

*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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Essay®

A Quarterly Publication of Sexaholics Anonymous, Incorporated

IT KEEPS GETTING BETTER

I can hear my sponsor's voice, passing on the words from his sponsor and his sponsor's sponsor: "Things get worse; IT gets better." I do not have to wonder any more what IT is. For me, today, IT means life, serenity, acceptance, gratitude, living without expectations, finding the power to be useful and to carry out God's will for me. When I came to Sexaholics Anonymous over twelve years ago, I had none of IT. Things were getting pretty bad in my life and family and work; however, I was getting ready for a change.

I learned about Sexaholics Anonymous when a counselor, during an emergency session with my wife and me, reacted to my explanation of my repeated adulterous affairs. "I guess I

just need to be involved with more than one woman at a time," I said to her. She replied: "You're a sex addict!" My first SA miracle occurred at that moment. I looked at her and said, "You're right." I can feel the goose bumps as I write this just like I felt them that day in August. I had been called by my true name for the first time. I am a sex addict. I knew when she said it that I had been a sex addict for over thirty-five years at that point. Finally, someone saw me for who I truly was. I was very relieved.

She said to call a certain phone number. I did, and within two hours I spoke with Steve, my first official SA contact. Two hours after that I met him at my first SA meeting on a Tuesday

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IN THIS ISSUE:

Remodeling
Daily Renewals
Same Sex Issues

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Same Sex Issues in SA
Recovery Tools: Step 4

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,

Have you found something helpful in an issue of the *Essay*? Do you have something you can contribute to our quarterly? Would you urge another sexaholic to subscribe?

Hopefully you can answer, "Yes!" to all these questions. One day at a time, we hope the *Essay* adds to your collection of tools for sobriety. Your assistance in keeping the toolbox filled with the best and newest additions is essential.

The *Essay* is available by subscription (four issues per year) either as individuals or through your group. You can order on our web site or by mail, using a credit card or check. We are making plans to make the *Essay* available in an electronic form. However you connect with us, we hope you will become a part of our growing *Essay* family.

Please contact us at essay@sa.org or by mail at

Essay
PO Box 111910
Nashville, TN 37222-1910 U.S.A.

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. 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.

night. Twenty-four hours earlier I was sitting paralyzed with fear in a chair in our living room as my wife confronted me on having lunch with a lust partner and told me I'd have to move out. She was emotionally dissolving in front of me. All I could do was sit frozen and wonder how I'd get out of it this time? And why did I torture this woman I really loved so much?

At my first meeting, I learned some pretty important things. I learned that there would be people in this anonymous program who knew me. One man there that first night, was a fellow professional whose arrest had been reported on the front pages of the local newspaper. I learned that night that my compulsive masturbation, sexual fantasies, voyeurism, use of pornography, multiple affairs and exhibitionism were shared with others. I learned that feeling so awful and guilty and helpless about these behaviors was normal for a sexaholic. I also learned that night that there was an answer to the question I had asked myself twenty-two years and two marriages earlier. Could I ever look at a woman and not imagine being sexual with her, no matter who she was or how old she was or what she was doing? They told me that night that, if I kept coming back and would work these Twelve Steps, that eventually sex could really be optional for me.

In the next few weeks and months, I began to see that I was a sex drunk. While I had no history of alcohol or

drug addiction, I got as intoxicated on lust and lust images as any alcoholic gets on booze. Pornography, sado-masochism, bondage games, cross-dressing, romantic and sexual pursuits of women, attempting to seduce a teenager, touching a girl inappropriately, multiple adulterous affairs, and sexualizing every person and situation I encountered every day were each and all part of my drinking pattern. I was the kind of sex drunk who never lets the glass -- or fantasy images -- run dry. I was always sipping on lust in some shape or form. I realized that for over thirty years I had not been sober for even one day. My acting out was getting worse and increasingly dangerous to myself and to others.

I did not know that it takes years for these things to change nor did I know how many costs and consequences there might be along the way. "Things get worse -- IT gets better," For quite a while Things just got better, actually. Though I came into SA an atheist, I acted as if I could pray, surrender to a Higher Power, and ask for temptations and lust to be removed. If I could not use the words "God" or "Lord," I would say, "Master" (which I thought of in the sense of a teacher) and think of my Higher Power as the collective wisdom of humanity. Eventually, pretty much as it says in the AA literature, I came to believe that "God" was a good description for a Higher Power. I found that the question of whether or not there was a God only distracted me

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from my need to surrender lust. I was willing to surrender to God as I understood him. That kept on working.

