



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

ESSAY®

2006, Issue Four

A Quarterly Publication of Sexaholics Anonymous, Incorporated

The Face, Hands, Voice of God

I attended family counseling for six years; my wife was crazy and she wasn't getting any better. Did it have anything to do with the fact that I was having several simultaneous affairs? I was a respected professional in a small town. Some of the women were my clients. This was in violation of the ethics of my profession and whatever ethics I might have thought I had for my marriage. I was juggling several lies, and I was tense and angry all the time. I spent lots of energy covering my tracks and keeping the lies straight. I was having trouble sleeping.

In the midst of this misery, I was determined to "be there" for my kids. They were very young back then. I was miserable and not much fun to be around, but I was physically present in their lives. I was putting in a lot of "quantity" time.

One night one of the husbands called me and told me that his wife had confessed to him. It was the first time I acknowledged a Power greater than myself. I admitted it was true. Like some sort of science fiction movie, time slowed to a crawl. I remembered a book I had seen five years earlier about sexual addiction. I recognized in that instant that I was a sexaholic. I could not stop myself. I could see it happening, inevitably: loss of job, career, professional status, home and family. I saw it in a split second and I was relieved. I would not have to juggle this misery any longer.

My wife asked who called. I put her off with some lie. We had reached this compromise that allowed our marriage to go on, but there was no intimacy and no honesty between us. Years before

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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.*

Dear *Essay* Reader,

This issue of the *Essay* includes a story about one member's experience with sexaholism, some thoughtful short essays by members, some samples of Meditations, and some experience about sponsorship.

You have something you can contribute to this quarterly. Would you please send it in?

The *Essay* is available by individual subscription, through your group, or online at the SAICO online store. Individual subscriptions are \$12.00 annually; the group rate is \$10.00. A subscription form is included with this issue.

Essay is now available by email subscription in a pdf format.

You can contact *Essay* at saico@sa.org or by land mail at *Essay*, PO Box 3565, Brentwood TN 37024-3565, U.S.A.

Sincerely,

Essay Editorial Committee, December 2006

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 saico@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.

SA Financial Snapshot January - September 2006

Budget

Contributions	66,750.03	Contributions	102,073.40
SACFC	6,000.03	SACFC	5,706.35
Conventions	11,250.00	Conventions	25,538.19
Literature Sales	23,100.03	Literature Sales	19,980.15
Interest	225.00	Interest	306.75
<i>Essay</i>	<u>5,850.00</u>	<i>Essay</i>	<u>4,764.00</u>
Total Revenues	<u>113,175.09</u>	Total Revenues	<u>158,368.84</u>
Bank Charges	74.97	Bank Charges	00.00
Credit Card Fees	900.00	Credit Card Fees	1,138.26
Conference Fees	825.03	Conference Fees	1045.00
Depreciation	1,350.00	Depreciation	1,228.56
Interest Expense	.00	Interest Expense	0.00
Liability Insurance	2,250.00	Liability Insurance	490.00
Legal	1,600.00	Legal	1,600.00
Accounting	2,625.00	Accounting	2,151.00
Literature expense	7,499.97	Literature Expense	2,687.44
Payroll	47,999.97	Payroll	48,030.56
Payroll Tax	7,200.00	Payroll Tax	3,673.67
Pension	00.00	Pension	.00
Postage & Freight	5,000.00	Postage & Freight	4,681.67
Office Expense	1,199.97	Office Expense	1,961.32
Printing	3,750.03	Printing	5,729.22
Professional Fees	750.00	Professional Fees	750.00
Rent	7,200.00	Rent	7,471.47
Maintenance	749.97	Maintenance	1,085.93
Sales Tax	225.00	Sales Tax	78.50
Taxes & Licenses	225.00	Taxes & Licenses	155.00
Telephone	7,499.97	Telephone	7,505.74
<u>Travel</u>	<u>9,375.03</u>	<u>Travel</u>	<u>16,523.14</u>
Total Expenses	<u>113,174.82</u>	Total Expenses	<u>107,986.68</u>

Actual

(Continued from page 1)

she had threatened to leave if I ever had an affair. So, of course, I could never be honest about what was happening.

