



# ESSAY

December 2021, [sa.org](http://sa.org)

The International Journal of Sexaholics Anonymous

## THURNS

# 40

## 1981-2021: 40 Years of *Essay*

Read what *Essay* means for members all over the world  
as well as shares from four previous Editors

# SA Purpose

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.

*Adapted with permission from AA Grapevine Inc.*

## RESPONSIBILITY DECLARATION

I am responsible. When anyone, anywhere reaches out for help, I want the hand of SA always to be there. And for that, I am responsible.

## Sexaholics Anonymous STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLE

We have a solution. We don't claim it's for everybody, but for us, it works. If you identify with us and think you may share our problem, we'd like to share our solution with you (*Sexaholics Anonymous* 2). In defining sobriety, we do not speak for those outside Sexaholics Anonymous. We can only speak for ourselves. Thus, for the married sexaholic, sexual sobriety means having no form of sex with self or with persons other than the spouse. In SA's sobriety definition, the term "spouse" refers to one's partner in a marriage between a man and a woman. For the unmarried sexaholic, sexual sobriety means freedom from sex of any kind. And for all of us, single and married alike, sexual sobriety also includes progressive victory over lust (*Sexaholics Anonymous* 191-192). (*Adopted 2010 by the General Delegate Assembly.*)

The only requirement for SA membership is a desire to stop lusting and become sexually sober according to the SA sobriety definition.

Any two or more sexaholics gathered together for SA sobriety according to the SA sobriety definition may call themselves an SA group.

Meetings that do not adhere to and follow Sexaholics Anonymous' sobriety statement as set forth in the foregoing Statement of Principle adopted by the General Delegate Assembly in 2010 are not SA meetings and shall not call themselves SA meetings. (*Addendum to the Statement of Principle passed by the General Delegate Assembly in July 2016.*)

*Essay is a publication of Sexaholics Anonymous*

[essay@sa.org](mailto:essay@sa.org)

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**RESOLUTION:** "Since each issue of *Essay* cannot go through the SA Literature approval process, the Trustees and General Delegate Assembly recognize *Essay* as the International Journal of Sexaholics Anonymous and support the use of *Essay* materials in SA meetings."

*Adopted by the Trustees and General Delegate Assembly in May 2016*

**D**ear *Essay* readers,

Could Roy K. have imagined how *Essay* would look like when he wrote a letter to the fellowship in 1981? Gradually his letters turned into a newsletter containing sobriety insights and comments, as well as sharing from other SAs, and information on new groups, conventions, etc. Our 1990 book *Recovery Continues* contains twenty-four of Roy's reflections from the early *Essays*.

The first letter in July, 1981 was a reflection on a recent SA meeting. Roy wrote "The feeling of oneness was remarkable. Can't help feeling the unity was due in part to our individual commitment to what we're after—freedom from the obsession of lust and sexual sobriety." This spirit of oneness inspired the desire to reach out to every SA group and individual through a regular free newsletter. *Essay* "Volume One, Issue One" was mailed out in November, 1981.

Over time, as you will read in this anniversary issue, Roy passed on the editorship and the production of *Essays* to the Fellowship. What we see today in our global magazine is the current fruit of his early efforts. Whether by [subscription](#) to the print version or [downloading](#) the free electronic version, the *Essay* is used around the globe.

In this December issue, you can read members from Australia, Saudi Arabia, Ghana, Ireland, Russia, and the USA share what *Essay* has meant in their recovery. Four former Editors tell you how this forum has been a fulfilling, rewarding, and challenging experience in their lives as recovering sexaholics. We hope you will read and benefit in the same way.

*In fellowship,*  
THE EDITORIAL TEAM  
[essay@sa.org](mailto:essay@sa.org)

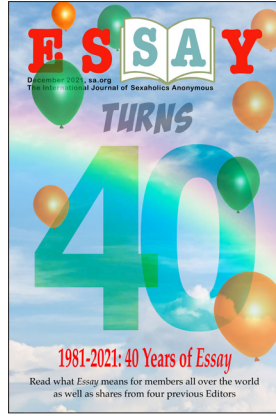
Happy 40<sup>th</sup>  
Birthday



# December 2021

“Essay has proven to be an important channel of recovery and link for union of our fellowship at the broader levels—something that has become rewarding to a great many of us.”

Sexaholics Anonymous 212



On the cover: Essay celebrates 40 years after it began in 1981 with a series of letters from Roy to all members of the fellowship who wanted to keep up with events in the young and growing fellowship of SA.

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## In Gratitude to Roy K.

### DEAR ESSAY, WHEN

I read the Oct issue about our old-timers, I thought of our founder Roy K.

If you have doubts about being a sexaholic, just open the White Book and read “The Problem.” (SA 203) And if you are one of those who stay in SA, the best way to know you are in the right place is to read it again!

Every time I read the White Book, I ask myself how a man in the 1980’s could have written this state-of-the-art masterpiece on sexual addiction and a solution—“the Twelve Steps of recovery practiced in a fellowship and on a foundation of

sexual sobriety.” I always get the same answer: Roy K. was divinely chosen to carry the SA message to the sexaholic who still suffers, in the tradition of Bill W. and AA.