My marriage slowly came back toward health. My wife was active in our sister program and sought the help she needed to deal with her anger toward me, the other women, and those who had enabled my disease. After about eighteen months, I realized that I had stopped mentally ending our marriage. I had done this every day for the first twelve years of our marriage. I made the commitment that, no matter what, I am married to my wife and that's what God wants for me. My job is to carry my weight and responsibility in the marriage. Any thoughts of another marriage or relationship are fantasies -- and toxic ones at that.

My children seemed to appreciate my being home more often. Though it took several years, the rage attacks on them (and the dogs) gradually lessened. My work life seemed to steadily improve as I became less obsessed with being everywhere and doing everything. Much of what I had done at work before was either trying to lessen my guilt or set up lusting situations with women.

As I listened in meetings I learned that the social nudity at home as I was growing up was abusive for me. Eventually after several years, I had to forgive my parents and to repent having desired that they be different than the

way they actually were. I learned that they and I were always doing the best we could do at the time. Sometimes my "best" was destructive and other times it was helpful.

After four and one-half years of sobriety and basically very comfortable with my progress in recovery, God decided I needed more humility and practice in "meeting calamity with serenity" as the Big Book says. I chose to share the basics of my addiction and recovery with my employers in a somewhat public meeting. I believed most people would accept me for the changed person I was. While most did accept my recovery, some could not. This led to the loss of my employment and profession after thirteen years in that city and years of sobriety.

With the help of my sponsor, I moved into a new profession. I worked for about a year in two different states. In the second job I shared with my unit director the nature of my addiction and recovery (after he asked). He fired me immediately. I was really shaken and depressed for the next two years.

My wife told me I had to work, so I applied to a temporary employment agency. The temp work included stuffing envelopes, being a receptionist and working as the office manager and secretary of a law firm for a year. I found this humiliating and freeing at the same time. At the end of that year, God found a new use for me in a help-

(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 | 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 |

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.

ing profession, which I did for the next three years. During this time I learned some of the most important life lessons I have learned in sobriety.

I learned to reduce my expectations for income. I learned to actually to respect my anonymity as a recovering sexaholic; having not done this before cost me two jobs. I learned that I had grown up crippled in my ways of handling emotions. With the help of a therapist, I did some major growing up as well as accepting my character defects at a deeper level. I also learned (over and over again) that whatever it is I think I cannot give up in my life is exactly what I must surrender if I want to keep growing in sobriety. Through God's grace, I have been willing to do that so far.

In the past two years, much has happened. I have been diagnosed with cancer and gone through surgery and radiation therapy. My sponsor was essential in keeping my focus on God and my willingness to value each moment of life He gives me. I can feel my values shifting as I view mortality. I realize what wonderful gifts God gives me to share with others on a daily basis.

I have twice experienced the need to change sponsors for different reasons. Having a person who knows me through and through, who can recognize how I am doing just from the tone of my voice is one of this program's greatest gifts.

I have been restored to my former profession. Thanks to my wife's urging, I do so on a part-time basis. Since I learned that God truly will provide as much money as we need, I am permitted to work reasonable hours and to have time to take care of my health as well as to do service work and pursue my avocations.

As my sponsors said, while Things may get worse, or better, or just stay the same for a while, IT keeps getting better! And for the grace, serenity and joy of sobriety and for the opportunity to grow up as God wants me to grow, rather than as my ego and fantasies were leading me for all those years, I can never be sufficiently grateful.

Essay: Future Issues

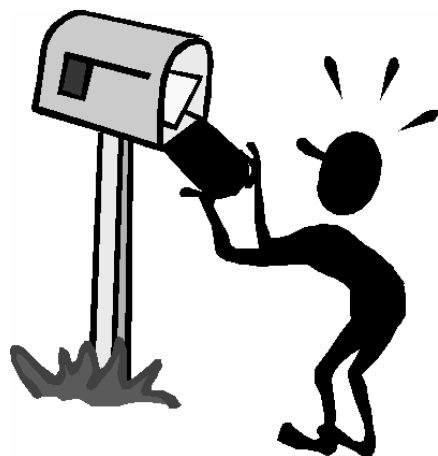
The Editors of the Essay would like to devote a future issue of the Essay to our experience, strength and hope with three special concerns: materials for Newcomer meetings; Same Sex issues and the SA Twelve Traditions. We have had some helpful responses already. Please send any writings and thoughts you have.