I called the therapist to whom I had been lying for six years. I couldn't lie now. The therapist read me the first three Steps. It was an "Ah ha!" moment for me. The idea of being powerless and needing a Higher Power suddenly made sense because I was in a desperate place. It took me another six weeks to locate a meeting. I have to say thanks to all the members who have recorded tapes. I would play a tape on the way to the meeting, and another on the way home. There is so much recovery and hope on those tapes. I knew those voices and stories long before I met any of those members.

I struggled with telling my wife. She had to know that we were going to be without income. She had decisions to make about the welfare of our children and how to live without me. I was going to be lying in a gutter somewhere. I fantasized about chain saws and how to make a suicide look like an accident. I didn't have the benefit of the sage advice in the White Book about early disclosure. I just picked a time and told her. She listened and asked questions for hours. Then she left to take a walk and clear her head.

She came back and told me that, for the first time, parts of her history made sense to her—her dad and the other men in her life. She saw a pattern. She de-

ecided not to leave because she was afraid that she would just do the same thing again unless she figured out what to do. That amazed me because I had not imagined that she would stay.

She progressed to a place of rage and fury for several months, but she stayed. She tried to find a Twelve Step program for herself. I tried to read about the Steps and struggle through them. God provided me a meeting and a sponsor.

The public shame was intense. I was front page news. Daily. For a very long time. Even later, when someone else was exposed, they would use me as a bad example. People from the media would come right up to the front door. My wife would moan, "We are working the Steps. We are doing the best we can. Why aren't things getting better?" The process took over two years. I lost my job, my career, my reputation, and my standing in the community. In addition, I had to work my way through several lawsuits.

God provided new work for us. We can work from home, and we have learned new skills.

The kids were young, but it was impossible to hide it from them. We took them to counseling. They told stories of a prince and a princess who were seeking a treasure hidden in a castle guarded by a terrible dragon. They knew something was happening. We knew the day would come that we would have to tell

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(Continued from page 3)
them.

After several years passed, I checked the computer of one of our kids and found pornography. As parents, we were distressed and clueless. I knew it was time to tell him about being a sexaholic. I had to tell him. Fortunately, my other son had asked me pointed questions first, and I had been able to practice on him.

Today, we have learned how to play as a family. It is part of being “happy, joyous, and free.” We take family trips—backpack, share the facilities, and learn to get along and compromise. We use the Traditions in our family, remembering that the primary purpose is not to get what I want, but to do something for someone else. This program has given me a life and a family.

I have to put in a plug for service. At first, when my sponsor asked me to do service, I would think, no thanks! You just want me to do something you don’t want to do. Now I realize that he was offering me a piece of cake, a chance to participate, a gift. Service benefits me more than anyone else. So, I thank the fellowship of SA. You are the face, hands, and voice of God in my life. It has been a privilege to serve and be served by you.

How to Tell Your Story

The Editors of the Essay would like to hear from members about your experience, strength and hope in the fellowship.

What is your story? Everyone has a story and every story has something to share with others. If you don’t know where to start, answer these questions:

What was it like?

How did you find SA?

What tools of the programs do you use in your recovery?

What is it like now?

Share some hope with a member who isn’t in the room. Please send your story to us at:

SAICO — ESSAY
PO Box 3565
Brentwood, TN 37024-3565
U.S.A.

Electronic files received at
saico@sa.org

With anticipation, gratitude, and thanks,
The *Essay* Committee,
December 2006

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 A.A. has approved the contents of this publication, nor that A.A. agrees with the views expressed herein. A.A. is a program of recovery from alcoholism only. Use of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions in connection with programs which are patterned after A.A., but which address other problems, or in any other non-A.A. context, does not imply otherwise.

‘His Sanity Returned and He Thanked God’

Recently my sponsor in another 12-Step program pointed out a sentence in the Big Book that I hadn’t paid special attention to before. It comes in Chapter 11, *A Vision For You*. The reading has to do, in part, with events surrounding a business trip by Bill W., the co-founder of AA, when he was just six months sober. We learn that the business wasn’t a success. When it was over, Bill found himself far from home, in an unfamiliar city, “discredited and almost broke,” and worst of all, close to taking a drink. Gripped with fear, he paced the lobby of his hotel, torn between a voice of conscience telling him to reach out to a fellow alcoholic and an almost overwhelming urge to try a little controlled drinking in the hotel bar.

In his crisis, Bill’s thoughts turned to his responsibilities to his family and especially to the unknown alcoholics who would die if he didn’t try to carry the message of his recovery to them. Then came the key sentence: “His sanity returned and he thanked God.” Immediately Bill got on the phone, looking for another alcoholic who wanted recovery.