I must confess I have wondered many times what the White Book would have been like if Roy had been single as I am. I can never know, but if I read “The Problem” again, I will find this “We became true addicts ...” and this is what I am, a true addict. And for me as a single person, “sexual sobriety means freedom from sex of any kind.” (SA 192)

I began going to meetings and came off my physical drugs—sex, food and my fifteen-year “committed” relationship. After all, I was now sober, good, and honest, wasn’t I? But, there was no trace of “happy destiny.” I expected God to keep His end of the deal, but NOTHING! “Can’t you see what I’m giving up for you?”

During my fourth year of sexual sobriety, I felt exhausted and severely depressed, contemplating suicide including clear plans to commit it. My psychiatrist committed me to a mental hospital. HELL. I am one of those who “suffer from grave emotional and

mental disorders.” (AA 58) It probably sounds quite odd, but at least I had a very profound feeling of peace that I would die sexually sober.

After the fifth medication change, I began to feel much better and I began to dream of my new life. I began running the whole show again. I was deciding everything about my future—“I” will study, “I” will pass the exam to work for the government, “I” will buy a house, “I” will live on my own again.

And after some months, I found myself waking up in an emergency room after attempting suicide. What? I realized I had to surrender to God MY WHOLE BEING AND LIFE. But it was impossible. I couldn’t trust anyone except myself because of my traumatic early experiences in life.

So, since then, I’ve been practicing the first three Steps with my sponsor in order to build up an intimate and trusting relationship with God, myself and other people. Real connection. At times, this road of recovery feels narrow, but God always finds a way to let me know that I am on the right road, the one of Happy Destiny. I am grateful to be sober since August 1, 2015.

CAROLINA M., Madrid, Spain



# World Wide Walls Of SA

## SA meetings can be held just about anywhere ...



Lake Konstanz group  
Konstanz, Germany



"Rolling Stones" group  
Alexandria, Virginia , USA



Denton meeting  
Denton, Texas, USA



Three Legacies group  
Jerusalem, Israel



Saturday  
morning  
group  
Munich,  
Germany



### Share your photos

Send your meeting  
place to [Essay@sa.org](mailto:Essay@sa.org)

### Remember:

Include your name,  
address, group name,  
and location of the  
meeting.

# The Dog Doctor Told Me That I Needed to Change

**E**arlier today, my family and I had to put our 11-year-old dog Cody down due to complications following cancer and other assorted and cumulative ailments. He was blind and had lost his hearing and his teeth. He had become increasingly lame, irritable, discontent and restless—boy, do I relate to those character defects.

We had three rescue dogs, which I had code-named “Happy”, “Joyous” and “Free”—inspired by the AA Big Book promise. Cody was “Happy” in this trio. I gave him the “Happy” moniker because he taught me so much about being happy:

- Despite all his challenges, hurdles, and struggles, his tail always wagged, including when I set him down on the blanket in the vet’s office for the last time.
- He lived for some very simple things: food, play, going for group walks and being petted.
- He ate each meal as if it were his first and last.
- Until his blindness, he would constantly play fetch and woof at the evening sounds, ever vigilant for the occasional squirrel.
- He never really learned how to bark, but made a sound like a low pitched gurgle.
- Once he discovered the joys of a good belly rub, he became an instant mashed potato. If we were in the kitchen, I could spin him



around on the tile.

So where does the recovery set in? So, so many ways. Here are a few:

- Cody inspired me to dust myself off when a new challenge arises. Instead of fleeing the scene and chasing into the problem, which was my default mechanism for nearly four decades, Cody was a guidepost to hunker down, shake off the guilt, shame, and remorse, and intrepidly move forward.
- I had to really work through a Fourth Step inventory after he bit me, then bit me again, again, and again. It wasn’t easy but I can honestly say I had no malice or ill will for that woebegone canine.
- We took him for dog therapy and the doctor told me *that I needed to change*, shift my way of handling high(er) stress situations. And, I did. I was teachable. It didn’t really change Cody, but strangely reinforced the notion of pausing when agitated.

After much discussion and several vet consultations, we came to peace with putting him to sleep. Today, being Sunday, with the gray skies and light rain, it felt rather serene to bring him in. I truly believe he is in a better place.

BILL K., *New York, USA*





# “God Is Patiently Waiting



## FOR ME TO ENTER A RELATIONSHIP WITH HIM”

**A** thought struck me today. Each time I lust or form a resentment, I am trying to hold onto something that is not mine to hold.

With lust I am taking the image of the person which prevents me from actually seeing them as a person. With resentments, I am holding onto their defects, which are normally my defects, again preventing me from seeing the person in front of me.

Over the last two years, I have struggled to grasp how to surrender these immediately. These things that I need to surrender, I would rather throw away, hide from, ignore, or run away from. Surrender is far from my first reaction because to surrender means I have to own what I am holding and claim these lust hits and resentments as my own. Then the idea struck me to make the prayer, “God I have this ... (resentment/lust)... that does not belong to me. Please receive it from me.”

The image that accompanies this prayer is that of a parent and small child. The parent looks to the child

with questioning eyes saying, “Did you take something?” The little kid (me) begins emptying his/her pockets revealing all the things he/she has collected that belong to others. The parent then receives the items. Some of the items the parent passes back to the kid to return to where they belong (amends); others they talk a little about; and yet others the parent explains that they will take care of it. Sometimes the lust keeps coming back or the resentment keeps boiling up, like I keep grabbing out of Gods hands what I have just surrendered. I must surrender again.