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Send email to: saico@sa.org

With anticipation and thanks,
The Essay Committee

LETTERS & FEEDBACK



Dear Editor:

I personally find the Essay publication another important tool I use in my recovery from sex addiction. Although not a substitute for daily contact with another member, Essay indeed helps me stay in spiritual contact with other members as I read their experiences, strength, and hope. It helps me identify that I am no longer alone, and that there is a solution. This publication is part of the solution.

I have been a member of an SA Group for over five years and have struggled staying sober. That is until I started working the Steps. Going to meetings and wishing for sobriety just didn't work. As I worked Steps 4 through 7 and began to dialogue more openly with my spouse (an active member in S-Anon) some wonderful things began to happen. There have been many painful moments, but inevitably on the other side of the pain I am finding true growth. During this process, I wrote the enclosed poem:

Keep up the good work. Your friend in recovery:

Greg D., Ontario, Canada

(His poem can be found in the Poetry Corner, page

Dear *Essay*,

I enjoy receiving the "meeting in print" each month. It is an important tool for me to have and to use.

Dale M., Columbus NE

A real help on the basics of the program -- a good reminder.

Richard O., Rochester, NY

Each quarter I eagerly wait for the new issue of *Essay* to arrive. I enjoy reading very much. Keep up the good work. God's will be done.

Mike S., Crystal Lake, IL

SA Financial Snapshot

2002 2nd Quarter through Sept 2002		2002 Sept YTD Budget	
Contributions	55,063.09	Contributions	60,750.00
SACFC	6,298.65	SACFC	5,250.00
Conventions	6,730.00	Conventions	9,300.00
Literature Sales	16,003.76	Literature Sales	4,500.00
Discounts	00.00	Discounts	.00
Refunds	25.18	Refunds	.00
Interest	753.80	Interest	3,750.00
<i>Essay</i>	2,965.00	<i>Essay</i>	5,250.00
Prudent Reserve	16,000.00	Prudent Reserve	16,000.00
Total Revenues	103,839.48	Total Revenues	104,000.00
Bank Charges	14.00	Bank Charges	75.00
Credit Card Fees	472.90	Credit Card Fees	75.00
Conference Fees	1,070.00	Conference Fees	3,300.00
Depreciation	1,296.11	Depreciation	1,200.00
Interest Expense	.00	Interest Expense	0.00
Liability Insurance	444.00	Liability Insurance	1,875.00
Legal	6,161.04	Legal	1,125.00
Accounting	2,891.00	Accounting	3,000.00
Literature expense	16,368.91	Literature Expense	3,750.00
Payroll	48,975.00	Payroll	48,975.00
Payroll Tax	4,425.00	Payroll Tax	4,425.00
Pension	3,450.00	Pension	3,450.00
Postage & Freight	3,375.00	Postage & Freight	3,375.00
Office Expense	1,430.19	Office Expense	1,500.00
Printing	8,425.23	Printing	3,750.00
Rent	5,850.00	Rent	5,850.00
Maintenance	1,011.70	Maintenance	675.00
Supplies	299.96	Supplies	1,125.00
Sales Tax	321.55	Sales Tax	375.00
Taxes & Licenses	117.68	Taxes & Licenses	150.00
Telephone	6,144.59	Telephone	6,375.00
Travel	11,939.29	Travel	12,750.00
Total Expenses	119,525.89	Total Expenses	107,175.00