That sentence is worth emphasizing: “*His sanity returned and he thanked God.*” As is clear from the reading, Bill didn’t reach out in desperation, and it wasn’t the activity of making calls that kept him out of the bar. By the time he picked up the phone, his sanity had returned. When he reached people who were sympathetic to his predicament, Bill was lucid, carrying a spiritual message and detached from the results. The person on the other end of the line wasn’t the source of Bill’s sanity, God was. This is also evidenced by the fact that Bill made up to ten calls before he reached the person who put him in contact with Dr. Bob. Bill was simply doing the next right thing, as he saw it, leaving the results to God.

Not only did this turning point save Bill’s life, we know from AA history that this also was the beginning of a series of events that led to his meeting with Dr. Bob and the eventual establishment of the AA fellowship.

This is something that I, a sexaholic, would do well to bear in mind, especially when I make calls to fellow SA members or encourage others to call me. As members of a fellowship whose primary addiction is living inside our heads, we correctly put a lot of emphasis on staying in touch with other through phone calls, meetings and get-togethers. But I know from experience that these activities alone don’t keep me sane, or even sober.

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My Twelfth Step in Action

Here are two ways I practice Step 12:

1) I go to bookstores, find the self-help section, look for a sexual addiction book, pull it out of the stack, and place it face forward on the shelf where others can plainly see what it is rather than it be hidden with the other books.



2) I give all the SA contacts in my cell phone a designation of Z, two spaces before the name, and then the person's location. For example, the cell phone listing for me would be Z Ed Columbus.

So, if you see me in a bookstore, smile at me, extend the hand of fellowship, and tell me to expect a Z call later!

Ed R., Columbus, GA



However, if I really believe I'm making the real connection, primarily through my practice of Step Three (*i.e.*, surrender to my Higher Power), then the calls I make don't have to be made in desperation, but in a spirit of quiet confidence and true sharing. I also don't have to worry unduly about fixing someone who happens to call me when he is disturbed. I can be grateful for the fellowship while being aware that the sanity of another doesn't depend on the feedback I give or can't give.

Bill's experience prompts the question: Am I willing to allow God to be my constant companion and refuge, or do I still regard him as the "bush-league pinch hitter" the literature talks about, "to be called upon only in an emergency"? Do I expect the calls themselves to save my sanity? Do I make calls as a substitute for making the real connection? God works through people, certainly, but if Bill's story tells me anything, it's that when I find myself disturbed, I can reach out in confidence to God before I pick up the phone and share with a fellow member, because: "... there is One who has all power ..."

Anonymous



Third Quarter Donations July - September 2006

Quarterly Appeal

Chicago, IL St Theresa Sat	172.00
Chicago, IL St Theresa Wed	449.00
Touchstones, PA	54.00
Penn Hills, PA Fri Noon	5.00
Penn Hills, PA Fri PM	15.00
Penn Hills, PA Wed PM	56.00
Columbus, OH	50.00
Westerville, OH	50.00
Springfield, VA Mon	54.00
Schenectady, NY	30.00
Twin Falls, ID	35.00
Hendersonville, TN	65.00
Asheville, NC	200.00
Daytona, FL Recovery	35.00

TOTALS

Group Total	26,707.14
Individual	2,961.50
SACFC	3,792.75
Quarterly Appeal	2,900.00
Grand Total	36,361.39

Thank you!
Thank you!
Thank you!

Your contributions are appreciated. We are emerging from a difficult financial period.

Your gifts are a reminder of the application of the Seventh Tradition in support of the international fellowship of SA.

Remember that donations are tax deductible because SA is a 501(C)3 organization. Every donation will be acknowledged with a Donations Receipt.

Please make your check out to SA. Send a note with it so that we can give proper credit to your group.

Additional information about the finances of the fellowship is available on page 30.

Thank you many times over for your generosity.

SAICO
SA International Central Office

MEDITATIONS

Thy Will Be Done

“We constantly remind ourselves we are no longer running the show, humbly saying to ourselves many times each day, ‘Thy will be done.’” (AA 87-88)

I have so often felt that if only I could achieve a certain level of skill playing the guitar or learn enough history, politics, math, and science as I felt I wanted or needed to, I could then be the person I wanted to be. Then everything would be okay, and I could live a meaningful and happy life. Of course I could never be accomplished enough in my own estimation no matter how well I performed or how much I knew. My accomplishments have never supplied what I really needed.