Sometimes I get really frustrated that I am struggling to surrender. A good friend asked the question, “If you did not struggle with it, would you have spent the same amount of time relating to God?” The answer normally is no. I am beginning to find some gratitude in the struggle, knowing that God is patiently waiting for me to enter a relationship with Him however I need to.

TRAVIS, *Barcelona, Spain*





## *Sobriety is very simple but not easy to grasp*

**W**hy is sobriety not something easy to grasp? Because it is very simple! Much has been said and tried to improve the sobriety of sexaholics; however, I cannot find a more efficient way than doing the following:

- 1- complete abstinence.
- 2- working with others.
- 3- attending meetings.

What about complete abstinence? This is, for me at least, the simplest one, as it requires some self-discipline and understanding of the behavior patterns. I cannot stay sober while I keep hiding many small bottles here and there. Hidden lust bottles that are labeled “slips” are extremely risky to me! I am very allergic to lust. No matter how small the portion is, I simply cannot take it! My body and mind react differently to them. I develop an obsession which will eventually make a relapse inevitable. I should and must stop at all costs! The more tolerant I am, the worse I get.

Now let’s talk about working with others. Why is intensive work with others a guarantee for recovery? Because I will not relapse when I work the steps with another addict

who needs help! I’ll be closer to my Higher Power with a functioning spiritual awakening and combined with a positive attitude to life. Working with and helping others is a joy for a lonely person like me. It gives me a sense of value and respect. With Covid-19, the SA fellowship has expanded utilization of online meetings widely which helps me to work with many fellows around the world! I am globally connected! Working with others is not easily done without meetings (my last point).

Meetings! I must say that I have been very blessed to join SA when the pandemic was soaring. Skype, Zoom, WhatsApp, Google Meet, etc. The SA meeting is as close as the phone in my pocket. I am able to attend meetings from different world locations by just clicking a link! This is also a great way to meet newcomers and maybe my future sponsees! I have no excuse for staying away from meetings now. Distance is not the issue anymore.

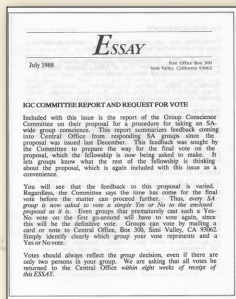
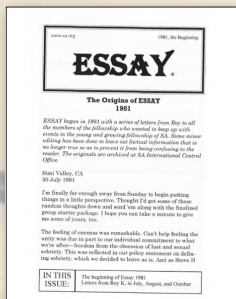
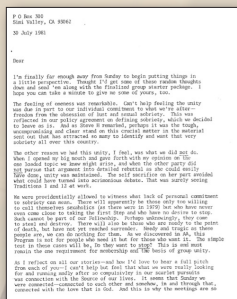
It is really impressive how attending a step work meeting and working with others can help me achieve abstinence! The number of ways that keeps me sober is really amazing.

AMEER M., Iraq



# A Few Historical Essay Magazines

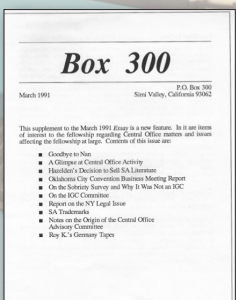
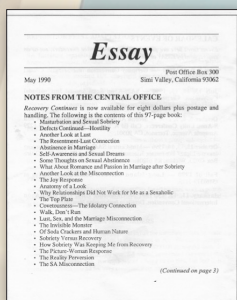
In order to look at them in a bigger size, click [here](#).



Roy's letter July 1981

Origins of Essay Dec 1981

July 1988



May 1990

New supplement March 1991

September 1993

Do you have some *Essays* from the 80s or 90s? It would be great if you could scan them and send them to us for our archives: [essay@sa.org](mailto:essay@sa.org)

## Best of Essay

A Publication of Societies Anonymous

Practical Recovery Tools  
1994 - 2003

## Practical Recovery Tools 1994-2003

Read this amazing selection of the very best stories from the *Essays* between 1994 and 2003 and relish the timeless shares of many sober old-timers.

To buy this very inspiring book in print or e-book version, simply surf to our SA store: [sa.org/store/](http://sa.org/store/)

# LUSTING ALWAYS LEADS TO More Lusting

**O**n my way home to join a Zoom meeting I stopped by my mailbox. I have a subscription to a golf magazine, and this particular issue had two beautiful professional women golfers on the cover, which meant it would be full of photos of them.

I threw the magazine on the table and logged into an SA Zoom meeting, but my addict was really looking forward to the meeting ending so I could start looking at the magazine. It was a reader-discussion meeting, and the reading was entitled, “Why stop lusting?”

My Higher Power was speaking to me through the literature and through the shares during the meeting. Nothing good could come of me looking at that magazine in the next room, but my addict was still anxious for the meeting to end, and we were arguing—my sober self and my addict. Actually, that’s not accurate. The literature and my friends in the fellowship were telling my addict that I shouldn’t look at the magazine. I, alone, was not persuasive enough to talk my addict out of it.

The meeting was wrapping up, and I knew I needed to take some kind of action in the next five minutes, so I went to the other room, got the magazine and returned to the Zoom meeting. While I had a screen full of fellow SA recovery partners on my screen, I tore off the magazine cover.