Second Quarter Donations July - Sept. 2002

Akron, OH	150.00	Jacksonville, FL	50.00	Sandpoint CFC	20.00
Albuquerque, NM	39.01	Kirkland, WA	50.00	Sandy, UT	20.00
Anaheim, CA	100.00	Lake Mary, FL	25.00	Savannah, GA	50.00
Annapolis, MD	30.00	Lancaster, OH	25.00	SCAI	2,655.00
Arlington Hgts, IL	50.00	Lincoln, NE	65.00	Seattle, WA	15.90
Atlanta, GA	179.87	Livonia, MI	100.00	Seattle CFC	50.90
Baltimore, MD	219.00	Long Beach, CA	160.00	Silver Spring, MD	292.00
Bannockburn, IL	10.00	Long Island, NY	100.00	Somerville, MA	39.00
Bannockburn CFC	5.00	Longwood, FL	50.00	So Barrington, IL	100.00
Barrington, IL	140.00	Los Angeles, CA	70.00	So Barrington CFC	50.00
Barrington CFC	80.00	Manassas, VA	200.00	Springfield, VA	36.75
Beacon, NY	10.00	McLean, VA	67.00	Springfield CFC	15.75
Bellevue, WA	68.00	McLean CFC	7.00	St Charles, MO	100.00
Bethesda, MD	150.00	Melbourne, Australia	55.87	St Louis, MO	380.00
Birmingham, AL	125.00	Minneapolis, MN	270.00	Tokyo, Japan	17.00
Boston, MA	70.00	Minneapolis CFC	43.00	Trenton, MI	180.00
Brooklyn, NY CFC	10.00	Nashville, TN	12.00	Twin Cities, MN	120.00
Bryn Athyn, PA	215.62	Newberg, OR	180.00	Twin Cities CFC	30.00
Bryn Athyn CFC	71.88	Newberg CFC	50.50	Washington, DC	410.75
Chicago, IL	675.00	Norfolk, VA CFC	10.00	Washington DC CFC	320.80
Chicago IG CFC	300.00	North Hollywood, CA	50.00	Wheeling, WV	52.30
Colorado Springs, CO	100.00	Omaha, NE CFC	16.55	Woodbridge, VA	94.32
Columbus, OH	100.00	Orem, UT	125.00	Woodbridge CFC	112.00
Dallas, TX	150.00	Owensboro, KY	23.00	Yorba Linda, CA	95.00
Darien, IL	70.00	Palm Desert, CA	147.00	York, PA	50.00
Darien CFC	30.00	Pasadena, CA	200.00		
Delmar, NY	50.00	Pearl River, NY	110.52	Group Total	18,154.44
Detroit, MI	160.00	Penn Hills, PA (Fri)	50.00	Individual	181.50
Eastern PA IG	200.00	Pensacola, FL	25.00	SA CFC Total	1,974.23
Fairfax, VA	97.65	Pittsburgh, PA	176.00		
Fairfax CFC	10.85	Portland, OR	615.00	Grand Total	\$20,310.17
Frederick, MD	29.00	Portland CFC	200.00		
Georgia IG	255.37	Portland Convention	5,020.86		
Glen Ellyn, IL	650.00	Portland Conv CFC	540.00		
Grand Rapids, MI	300.00	Provo, UT	100.00		
Guelph ON Canada	50.00	Ravenswood, IL	90.00		
Hacienda Hgts, CA	50.00	Roswell, GA	157.00		
Halifax NS Canada	31.65	St John NB Canada	50.00		
Herndon, VA	115.00	Salt Lake City, UT	200.00		
High Point, NC	17.00	San Diego, CA	74.00		
Idaho Falls, ID	100.00	Sandpoint, ID	5.00		

Remodeling

"It is a spiritual axiom that every time we are disturbed, no matter what the cause, there is something wrong with us. If somebody hurts us and we are sore, we are in the wrong also." (Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, page 90)

"... We'd rather believe such outbursts are simply results of what others are doing to us, unwilling to see that we think and act badly because there is something wrong inside US. As though bitter waters can spring up from a pure well." (Sexaholics Anonymous, page 88)

For the last two years or so, I have had trouble reading from the Twelve and Twelve which contains the first quote. I interpreted "...something wrong with us..." to mean I was this cruel and evil person who ought to be ostracized by the human race for all eternity. I thought it was unfair to say that it was wrong for me to be sore because someone else committed hurtful actions against me.

However, I was blessed with an epiphany this morning. I was reading from the section of Sexaholics Anonymous which discusses the First Step when I encountered the second quote. I was particularly struck by the part where it says that I THINK and ACT BADLY because there is something wrong INSIDE me.

In other words, my personality needs to be remodeled and this can be accomplished by working this program of recovery. Also, my character defects do not disqualify me from the human race. According to the White Book, "It's okay to be absolutely powerless over self. This is where we join the human race." (Page 88) It turns out that this admission is the key to overcoming all of my character defects.

Why did I ever interpret this statement from the Twelve and Twelve the way that I did? When I was younger, my father would berate me for anything I did that he thought was wrong. He basically condemned me instead of my actions. As a result, I did not think there was a difference between what I did (actions) and who I was (self).