My addiction drove me to a religious conversion, but I applied this self-centered performance orientation to my spiritual development. It was still all about my will. This was a convenient place to hide from God and from myself for a time, but it was also to no avail.

The Steps tell me exactly how to become humble, let go of self-delusions, and become a useful member of society. The solution is following simple, practical suggestions that anyone can do if they have the willingness.

The solution helps me develop humility. While taking the actions that I can, I rely on my Higher Power for all my daily needs. My shortcomings are not things I'm going to be able to handle myself.

God, please help me to recognize when I'm in self-will. Help me to let go and let You.



Third Quarter Donations July - September 2006

Southeast Region			
Asheville, NC IG	200.00	Eastpoint, MI	115.00
Columbia, SC	75.00	Elgin, IL Sat AM	50.00
Daytona Bch FL Mon	22.00	Elmhurst, IL Wed	70.00
Daytona Bch FL Mon CFC	22.00	Evansville, IN	300.00
Daytona Bch FL Sat	50.00	Fargo, ND	50.00
Franklin, TN CUMC	175.00	Garden City, MI	100.00
Greenville, SC	100.00	Glen Ellyn, IL Fri	110.00
Jacksonville, FL #1	77.00	Glen Ellyn, IL Sun	162.00
Jacksonville, FL #2	75.00	Glen Ellyn, IL Thurs Men	239.00
Knoxville, TN	200.00	Glen Ellyn, IL Thurs PM	200.00
Longwood/Lake Mary	30.00	Glendale Heights, IL Sat	55.00
Nashville, TN Sat.	293.66	Glendale Heights Sat CFC	55.00
Norcross, GA	109.78	Grand Rapids, MI Sat	175.00
Pensacola, FL	25.00	Lincoln, NE CFC	40.00
Savannah, GA	450.00	Milwaukee, WI Tu & F	275.00
		Milwaukee, WI Wed	200.00
		Mt Clemens, MI Fri PM	250.00
		Naperville, IL Tues	100.00
		Peoria, IL "Solutions	300.00
		Rochester Hills, MI, Wed	71.00
		So Barrington, IL Fr	138.00
		So Barrington, IL W	100.00
		St Charles, IL Mon PM	100.00
		Woodstock, IL	51.00
North Midwest Region			
Brighton Michigan Group	50.00		
Chicago, IL, Chicago Loop	30.00		
Chicago, IL	50.00		
Chi St Theresa M CFC	58.80		
Chi St. Theresa Mon	78.95		
Chi St Theresa Wed	208.00		
Chi St Theresa W CFC	155.00		
Chi St Theresa Sat	430.00		
Chi St Theresa Sat CFC	147.00		
Chicago, Schaumburg, IL	45.00		
Chicagoland SA IG	2,500.00		
Crystal Lake, IL	100.00		
Davenport, IA	50.00		
		South Midwest Region	
		Albuquerque IG	356.00
		Arvada, CO Sat	39.00
		Aurora, CO 1st Things Conv	20.00
		Colorado Spgs, CO	100.00
		Dallas, TX	100.00
		Denver, CO	61.00
		Greater KS City	238.00

MEDITATIONS

Humbly Asking

“Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings” (AA 59)

Asking for something means that I am not in control of the outcome. I may get what I asked for, I may not. It may look like I expect it to, it may not. I never was very comfortable with this before. I strove to set up my life so that no one could refuse me what I wanted. Sometimes I demanded, sometimes I manipulated, sometimes I threatened, but I never just asked and let go of the outcome.

In my recovery, I am learning that I don't know what's best for me. Asking allows things to work out the way they need to rather than how I might think they should. Asking with an open heart requires that I let go of my expectations, that I do what's in front of me and let go of the outcome.

When I ask for a defect to be removed, I assume it's a defect because my experience shows me that I have used it to do harm. I am learning that my Higher Power can use everything for the greater good. I am learning that my view of what is a defect and how it might be removed are very limited.

God, help me to become who You would have me be.



