizes true addiction.

Rightful thinking and actions, I have tried less often. Certainly, at first glance, they seem less satisfying. Probably because they must often be outwardly focused, away from self. Were addiction not involved, wisdom would undoubtedly be easier to apply after weighing the relative benefits of sexual addiction against those of rightful thinking and taking the actions of love.

But addiction is involved - and until free from its grasp, the application of wisdom seems a tenuous goal - little more than a concept. Until that happy day, working the Steps, going to meetings - and more meetings - seems the closest thing to wisdom I can summon. But I'll be satisfied with that for now. And, I'll keep coming back.

**Dennis T.**



## **New Groups**

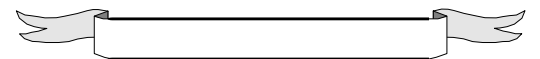
### **USA**

Coeur D'Alene, ID  
Richmond, IN  
St Charles, MO  
Johnson City, NY  
Lebanon, TN  
Mechanicsburg, PA  
Norfolk, VA

Additional meeting  
Tucson, AZ  
Wheeling, WV

### **Canada**

Kingston, ON  
North Bay, ON



***Share Your Story***  
***Share the Message***

## PRACTICAL TOOLS FOR RECOVERY

### 2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

[this is a continuation of an article on the Steps from December 2001 *Essay*]

Many of us who have difficulty believing that there is a God or that (S)He will help us, can begin by letting the group be a “power greater than ourselves”. After all, here is a group of people who suffer from the same disease, who have found a way to overcome the problem. Surely that’s more than we have been able to accomplish for ourselves.

Chapter 4 of *Alcoholics Anonymous*, “We Agnostics,” begins to describe the spiritual solution for our illness. *I strongly recommend reading it carefully.* The Greek word from which agnostic comes means literally ‘lacking or without knowledge’. My problem when I arrived was that I had many ideas about God (many of them wrong), but I lacked knowledge and understanding about God. “We needed to ask ourselves but one short question. Do I now believe, or am I even willing to believe that there is a Power greater than myself? As soon as a man (or woman) can say that (s)he does believe or is willing to believe, we emphatically assure him (s)he is on his way. It has been repeatedly proven among us that upon this simple cornerstone a wonderfully effective spiritual

program can be built.” (page 47, parentheses & underlining are mine).

There is a description of what the term “spiritual” means in an Appendix in *Alcoholics Anonymous*. There are many other questions posed in this chapter. When I go through this chapter with my sponsees, I encourage the sponsee to *answer* these questions. *They are not rhetorical!* Studying Chapter 4 helped me become willing to believe that God *could* help me, but some of my old ideas got in the way. How could I let go of these old ideas?

One of the most useful tools I have been given in recovery is a spiritual inventory. This is a simple tool that is best performed in a notebook. Open the notebook so that you have two blank pages on which to write. Label the far left column on the left page “Powerful people”. The rest of the left page is “What happened; what I learned”. The right page is “The Truth I choose to believe today”; leave this blank, initially. In the first column begin listing the people who were a power greater than you when you were a child.

# SACFC NEWS

SA CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES COMMITTEE

## SA in Albion Prison:

The first time I heard about visiting or writing to prisoners was at a SA Conference. It sounded good, *but* I put off doing anything for the next couple of years because of *my fears*. Stories about prisoners and what they do to sex offenders fed my fears and led me to procrastinate. Finally, another SA member got an SA meeting started in the Albion State Prison near Erie, PA, where I live. Outside members were invited into the prison in February, 2000. I was initially afraid of talking to the prison officials about being a Sexaholic volunteer. When I was going through the security check for my first meeting, I encountered some friends and fellow church-goers who were attending another volunteer group. They asked me, “What are you doing here?” I’m sure most of us have been in that embarrassing moment, and I had to come up with a fast, honest answer, “It’s a spirituality program.” God has a wonderful sense of humor.

Walking across the “Yard” among prisoners was intimidating at first. I don’t know why or how I had concluded that sexaholics in the prison

would be any different from sexaholics outside prison. Before I went to my first meeting I thought I was going into prison to “help them” become sober. That myth changed at the very first meeting. We were fellow sexaholics helping each other stay sober one day at a time. And that has been the case ever since.

In the beginning, the group wrestled with some basic issues: trust, confidentiality, honesty, and sponsorship. Could they trust us outsiders? Are we part of the prison system? Will we tell what we hear to others? Can we trust you? We soon learned that information is *power* in prison. And so, we emphasized the need for complete honesty and confidentiality. We led with our weaknesses, although we didn’t reveal everything at once. But everything about our addiction, we did. By us doing so, they began to open up also. (We still don’t reveal personal information, such as phone numbers and family info, as recommended by the prison staff.)

Four outside volunteers attend the Tuesday night meeting, and within a year a second meeting was started on Saturday morning. I attend the Tuesday meeting every week. Over these

# SAICO NEWS

SA INTERNATIONAL CENTRAL OFFICE

SAICO is pleased and proud to announce the addition of a new piece of literature for the fellowship.

“SA as a Resource for the Health and Helping Professional” is now available for orders.