Then I flipped through the magazine and tore out pages that had pictures of the women who were on the cover. There must have been ten pages. I tore the pages into strips and then I tore the strips into little pieces; making sure to tear through anything that looked flesh colored. I threw it in the kitchen trash can because I knew it would be covered over by a lot of smelly wet garbage.

This is why I have to attend meetings every few days and take daily actions. Otherwise, I’ll be right back where I came from, or worse.

**Just as the alcoholic cannot tolerate one drink of alcohol, we sexaholics cannot tolerate even the smallest drink of lust.**

The reading in the meeting said, “Our addiction to lust is like the alcoholic’s problem with alcohol. Just as the alcoholic cannot tolerate one drink of alcohol, we sexaholics cannot tolerate even the smallest drink of lust. Lust always leads to more lust, eventually making us drunk with it. Once drunk, the urge to act out sexually is impossible to resist. Even worse, lust keeps taking us deeper and deeper into behaviors we promised ourselves we would never do. The shame that these behaviors caused us required more and more lust to mask it. Just a little lusting simply doesn’t work for sexaholics like us.”

MIKE C., *Georgia, USA*







## Ours Is a Forgetful Disease

I have been involved in SA since June 2007. Over the years I have tremendously enjoyed our worldwide magazine *Essay*, the “meeting in print.”

Most recently I was struck by the story about the sex addict who was stuck in a pit, and a recovering sexaholic jumped in to explain he had found a way out. I relate to that story constantly.

I have always enjoyed AA’s Rule 62 (“Don’t take yourself too seriously”) and recovery humor, and always read the humor page of each *Essay* as soon as possible. So here is my contribution to that page. (Note: the first part is a true story!)

I am at a meeting, and the chair says, “We will start in two minutes,” and I respond, “Great, we have time

for a joke.” Another fellow, Abel, objects and says, “Don, we know all your jokes!” I reply, “Yeah, but you all do have a forgetting disease.”

So the chair says, “Go ahead.” I start, “A sex addict, a drunk, and a drug abuser are in a car—who’s driving?”

Now the chair objects and says, “Wait a minute, I am a recovering sex addict, Abel over there is a recovering sex addict and alcoholic, and Cain over here is also working double recovery for lust and drug addiction. You still want to tell that joke?”

“No,” I reply, “You guys have such forgetting diseases, I wouldn’t want to have to explain it three times.”

DON B., Pennsylvania, USA



Have a good joke, wry observation, funny SA story? Did you make a funny recovery cartoon? Send your Humor gifts to [essay@sa.org](mailto:essay@sa.org)

1981-2021:  
40 Years of Essay

## VERY GRATEFUL FOR OUR AA & SA Literature

One of my favorite *Essay* articles appeared in Issue Four, 2003. It's called "Rent-A-Sponsor" and is a very funny (in my opinion) "advertisement" to imaginary SA members who are tired of the old, time-honored methods of working the Program. It offers a new (much) "easier, softer way!"

If you would like to read the full article, it is included in our book *Practical Recovery Tools*, which is a collection of the best *Essay* articles between 1994-2003. Enjoy!

I believe a sense of humor is a valuable asset. Laughter can help me alleviate negative emotions and feelings and help build positive connections with others. Humor can help smooth some of those bumps on the road of recovery. I am a firm believer that laughter is good for my mental, emotional, spiritual and physical well-being.

The Big Book says, "But we aren't a glum lot. If newcomers could see no joy or fun in our existence, they wouldn't want it. We absolutely insist on enjoying life. So we think cheerfulness and laughter make for usefulness. Outsiders are sometimes shocked when we burst into merriment over a seemingly tragic experience out of the

Tired of being told like it is?  
Still looking for the easier softer way?  
Sick of the same ol' time-tested direction?

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- Listening to your sad little story without constant reference to the Steps
- Co-signing your excuses and rationalizations every time
- Letting you work only the Steps you want - in the order you choose
- Learn the secret of giving it away BEFORE you have it
- Understand how to talk the talk without walking the walk
- Identify ways to look better rather than feel better
- Learn how to save your face rather than you ass

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past. But why shouldn't we laugh? We have recovered, and have been given the power to help others." (AA 132)

Cheerfulness does make for usefulness. One important way is when we "take on the unspectacular but important tasks that make good Twelfth Step work possible, perhaps arranging for the coffee and cake after meetings, where so many skeptical, suspicious newcomers have found confidence and comfort in the laughter and talk." (12 & 12, 110)

And outside SA, a friendly smile, a word of encouragement, or a humorous incident shared, can make a big difference in someone's day. We may not even be aware who is struggling—the person processing our grocery order, the bus driver, the busy waiter at the coffee shop, or my next-door neighbor. Cheerfulness is indeed good "medicine"!

I can sometimes lapse into criticism and complaining about some of the things that happen in this imperfect world. But this just negates the peace I might otherwise have in that moment. The Big Book suggests that I don't "indulge in cynicism over the state of the nations." (AA 132) Far better if I can just focus on how I can be helpful to others from my little corner of the world.