Calendar of Events

October 13, 2007, Writing Workshop on the Steps, La Habra, CA, sponsored by Southern California Area Intergroup. Information at www.sasocal.org

November 9 - 11, 2007, Northern California SA Men's Retreat, Ben Lomond, CA, sponsored by Northern California SA Intergroup. More information will be posted on the web site at www.sabayarea.org

Upcoming International Conventions

January 12 - 14, 2007, SA International Convention, Greensboro, NC.
Theme: Our Common Welfare. More information at 336/333-1565.
Convention site at www.CommonWelfare2007.com

July 6 - 8, 2006, SA International Convention, St. Louis, MO
Theme: Live and Let Go. More information at 703/866-6929.

[Please note: Since international calling protocols differ from country to country, we include only the country codes, area code, and number given by the local contacts. Please consult an international operator for guidance on making international calls.]

Please send in your event to be listed in *Essay*.
Events taking place from April 2007 and onward will be listed in the next edition.

Deadline for sending information to SAICO is March 1, 2007.

Please submit the following information:
dates, theme, place, cost, and points of contact.

A flyer for your event is very helpful.
Often someone calls in and asks what events are available.
Send that information to saico@sa.org.

Calendar of Events

*[Events listed here are presented solely as a service
and are not endorsed by Essay or SAICO]*

January 13, 2007, Writing Workshop on the Steps, La Habra, CA, sponsored by Southern California Area Intergroup. See www.sasocal.org

April 7, 2007, Writing Workshop on the Steps, La Habra, CA, sponsored by Southern California Area Intergroup. See www.sasocal.org

April 13 - 15, 2007. Spring Retreat, White Rock, BC, Canada, sponsored by SA Vancouver BC Intergroup. Theme: A Change of Heart. For more information, call 604-290-9643 or send email to intergroup@canada.com

April 28, 2007, Annual Retreat, Paul VI Pastoral Center, sponsored by Wheeling / Steubenville Intergroup. More information available by calling 740-342-0828.

May 25 - 27, 2007, SA & S-Anon Spring Retreat, Central Alberta, Canada, Sponsored by Edmonton SA. Theme: A Vision for You. Information Available by calling Intergroup at 780-988-4411, or send email inquiry to essayedmonton@yahoo.ca.

June 1 - 3, 2007, SA Men's Retreat, Big Bear Lake, CA, sponsored by SA San Diego. Theme: There Is a Solution. More information on the website at www.sasandiego.org.

July 14, 2007, Writing Workshop on the Steps, La Habra, CA, sponsored by Southern California Area Intergroup. See www.sasocal.org

September 7 - 9, 2007, Unity Conference, Anaheim, CA, sponsored by San Diego and Southern California Intergroups. Theme: A Design for Living. Information available at the websites: Www.sasocal.org and www.sasandiego.org

MEDITATIONS

Prayer and resentment

“If you have a resentment you want to be free of, if you will pray for the person or the thing you resent, you will be free.” (AA 552)

When I was new in the program, I was justifiably angry with someone I had resented for years. My sponsor told me to pray for the person I was angry with every day and every time he came to mind. I said, “You're kidding, right?” Of course, he wasn't. He said my prayers should be honest. My first prayer was, “God, please give that SOB just what he deserves.” My sponsor chuckled and said that would do for now.

I found that after a few days my prayer began to soften. I began to see how I let resentment dominate me. My prayer became more positive. Eventually I was able to ask for the same grace, serenity, and love for him that I wanted for myself and my family.

God, help me to see for one day that it's not them.

Wanted

Members who meditate and write about it. Here are some suggested Topics needed for the SA Meditation Book:

anger, depression, easy does it, ego, fear, powerlessness, principles vs. personalities, the promises, amends, selfishness, self-pity, guilt, remorse, honesty, live and let live, open-mindedness, service, tolerance, willingness.

They do not have to be in “perfect” English. The editor will repair all flaws. Please send any contributions by e-mail to saico@sa.org, or by land mail to SAICO, P.O. Box 3565, Brentwood TN 37024-3565

Thank you, Jerry L., Sponsoring Editor, SA Literature Committee

The Reality of Who I Am

In meetings, I have often heard sexaholism referred to as “it.” *It* is cunning and baffling. But my experience has revealed that there is no *it* in my life, there is only me. By making my sexual compulsiveness an *it*, I’m trying to minimize my problem in order to make it seem more manageable (by me). *It* is not cunning and baffling; I am. My sexual addiction is only one symptom in my life that shows me how unmanageable my life is when I attempt to control it.