This item will be a valuable tool in the outreach of your group or intergroup to the health and caring professionals in your area. Paired with an SA brochure and a letter of introduction from your group or intergroup, this combination will help introduce SA to your local community. The Professional brochure addresses questions frequently asked by health and helping professionals.

Pricing for the new brochure is as follows:

1 – 10 copies each	0.20 ea
11 – 99 copies each	0.18 ea
100 – 999 copies each	0.15 ea
1000 & over, each	0.12 ea

This piece of new literature has been “in process,” “in the works,” “on the front burner,” and numerous other colorful expressions for a long time. It has involved the efforts of a lot of members. In addition to the tireless and committed efforts of the Literature Committee, the Trustees and Delegates

have poured over this item many hours. We would like to personally thank every member who contributed to this work. We would like to thank you for each draft, paragraph, idea, comma, and thoughtful input that turned the first concept into this finished work. It would not be possible without you.

*Thank you  
Thank you  
Thank you  
Thank you!*

## How to Contact SA

SA International Central Office  
PO Box 111910  
Nashville, TN 37222-1910

Phone: 615/331-6230

Fax: 615/331-6901

Web Site: <http://www.sa.org>

E-mail: [saico@sa.org](mailto:saico@sa.org)

For most of us, Mom and Dad will head the list. For others there will be stepparents, grandparents, older siblings, neighbors, teachers, and others who might not be family members. In the next column describe your experience with this person, and what you came to believe about “a power greater than yourself” as a result of this relationship. For example:

### Powerful people

Mom

Dad

### What happened; what I learned (old ideas)

Beat me and my siblings for imagined or small mistakes. God is cruel and will punish me harshly whenever he is angry.

Was paralyzed by fear when my sister was injured, could not even take her to the doctor. I can't count on God; I must take care of myself.

Was always at work; didn't have time for the kids. God is too busy with important things to care for me.

Did not protect me or the other kids from Mom. God doesn't care about me or my pain.

As you list your own experiences, you will begin to see some of your old ideas that may get in the way of taking the 3<sup>rd</sup> Step. Some of the experiences and ideas may seem repetitious; these may be the deeply ingrained beliefs that you most need to change.

Once you have completed this portion of the inventory, it's time to begin writing what you believe about your conception of God. You may wish to discuss this with your sponsor, clergy, or other spiritual guide. Having identified our old ideas and false beliefs that kept us in bondage, we are now commencing to describe the attributes of the Power greater than ourselves which will restore us to sanity. Returning to the previous example, begin writing on the right page, “The Truth I choose to believe today” which will replace the old idea.

### Old idea (in second column)

God is cruel and will punish me harshly whenever he is angry.

### The Truth I choose to believe today

My God is kind and loving. He has already forgiven all my sins.

Old idea (in second column)

I can't count on God;  
I must take care of myself.

God is too busy with important things to care for me.

God doesn't care about me or my pain.

The Truth I choose to believe today

My God knows my needs and provides for me.

My God delights in me.

My God wept every time He saw me hurt.

For me, finding the words to express the Truth required the help of others who could see past my own shame, fear, and pain. I did not have to allow someone else tell me what I had to believe. I did listen to persons whose lives were working better than my own as they describe the characteristics of the God who had delivered them from the bondage in which I remained

Once I had listed these characteristics of my Higher Power, I distilled my beliefs to short affirmations, which I review *daily* to affirm my new ideas. Seven years later these affirmations about my relationship to the God of my understanding are an important part of my morning devotion.

I will admit that for the better part of the first year, I repeated these from my head without any real *feeling* that they applied to me. However, as I repeated these daily affirmations, and began to experience the fruits of my participation in the program and fellowship, these Truths found their way into my

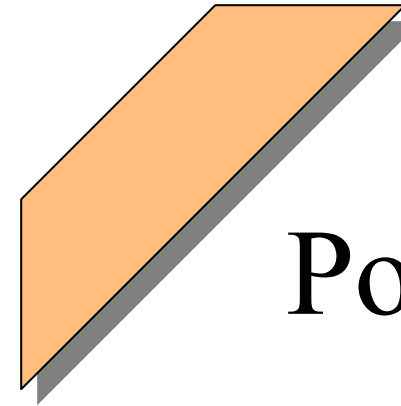
heart. Today, I know *and feel* that I am the beloved child of a loving and a gracious heavenly Father.

Because I persisted through those first months, even when the feelings were uncomfortable, I can now look back over seven years of a comforting relationship with the God of my understanding. God was with me all along, loving me, waiting for me to invite Him into my life. "When we drew near to Him He disclosed Himself to us!"

The work we have done to this point should make clear three pertinent ideas:

- That we were sexaholic and could not manage our own lives
- That probably no human power could have relieved our sexaholism
- That God could and would if He were sought.

"Being convinced, *we are at Step Three*" (*Alcoholics Anonymous*, page 60).



# Poetry Corner

~~ *Haiku* ~~

When weak, I am strong.  
When I surrender I'm free.  
Live with paradox.

When I am tempted  
I surely know what to do.  
Let go and let God.

My spirit must grow.  
The only way up is down.  
Humble I must be.

-- Keith S.