It's great to enjoy laughter and fellowship before and after meetings. Fun has also been a regular feature of SA Conferences I have attended here in Australia. At three-day events,

**Humor can help smooth some of those bumps on the road of recovery. I am a firm believer that laughter is good for my mental, emotional, spiritual and physical well-being.**

Saturday night is usually given over to things like singing a song, reading a poem, participating in a funny sketch, or telling a joke. At the recent one-day Conference in Brisbane, the final session was a fun quiz where we split into teams and tested our knowledge. Speaking of conventions and retreats, the White Book says, "Here we meet friends old and new. We rediscover laughter and have fun together. Our recovery is validated and enhanced

in new and stronger ways." (SA 183)

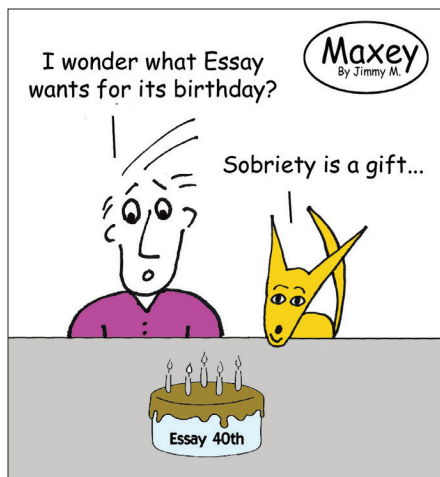
This year, I purchased a calendar block that has a cartoon on each page. I really look forward to going into my study in the morning and wondering what today's joke will be. Sometimes I smile, other times I can't help bursting out in laughter! I have also started compiling a scrap book containing the best cartoons I can find from any source.

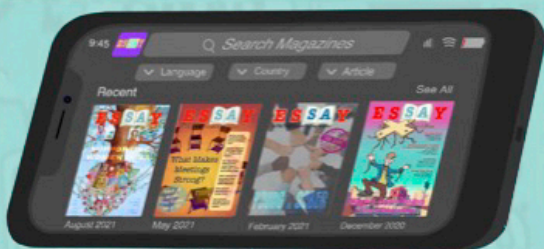
I liked what an SA member says in *The Real Connection* (Nov 18), "Now, when I take inventory, I ask myself if I have laughed at myself today and if I have helped someone else enjoy his or her recovery."

And here is a good prayer I found in the same entry, "God, help me to live, love, listen, learn, let go, leave behind and laugh today."

I cannot be grateful enough for the inspirational messages that our AA and SA literature give me each day again—and especially for the *Essay* way of doing it in the shape of an easy-to-read, well-balanced, and visually attractive magazine.

DOUG H., Logan City, Australia





When considering what artwork to design for this article, my imagination began to view *Essay* through the digital world (yesterday, today and tomorrow). It seemed appropriate to honor *Essay's* digital outreach by designing this article to be read in a way that digital articles are often read, on an Android or Apple device.

*Essay's* Digital Copy allows me to obtain the magazine within seconds and hold its entire content in the palm of my hand. Whenever a member mentions the magazine, I can pull it up immediately and participate in the conversation.

I remember the first time my home group used *Essay's* digital copy. It seemed like only yesterday. After our meeting, a member reminded us that the latest edition was available for download. He asked if he could read a funny story from *Essay* to lighten our spirits. In a few moments, we were laughing hysterically. Over time, my home group incorporated *Essay* Digital into the meetings by screen sharing the magazine so members can follow along as we read it together.

I decided a year ago to work with my sponsees in a group in order to provide sponsorship to a larger number of women who were having a hard time finding a sponsor. This also gives my sponsees, who are ready for sponsoring yet are reluctant to do so, the option of co-sponsoring with another female for extra support. Today, I use and screen share *Essay* Digital when meeting with them. This allows them to hear the hope from other members, especially women, in recovery who are having similar experiences.

Lastly, I imagined *Essay* Digital for tomorrow. It seemed so fitting to consider *Essay* Digital as an app, and I enjoyed designing what the app could be. Members from all over the world could download the app and have immediate access to all the *Essay* magazines ever published. Articles from any edition could be pulled up under subject and used individually or as a group. Being convenient and user friendly could potentially reach a larger number of newcomers while ensuring a recovery based message. I am grateful for *Essay's* service yesterday, today, and for its possibilities for tomorrow.

LAURA W., Florida, USA





# THE SEED THE FELLOWSHIP PLANTED Has Grown Into a Tree



I came to SA in 2016 via online meetings in Egypt and soon after, attended my third SA meeting in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, which is my home meeting. I have remained here since.

My main forms of acting out were pornography, fantasies, excessive masturbation, and sex with others. Eventually I hit bottom in my acting out which crossed many boundaries and ethics that I used to live by and which led me to try more and more to stop lusting while I couldn't on my own.

Today I have a sponsor, have worked the 12 Steps, and have started to sponsor others. I'm so thankful that I stayed in the fellowship even though I didn't maintain sobriety after my first meetings. But the fellowship planted a seed of recovery into my heart and so I never left.

Over time, I have realized that the

seed has grown into a tree and my life continues to get better. My life has kept improving since my recovery journey started and I have begun to be free from shame, guilt, and my compulsive behaviors.

I will never forget the day when an SA member shared his story and his willingness to sponsor other sexaholics in the *Essay* magazine. While reading his story I saw the similarity between me and him, and I wanted the recovery he had. I was able to contact him and asked him to be my sponsor. He agreed and is my sponsor since then. I am grateful for him and for the *Essay* magazine which brought us together!

Currently, we are looking for a meeting location here as things are opening up again after the Covid pandemic. We have an average of

**He agreed and is my sponsor since that time. I am grateful for him and for the *Essay* magazine which brought us together!**

three people per meeting and are looking to grow and reach more sexaholics.