Another way I minimize my problem is by using the phrase, “part of me,” as in “Part of me wants to continue to lust and part of me doesn’t.” Once again, I have divided myself into convenient parts, hoping to gain control over the lustful part of me. But by minimizing the problem, I also minimize my need for God and others in my life. Today, I have come to accept that what I am truly powerless over is *me*. By accepting my powerlessness over myself, my relationship with God has become an integral part of my every day, as has my connection to people inside and outside of our program.

Acceptance is the key to a happy and joyous freedom. I no longer have to run away from myself, as I tried to do my whole life. Through working the 12 Steps, I can recognize each character defect that separates me from God and others. I can, in that moment, acknowledge my powerlessness over myself and be driven into God’s arms. As my relationship with God grows, the fear that has driven my life falls away and I find the safety I have been looking for, in the arms of a Power much greater than myself. Here lies the peace and serenity that the program promises. I found none of this in my quest merely for sobriety, when I wanted to be sober so I could get what I wanted (e.g., my wife to stay with me). It was focused on *my* will.

But because I now know there is a Higher Power whose will far surpasses my own, I no longer worry about the outcomes in my life. I now know that whatever consequences happen as the result of living an honest life can be nothing but God’s will. From His will comes the greatest joys and the greatest sorrows. For that I am truly grateful, for it has been my greatest sorrows that have propelled me into a new way of living.

Ric K., Escanaba, MI

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or email can be sent to saico@sa.org.

San Diego Women's Group Celebrates 5th Anniversary

In the summer of 2001, I spoke with women in other 12 Step fellowships who identified themselves as having SA issues. At the time, only two women were active in SA groups in San Diego. Other women were reluctant to come to SA because the fellowship was mainly men. I began to think how lovely it would be to gather all of these women in one room so that they could hear that other women have similar issues. I thought of it as a one-time meeting. There had been three other attempts to have an SA women's meeting throughout the years since 1987, when SA was started in San Diego, but somehow an ongoing SA women's meeting did not take hold.

The first SA meeting for women was scheduled on a Sunday in November 2001. Eight women attended. After each briefly shared her story related to sexaholism, the women voted to meet weekly. We met for two months in a private home. We then decided to become part of San Diego's SA Intergroup and be listed in the meeting schedule. The Intergroup supported our women's group from the beginning and continues to do so today. We found a public place to meet on Sundays. Four of the original women have stayed as active members of the women's group for the past five years. Newcomers would come and go. For a time I wondered if we would ever grow past the four founding members. This past year that is exactly what happened; at our last meeting we had eight women present!

The Women's SA meeting is a great gift. We can share our brokenness, pain, struggles, and spiritual journey of recovery. We can listen to each other. Generally, the women eventually feel comfortable enough to attend mixed SA meetings, where they can learn from the experience, strength, and hope of the larger number of both men and women sexaholics.

All it took was four women who continued to keep the SA women's group alive. We knew we needed each other on this journey. With the grace of God, women will continue to be there to support other women sexaholics who desire to begin recovery with the support of other women.

Lilliana, San Diego, CA

WiSA Update

WiSA, Women in SA, is up to 70 members. Through the contribution of our members we are supporting a website, email, and a phone call. Look for us at the next International Convention. We want every woman who comes to SA to find help, support, and encouragement. For more information, contact SAICO at saico@sa.org or call 866-484-8777.

The Four Absolutes

HONESTY

The Oxford Group's "Four Absolutes" were absolute honesty, absolute purity, absolute unselfishness, and absolute love (the Oxford group was a precursor to AA).

Early in my recovery, when my sponsor kept telling me, "Just do the next right thing," I used those principles to help determine what the next right thing was. Since I had not yet worked all the Steps back then, my connection with God was still blocked by all kinds of unsundered defects and unmade amends. Those absolutes were a helpful guide, especially until I cleared away enough of the wreckage to enable any kind of real connection with Him.

Whenever thoughts like, "Well, I don't really have to be totally honest," or "I'll just increase this purity thing a little at a time," or "What about me? I deserve such and such," or "They are no better than me. They don't deserve justice..." I was forced to realize that my addict was trying to take control. At first, I wanted to rebel against the idea of absolutes. "I can't be perfect. Who are they to tell me how to act? My God forgives my imperfections! Blah, blah, blah..." But somehow I knew that these principles were goals I needed to strive for.

Through my Step work, I came to realize that the program talked about "God, as I understand Him" not "God, as I want Him." God as I wanted Him wasn't working. I had to look at what kind of God I needed and what kind of God seems to actually exist. I had to work toward some small understanding of the reality of God, rather than the fantasy God I had pictured.