Thank God for the epiphany and providing a way to recover from my character defects which are responsible for my emotional insobriety. This insobriety is similar to my sexual insobriety which brought me to this program in the first place. The way I recovered from my sexual insobriety was working the Steps. It is my hope that the Steps will also provide the way to emotional sobriety.

Jim A.

Same Sex Issues

All my life I felt “different” from the other boys. I was sensitive and didn’t like to play rough sports. I spent most all the time with the girls. At age 12, I became sexually active with males and females. Since the first day I used sex as I had been using food since I was seven: to medicate the pain of my early childhood abuse. It became so painful that I needed more and more lust to cover-up my feelings.

Twenty years later and with almost a year of sobriety, I can see that my homosexual acts were pure lust. They were a desire to get the masculinity I never got from my father or other masculine role model in a healthy way.

I believe that I’m here in S.A. to deal with my obsession to lust. Knowing how I view my homosexuality, I’m extremely happy to be a part of S.A. The greatness about this program is that I don’t need to hear politics. I just need my 12 Steps and my 12 Traditions and working my program.

I also thank S.A. for the definition of sobriety, being the only “S”-group safe for people like me.

May G-d Bless!!!

Joseph, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

UPDATE: “God Works In Small Towns, Too” (Essay, March 2001)

Hi,

I wanted to share what's going on in North Idaho. Our meeting (We named it Monday Miracles), turned two in September, 2002. At times it has been very challenging to my sobriety to bring SA to my town. Whenever I thought I was doing it, boy did things get bad (in the realms of my mind). I would want to change someone else's recovery; ick! there's a program for that isn't there? Or someone would praise me to the group and FEED MY EGO. (I got practice on setting boundaries!) There were/are times when attendance is small. I am very grateful there has been one other person committed to showing up to Monday's meeting. Recently our attendance has doubled and tripled.

About a year ago, God prompted me to share my story and to have a speakers meeting once a month. A few weeks after this prompting there was a newcomer from a bigger town who could only attend night meetings. There was interest with others so, alas, a Friday meeting started. It was hit and miss with that meeting for a while. The other person started a meeting in his own town, but still came up often.

Calendar of Events

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

Upcoming International Conventions

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 Tom at 908/351-3876.

July 11 -13, 2003, SA / S-Anon International Convention, Chicago, IL, sponsored by Chicago area SA / S-Anon intergroups.
Theme: A Program of Action: Maintaining Our Spiritual Condition.
Contact Intergroup at 630/415-0341 or see web site <http://www.geocities.com/ProgramofAction>

January 2004, SA / S-Anon International Convention, San Diego, CA
Sponsored by SA / S-Anon San Diego Intergroups.
Contact Intergroup at 858/495-2446.

[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.]

Calendar of Events

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

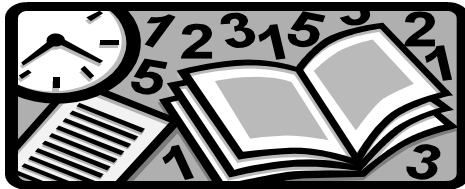
February 15, 2003, SA / S-Anon Retreat, Schuler, NE, sponsored by Nebraska SA IG. Theme: Oh! How it Works! Contact Gus at 402/475-0101 or email to sanebraska@yahoo.com

March 7 - 9, 2003, SA Australia Convention, Sydney, sponsored by SA Australia. Contact 2 8250 0180 or send email to australia@sa.org.

March 8 - 9, 2003, Colorado Spring Retreat, sponsored by SA Denver IG. Contact Tom L. at 720/422-4212.

September 20, 2003, SA / S-Anon Workshop, sponsored by SA Florida IG. Theme: Emotional Sobriety. Contact Jim M. at 386/676-3954.

October 3 - 5, 2003, SA Australia Convention, Melbourne, sponsored by SA Australia. Contact 2 9506 6719, or send email to australia@sa.org



Well, with our recent increase in membership, someone else has taken the key for Friday's meeting!! I can't tell you how much feels lifted from my shoulders with that.

There have been a lot of two people meetings. I have the opportunity to learn non-romantic intimacy with the opposite sex during this time. That is a blessing, and is what I feel a part of the program is about (along with intimacy with God).

I have also been blessed with getting to know women in the fellowship here. There have been two other women that at different times have been coming regularly. Often times the women outnumber or at least match the men. Once there was a meeting that was four men and two women, and did I feel strange! It helped me to not take for granted the wonderful gift God has given. God does indeed work in Small towns.