I thank God for my previous SA sponsors and my current sponsor, all of who happen to live in the United States. I thank God for this amazing international fellowship. Thank you for letting me share. Peace be with you.

KHALID A., Jeddah, Saudi Arabia





## Very Grateful to Have the Essay Magazine Available for Free Download

*Essay* is playing a part in the growth of the membership in Africa.

**G**hana, Kenya, Botswana, South Africa, Zimbabwe, and Ivory Coast are the countries whose members have been participating in the Africa Sunday SA Zoom meeting every Sunday at 17:30 GMT. This is only one Zoom meeting out of many in the continent, and there are more countries with SA members in addition to those mentioned above.

Addiction to lust knows no limits; it transcends language and nationality. I am so grateful for my 12-step program in SA; it has given me and people throughout the world the gift of hope.

### 1. The *Essay Magazine*: Free Literature

It is unfortunate but a true fact that

much of our SA literature costs money. I can buy a *White Book* or a *Step into Action* book for \$10 in the USA. Copies of these books are not readily available in most African countries. The average monthly salary for the majority of the workers in Ghana varies between the equivalent of \$35 to \$95 US dollars a month. An SA book is beyond his/her reach.

However, we have a number of pamphlets on our website [www.sa.org](http://www.sa.org) which can be downloaded for free. We are also very grateful to have the current and past issues of *Essay* magazine available for free download. What a gift! The issues of *Essay* magazine can be read during our local meetings or at my leisure on my smartphone, and they are free!

## 2. The English Language

Although there are hundreds of African languages which are the mother tongues of the inhabitants, in most English-speaking countries in Africa the English language is the “national” language. It is the language of instruction in schools and in the business world.

The *Essay* Magazine is available to many people living in such countries where English is the “national”

**We are very grateful to have the current and past *Essays* available for free download. What a gift! The issues can be read during our local meetings or at my leisure on my smartphone, and they are free!**

language. A person may not be fluent in English, but can benefit from listening to our SA literature being read and discussed. Indeed, there is no other option since our literature has not yet been translated into many African languages.

## 3. Technology Can Help

In my own life, my internet connection drew me deep into pornography on the internet. My internet connection also helped me to find Sexaholics Anonymous. Now, with a world-wide pandemic raging, I have made life-giving connections

on the internet through SA Zoom meetings. The current issue and past issues of *Essay* are available to me 24/7 on the internet. Even though I live in rural Ghana and sometimes have a spotty internet connection, I can live sober. I surrender all lust temptations that come to me on the internet, and I receive encouragement and advice from the world-wide fellowship of SA.

The number of mobile phones in Ghana in January 2021 was 41 million and our population is around 30 million. This is the 21st century, and we live in a global village. Help is available online for many Africans living in a rural setting. Of course, not every mobile connection is a smartphone, but many are. Although this means that pornography is available, it also means that help is available on our [sa.org](http://sa.org) website, the *Essay* magazines, and many SA phone and Zoom meetings.

## 4. Opportunities for Growth in SA

In addition to our weekly Sunday SA meeting at 17:30 UTC (ID.# 867-0637-5646; password: 5424), there are SA meetings in Kenya during the week. Our contact in Kenya, Dan, helped arrange an SA 12-step workshop for two consecutive Sundays in October led by a UK old-timer. It attracted a number of participants.

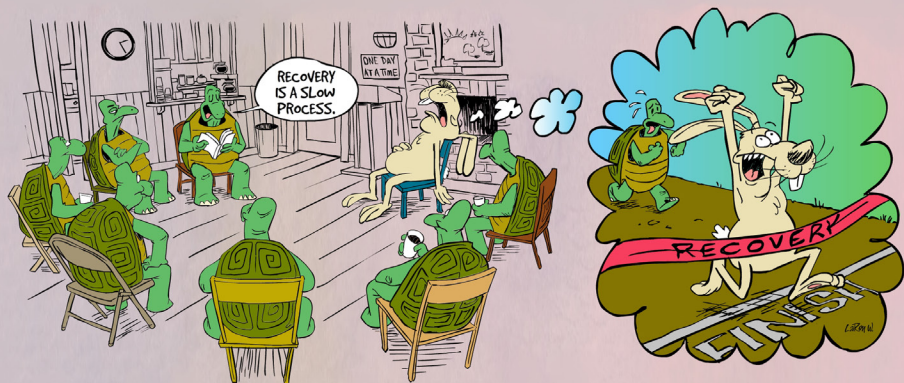
Our African SA fellowship will be hosting a one-hour Channel B Panel discussion for the 2021 SIM Marathon. We also have a group of African SA members who are meeting to create a representative committee to organize our meetings and activities in Africa.

2020 and 2021 have been years of growth in our membership in Africa, and I am grateful to say that *Essay* is definitely playing a part.

KWAKU O., Eastern Region, Ghana







## He Surrendered to the Slow Process of Recovery in SA

This Irish delegate testifies how SA and *Essay* have really changed his life.

I am a very grateful sexaholic and member of SA. My first experience of SA came in 2006, but unable to see the problem clearly, I left and did not return until 2012. I attended another S-fellowship for a time and saw a friend walking with someone I knew was an SA member. This prompted me to return to SA.