The Four Absolutes are still a helpful way for me to evaluate if something seems to be God's will for me. Can I keep them perfectly? Well, not alone. I'm powerless to do right. But this program teaches us that there is One who has the power we need, and who'll give it to us, if we turn to Him—if we "work the Steps."

Dana

unselfishness

Purity

Love

doing spiritual work. Thus do we all—individuals, groups, the Central Office, and other parts of our SA service structure—work together in harmony and unity to bring the joy and good news of recovery to the sexaholic who still suffers.

So, send money to the Central Office and support their efforts just as you would your local intergroup or group literature person. Send them letters of thanks. Send articles to the *Essay* telling how the Central Office was instrumental in your or your groups' Twelfth Step work. Thanks be to God for the incredible gift of recovery in this incredible and varied fellowship which includes our Central Office.

Grateful Anonymous Member



New Groups

Ireland

Sligo

USA

- Champaign, IL
- Columbus, GA
- Escanaba, MI
- Holyoke, MA
- Jonesboro, AR
- Kinsley, KS
- Melbourne, FL
- Pecos, NM
- Raleigh Durham, NC
- Saratoga Springs, NY
- Spring Valley, NY
- The Dalles, OR

Please let us know about your new groups and additional meetings in your local area.

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Letter to the Editor

I am writing to suggest that financial and moral support for SA International Central Office is a vital part of our Twelfth Step work. Our groups are spiritual entities carrying a spiritual message. We may for that reason have trouble supporting Central Office unless we see how the duties of our Central Office are also spiritually based and a necessary part of carrying the message.

In general, Central Office does on a national and international level what the groups do locally: it brings us addicts together so we can carry the message in direct Twelfth Step work. Central Office staff supports our activities in many ways. Examples include coordinating all requests for information about SA (including inquiries from professionals and inmates); providing references to local groups worldwide; publishing and distributing *Essay*; assisting in organizing groups; providing secretarial functions for the General Delegate Assembly, the Trustees, and the committees (such as the Corrections Facilities Committee, which sends *Sexaholics Anonymous* to inmates at no charge to them); preparing layouts and publications for the literature committee; assisting in annual budget preparation and providing financial statements; and maintaining the SA archives. Whew! When do they take a breath? The full list is available in the SA Service Manual.

By Twelve Step Tradition, Central Office does not and cannot accept outside contributions or grants, and it does no fundraising. It is supported solely by our groups through Seventh Tradition contributions and literature sales. Check out this statistic: 85% of all funds received comes from groups! It is fair to say that our contributions are the life-blood of Central Office.

When I make a Twelfth Step call and tell my story to another sex drunk, I have behind me not only the support of those who wrote *Sexaholics Anonymous* and other literature, but also those who pack books and brochures in boxes for shipment from Central Office and those who type invoices and receipts and do accounting in Central Office, as well as the treasurer of my group, the literature person in my group, and so on. We stand together like links in a chain, doing spiritual work. In my experience the people of the Central Office go about their work faithfully, consistently, and with an attitude of cooperation and helpfulness.

The Big Book teaches me that we addicts are saved from a common spiritual peril by a common spiritual solution. One drunk working with another is therefore doing spiritual work. By extension those who support our carrying the message are also

Doing the Opposite

The addict part of my mind likes to get me spinning around and frantically worrying about my problems. It likes to convince me that the only behavior that's right is to be firmly in the driver's seat of my life. "You *must* be in charge of you," it shouts, as I bulldoze my way through the day, leaving a trail of scarred situations behind me.

I'm learning to engage the healthy part of my mind much earlier, sometimes even before the bulldozer starts up.

It's a simple truth of my recovery—when I'm fervently thinking that I should be in control of me, exactly the opposite is true. When I think I don't need to go to an SA meeting, I'd better get to one. When I'm thinking I don't need to do service work, I need to find a job to help my fellows. When I simply turn off the bulldozer, get out of the driver's seat, and walk in the opposite direction, I find joy.

I like to say the following to my Higher Power:

*You know me
as I truly am.
By Your grace
and with Your help,
I choose to walk
toward You,
not run away.*

Stephen P., NJ

Future Issues

The Editors of the *Essay* would like to hear from the fellowship about your experience, strength, and hope in the area of disclosures of abuse in meetings.