Judy, Sandpoint, ID

New Groups

Barstow, CA
Champaign, IL
Macon, GA
Springfield, IL

Additional meeting

Harrisburg, PA

International News

Hello SAICO and staff,
My name is Bobby S, and I'm the contact person for the Philippines. The official email address is active now. saphilippines@yahoo.com

Rome, Italy



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

“Our stories disclose in a general way...”

Most articles in the *Essay* are sent in by members and by SA groups. We are always interested in short articles on how we apply the Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions, and Twelve Concepts in our daily life and service to others, our families, and the Fellowship.

The *Essay* is our meeting in print. Your contribution on working the Steps and Traditions and the impact of your recovery on family, finances and friends are always of interest. The *Essay* also has themes from time to time, such as on our sexaholic experience with same sex issues.

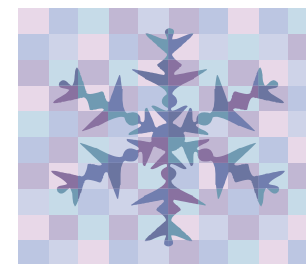
The deadline for submissions for the next issue is February 1, 2003.

Around that same time I got approved to go into the local jail for AA meetings. It was a little scary because I am not really an alcoholic. I know for certain I am really a sexaholic. Well, a few months later I received a letter from Keith S. saying that there was a female in prison desiring recovery. Wow!

So for six months we have been writing back and forth. It has been enriching my sobriety. It also helps me to see how much I take for granted. Such as having a face-to-face sponsor for my first year, and to have other women to talk to.

The woman I correspond with is working the Steps and has a roommate she meets with, along with one other woman in the same prison that has been involved with SA before. Sometimes they have three people meetings! That has been bigger or as big as some of the meetings I attend. It feels very incredible to be a part of this!!

Judy, Sandpoint, ID



Service Opportunity

If you would like to be a CFC Representative, please contact SAICO at (615) 331-6230 or send email to saico@sa.org.

Please consider sponsoring an inmate by mail. We need more SA volunteers to do this important 12th Step work. We can send you a Sponsor-by-mail packet that will help you sponsor an inmate. If you are interested write to

Keith S.,
Sponsor-By-Mail Service
P.O. Box 99667
Troy, MI 48099

Your contributions to SACFC help supply literature and hope to those who still suffer in prison. We would like to thank all those members and groups who have participated with SACFC in this vital outreach.

SACFC NEWS

SA CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES COMMITTEE

The program of SA works -- even in prison!

Dear SACFC,
Thank you very much for the Plain White Cover Book. It's great and it truly has alternatives and a plan. S.A. will be part of my life as I trudge the trail to a healthy, rewarding life, and I'll definitely handle my ups and downs a lot differently thanks to some caring friends.

You can be sure I'll call the office in Nashville upon my release. S.A. will be a big part of my support group.

Thanks again
Sincerely,
Kris H., Missoula

Words of Encouragement for SACFC Volunteers

Dear Frank:

How goes the war?? Keep fighting and we will survive. For the men writing who are disappointed or concerned they did not receive mail from inmates they contacted, this might help. First, they have planted the seed. The loving

GOD of this program will reap the harvest. Secondly, we were all very confused in the beginning. We did not know who to trust or what to say.

Third, it is difficult at best in prison. Some Correction Officers will harass mentally or emotionally abuse inmates who ask for help. Although the inmate may be sincere the director of the rehabilitation program may object to this kind of contact. They view it as negative losers trying to reform losers.

So, please do not give up. You just might save a life or another victim from harm. Make a copy if you choose and share it with the membership. Be well & GOD bless.

John C. SACFC Chair

Sponsor-By-Mail

Hi, I am Judy a sexaholic. I inquired about helping with the sponsor-by-mail program for the prisons. I was informed at the time there were no women inmates that had inquired yet. I think God kept prompting me until I followed through to make contact with the SACFC.