I was reluctant at first, but a miracle happened and I surrendered: to life, to me, to my way of life, and to the slow process of recovery in SA. I was willing to do whatever I had to do to stay sober. In 2014, I attended an EMER Regional Convention in Israel, as well as three conventions in my country, and another in the UK. Lots of gatherings! I was on an SA wave!

Going to Israel and being surrounded by fellowship, the spiritual atmosphere of traveling and hanging out with members was very liberating. I was in awe of the members of the EMER Regional Assembly and Delegates to the GDA.

They made me feel so welcome and “part of.” After the convention in Israel, several of us went camping on the lakes of the Sea of Galilee. What a great experience! After this amazing trip, I wrote an article for the *Essay*.

When this article was published, I was absolutely thrilled—I had never considered myself as a writer, and now this was my first published piece! Things were looking up! Since then, I have sent contributions to the *Essay* from time to time, of which some were published! I have felt connected to the *Essay* ever since.

Early in 2018, I found myself unexpectedly named Alternate Delegate for my region and was sent off to attend my first General Delegate Assembly and International Convention in St Louis in July 2018. After the assembly, the Editor of the *Essay* came over to me, and asked for my experience of the EMER convention held in my own country the same year, and this piece was also published.



The *Essay* has given me the opportunity to read about others' joys and victories, trials, and challenges—and also to throw in some of my own.

At the next GDA and International Convention that I attended (Seattle in July 2019) I noticed some old *Essay* issues at the literature table and picked up some that I could take back to my home group.

Sometime later I came across these two issues, which I had left aside. One was the year 2000 Issue two, and in that was Roy K.'s "A new Look at Lust Recovery, Part Two" (Dec 1999 contained part one), which is truly a wonderful piece of literature.

The other issue, Fall 1999, gave a synopsis of the Cleveland Clarification decision at the GDA. This is such an important part of SA history. The chair of the GDA at the time, Dorene S., gives a wonderful overview of what happened at that

convention:

*So, we voted on the one sentence we could all agree on. In a gesture of unity, the Delegates invited the Trustees to vote with us on the new wording. The result was total unanimity: nine Delegates and seven Trustees voted "yes" on that one sentence.*

*I feel strongly that God was at work in Cleveland. I don't think any of us expected what actually happened. Yet we all seemed satisfied with the outcome. I think God wanted us to know for sure that the results are in His hands, not ours.*

I highly recommend these three back issues (Fall 1999, Dec 1999, 2000, Issue two). They connected me to historic SA events that prepared the way for my recovery years later. SA and *Essay* have really changed my life.

ANONYMOUS

## DISCUSSION TOPIC

### What can I or my home group contribute to *Essay*?

**T**he *Essay* has given this EMER Delegate the opportunity to read about others' joys and victories, trials, and challenges—and *also to throw in some of his own.*

He also describes how our worldwide magazine has helped him to connect to historic SA events, which prepared the way for his recovery years later.

The author ends by saying how SA and *Essay* have really changed his life.

What about you? Have you been enjoying all those amazing stories of others' joys and victories trials, and challenges—while "throwing in some of your own" too, *or not?*

Service, our program teaches us, is the best way to feel part of. Would you commit to drafting an article for one of the upcoming issues? See p. 35 for their themes if you want inspiration. But it might also be, as the story has shown us, a piece on an unforgettable

fellowship experience, a report on a convention, the local SA situation in your country, your story, or an article on a specific program matter.

Does your home group have a subscription to *Essay* which it uses as meeting material or which it offers to its group members as a resource to lend out?

*You may use this topic in a discussion meeting, or send us a story of your own recovery journey to [essay@sa.org](mailto:essay@sa.org)*

# Looking Forward to Each Issue Like a Kid Heading to a Candy Store

**H**ow do I encapsulate what the *Essay* magazine means to me and my recovery? I look forward to each issue like a kid heading to a candy store. I can't wait to read each and every article, and typically enjoy a good laugh at the cartoons which invariably include nuggets of wisdom that broaden my recovery toolbox.

The magazine makes me feel a "part of" rather than "apart from." Whether I am reading an article from an old-timer on how they stay sober one day at a time, an essay from the woman's perspective, or learning from youngsters, my head nods up and down. I feel that common bond of all of us collectively trudging the road to happy destiny and propping each other up by sharing our experience, strength and hope.

The *Essay* magazine stands the test of time. I love going back through older issues, and am so appreciative of the digital age that makes it increasingly easy to benefit from those that came before me. The message from those earlier passages resonate with me as

if they were written yesterday.

*Essay* makes me feel part of something much larger than myself, deflates my ego and inflates my humility. The flags from around the world at the end of an article melt away the geographic boundaries and offer comfort as we combat our disease globally.

I love it when I attend our local meetings, or I drop into a meeting anywhere in the world via Zoom, and the chairperson clipped an *Essay* article for the reading. That article—and related shares—always seem to be just what I need to hear that day.

I have been blessed that the editors have included a couple of articles I have penned. Each piece was cathartic, helped me shed some tears while also allowing me to give back to others.

I am thankful to all those who contribute to the magazine. It takes a global village to pull together such a wonderful resource, and I am amazed at its transformation from one service team to the next.