Other topics include your experience working the Twelve Steps, meditations, and short, thoughtful essays about sharing your strength and hope.

What is your experience? Can you share some hope with a member who isn't in the room? Please send your writings, experience and thoughts to us at:

SAICO — ESSAY
PO Box 3565
Brentwood, TN 37024-3565
U.S.A.

Electronic files gratefully received at
saico@sa.org

With anticipation, gratitude, and thanks,
The *Essay* Committee,
December 2006

PRACTICAL TOOLS FOR RECOVERY

Spotlight on Sponsorship

My sobriety date is January 1, 1991. The longer I am sober, the more I need a meeting because I am close to a relapse. Why, you may ask? Well, there are a lot of new people, but not a lot of people with long-term recovery. That tells me that I am closer than ever to relapse. What I have been doing has been working for me, so I keep doing it.

It all boils down to love and service. When I got here I didn't have clue what love is. I had love confused with lust and sex. I was selfish, self-centered, and egotistical. I'm still all those things; I just don't act on them as much as I used to.

Today I understand that love is the desire to do good for another. This definition allows me to love my enemy. This relieves me of resentment and anger. Resentment is a poison I drink hoping the other guy will die.

My cue for sponsorship comes from the Third Step prayer: "God, I offer my self to Thee . . . to do with me as Thou wilt. . . ." If God puts someone in my path, then I need to look for ways to be of service. I need to do for him what was done for me. Sponsorship is a big part of my life. It is a lot of work and I love it! I don't always like my sponsees, but these have probably blessed me more than the ones I like. If you want to have a great experience, sponsor someone you don't like.

Following are some principles I have learned from my experience as a sponsor.

1. *Men sponsor men; women sponsor women.*
2. *A sponsor needs to be a year sober.* Like all rules, that may need to be modified for new groups where no one is sober. In the early days of AA, it was one drunk days dry sponsoring another drunk hours dry.
3. *Work with one sponsee at a time.* Over time I have sponsored seventy guys. One Step a week works for me, but how long does it take for some guys to get it? After a while I discovered that I could not get to everyone by my preferred method. A great way to do it is for a bunch of people to start working the Steps together. They can talk to each other and thrash things out. They really bond during the process.

4. *Never argue.* People like to argue. Don't. Do not argue with an idiot. He will drag you down to his level and beat you with experience. You have the literature; you have your experience; let them win. "You win. You're right. I've presented the program and in every instance you have carefully explained to me why it won't work for you. OK, you win. You get your life back exactly as it is now. You don't have to change a thing." Maybe "right" isn't what he wants. Maybe he will want to reconsider.
5. *Remember that newcomers are like babies.* Don't be surprised to encounter selfish, self-centered, egomaniacs with inferiority complexes.
6. *You are not your sponsee's friend.* That might develop, but in the meantime, a sponsor's job is not to be a friend. It really doesn't matter if he likes you. Sponsoring someone you don't like is an adventure in living.
7. *Give him the best that you have.* Mean what you say; say you mean, but don't say it mean.
8. *Never work harder than the sponsee.* You cannot do it for him. You cannot make him understand. All you can do is lay it out and let him do the work. Enablers kill addicts. Be true, give it your best shot, and leave the outcome in God's hands.
9. *Your basic texts are the AA Big Book, AA 12 & 12, and SA White Book.* The best, simplest, easiest way to use them is line by line, answering every question. Cover what is in the literature first.
10. *Write in the books.* Every note, every story, everything I have learned goes into the margins of the book. When I forget, I can find an apt illustration. These become modern-day parables. Sponsees relate to real life experience.

Helping someone, seeing him apply new principles to his life, watching the ripple effect as it spreads to his marriage and his family—it is a privilege to be allowed to watch. It isn't me; it's the hand of God at work. He is in charge of healing and He does it in His time. It takes patience, kindness, compassion, understanding, courage, and faith. The rewards of sponsorship are spelled out in the AA 12 & 12, p. 110:

Practically every A.A. member declares that no satisfaction has been deeper and no joy greater than in a Twelfth Step job well done. To watch the eyes of men and women open with wonder as they move from darkness into light, to see their lives quickly fill with new purpose and meaning, to see whole families reassembled, to see the alcoholic outcast received back into his community in full citizenship, and above all to watch these people awaken to the presence of a loving God in their lives—these things are the substance of what we receive as we carry A.A.'s message to the new alcoholic.