PRACTICAL TOOLS FOR RECOVERY

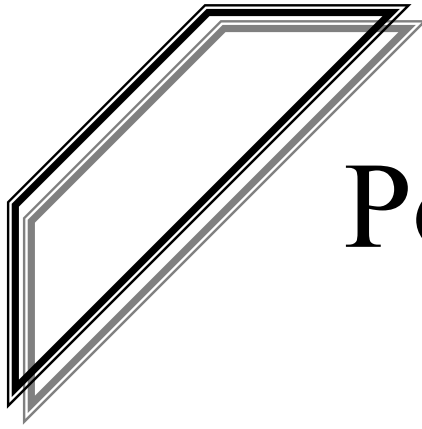
DAILY RENEWALS

After the serenity prayer, one person reads the following questions and both people answer them:

1. Are you willing to admit you are powerless over lust?
2. Do you desire sobriety and freedom from the actions and obsessions of lust for the next 24 hours?
3. Are you willing to do whatever is necessary to protect this sobriety for the next 24 hours, including rigorous honesty, praying to God, calling on others, surrendering all fears, self-pity and entitlements, forgiving all resentments, refusing all hits as toxic, reading literature, going to meetings, setting boundaries, and maintaining an attitude of gratitude (modify list as appropriate)?
4. Are you willing to do whatever is necessary to continue in recovery - in other words, work the Steps for at least 15 minutes (up to several hours if necessary) in the next 24 hours?
5. Do you realize that this renewal does not keep us sober - God does - however, it does help us to be aware of ourselves and to be accountable to others?

6. Do you realize that this renewal is only for this 24 hours, and that tomorrow you are free to go another way?
7. Tell me about time spent with your Higher Power and your Step work during the past 24 hours. Have you done anything you are grateful for during the past 24 hours?
8. Have you done anything you wish to bring to the light or are disappointed or ashamed of during the past 24 hours? Have you violated any boundaries?
9. Are you planning on doing anything you would be disappointed about or ashamed of during the next 24 hours? (Any "danger zones" coming up?)
10. Will you call me if you make any such plans before our next renewal?
11. Are you planning on doing anything you would be grateful for during the next 24 hours?
12. Are you willing with me now to turn your will and your life over to the care of God, the one who kept you sober yesterday and protected you from the full consequences of your lust in the past?

Close with the Third Step Prayer.



Poetry Corner

A Change

Until now a past regretted
To my wounds I was connected
Sadness for my unconscious life
Hurting self and my wife

A sad reflection in her eyes
A mirror to me – as she cries
For me a sadness to hurt us so
Out of ignorance now I know
Was caught up in my child like state
Quite unable to relate
Wanting others to nurture me
Read my mind take care of me
The wounded child ran my show
I now see it now I know
This knowledge is a healing seed
It's what I've searched for what I need

This sad reflection now turning bright
For underneath lies a new light
I'm rising from my unconscious state
In recovery out the gate
I've been wounded this is so
But now my adult runs the show
My wounded child is part of me
For him I now feel empathy
As I care and nurture him
A sense of love is flowing in
And love itself cannot stand still
By it's nature begins to swell
First love for self, a sense of caring
Goes out to others in my sharing

A past no longer regretted
To my healing I am connected
A gladness for my conscious life
Of caring for self and for my wife

SAICO NEWS

SA INTERNATIONAL CENTRAL OFFICE

“Practical experience shows that nothing will so much insure immunity from drinking as intensive work with other alcoholics.” (pg 89 Alcoholics Anonymous)

Farewell From The Loners Chair

My assignment was to keep Loners in touch with each other. I have been chairperson the last 2 years. Writing and receiving letters has been a special experience.

So many kids graduating from high school these days cannot write (and have horrible penmanship to boot). We have become so dependent on our electronic gadgets that we have allowed many of our God-given talents to wither away. If we can't do the job with a gadget, then we don't want to do it. Working with our hands is one of the most satisfying things we'll ever do--actually seeing the results flowing from our busily working hands. When my hand is moving at just the right speed, and the pen is feeling comfortable in my grip, and the ink is flowing smoothly, and my mind is focused on the task at hand, the resulting script is beautiful to behold.

Many of us have lost the ability to be in awestruck wonder of what we can do with just our own two hands and nothing else. My mailbox isn't always as full as I'd like it to be but the thrill of receiving just one hand-written letter from a loner makes my efforts all worthwhile.

In fellowship,
Ellis P.

Ned C. is the new Chair of the Loners Committee. Thank you , Ellis for all the letters, notes, and cards.

Service Opportunity

Your experience, strength and hope with the Twelve Steps and the Twelve Traditions.

Share with a loner, someone who needs to hear your story.

Send mail: SAICO, PO Box 111910,
Nashville, TN 37222-1910

Email goes to saico@sa.org

SUBJECT: How It Works