Bill K., *Huntington, NY*



# Grateful for the Experience of Those Ahead of Me

**M**y first encounter with *Essay* was in 2016, when I was a couple of months sober from lust. My first sponsor sent me the magazine, along with a step-by-step assignment and other SA literature. Admittedly, the magazine looked unusual—it was a Word file with several translated articles.

Now I do not remember what those articles were about, but they really inspired me to stay sober. And at the same time, one article really terrified me. As I remember, there was something about abstinence in marriage. In my vocabulary, the words “marriage” and “abstinence” never got along in the same sentence. “What kind of nonsense is this?” I thought. Why abstain in marriage?

I was single at that time, and the thought of abstinence with my future spouse disappointed me. One day at an online meeting, I heard the experiences of a guy with several

years of sobriety talking about how he was abstaining in marriage. Hmm, real hero!—I decided. By the way, he’s my sponsor now. Once I listened to a fellow and his spouse who had been abstinent for over two years. It was a shock to me. Fortunately, I had about a year of sobriety then, and I was beginning to understand something.

In my five years of sobriety, I’ve read quite a few articles from *Essay*, *Recovery Continues* and other SA literature. Today, I am no longer intimidated by stories about abstinence in marriage. Probably because I’ve been married for three years now and have learned firsthand the importance of this truly mystical process. Before, I could not last a day if there was a woman by my side.

I’m grateful for the experience of those ahead of me, which I learned from our literature.

DIMA K, *Kazan, Russia*



## Thanks *Essay* for Keeping SA Fresh

**A**n SA friend had what seemed like an old copy of a book in his pocket. It was all rolled up. It turned out to be the *Essay* magazine. He asked if I wanted to read it and I said yes. There is a certain nostalgia for getting that paper all

rolled up having been used by many people in recovery before me. Me being just the next lucky drunk to get to hold it for a bit.

At our noon Zoom meeting we stay current with the *Essay* as they come out and we often use articles from the *Essay* as the meeting’s reading. It gives me something fresh from SA when the books we use daily just do get a

bit mundane from time to time.

I am therefore very grateful for the Resolution, adapted by the GDA in May 2016, which recognizes *Essay* as the International Journal of Sexaholics Anonymous and supports its use in our meetings.

Thanks *Essay* for keeping SA fresh.

YAAKOV K., *New York, USA*



# NOTES FROM A TWO-TIME EDITOR



Having served as *Essay* editor from 2001 till 2005 and again from 2016 till 2020, he is responsible for the many notable changes our worldwide and colorful magazine has today.

**W**hen I arrived at Sexaholics Anonymous in August, 1988, the periodic mailings from the Simi Valley Central Office in California were carefully read. While I have a fairly complete set of *Essays* from 1991 on, I only have a few samples of the earlier issues.

In 1999 I began service on the SA Literature Committee and eventually became Chair until the end of 2005. During that time we published the first three SAICO pamphlets, which are still the same today: “Why Stop Lusting?”; “SA to the Newcomer”;

and “SA as a Resource for the Health and Helping Professional.”

We also published two *Best of Essay* Collections and our yellow book *Practical Recovery Tools* and a *Best of Essay 1994-2003* collection.

Because of my involvement on the Literature Committee I took over the role of editor of *Essay* in 2001. I served as the editor for four years with the help of a local editorial committee that selected and edited stories for each of the quarterly issues.

In 2005 I also passed on the editorship to a member of our local committee.



He edited for about two years and was succeeded by Barbara F. in June, 2007.

In 2015 Barbara announced her need to pass on the editorship after eight very successful years. I had retired from my main occupation and was in the process of retiring from my other work. It seemed a good time to offer to take on editing *Essay* again.

I began with the Feb 2016 issue and continued through the May, 2020 issue. A serious health issue motivated me to announce my retirement and plan to train my successor on the software and editorial processes for *Essay*.

The current editor took over in 2020 and has done a wonderful job.

During my time the notable changes in *Essay* included:

- Attempting to further imitate the AA Grapevine format
- Authorizing use of *Essay* in our SA meetings
- Making the *Essay* available free on-line beginning in June, 2017
- Going to five issues per year instead of quarterly
- Publishing articles in Russian, Spanish, Polish, Hebrew, and Farsi
- Introducing full color to the *Essay* in August, 2018

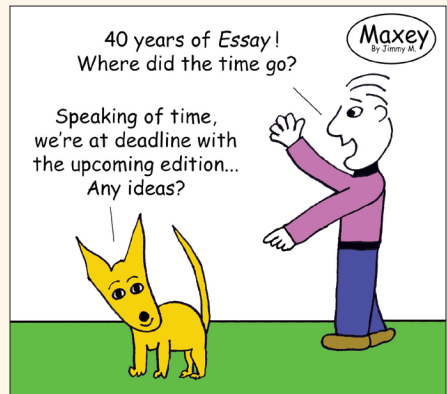
We also had an editorial committee with a range of women and men who were geographically spread out.

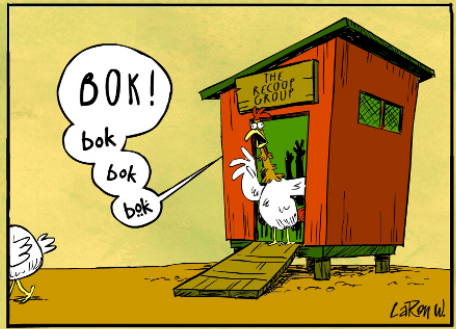
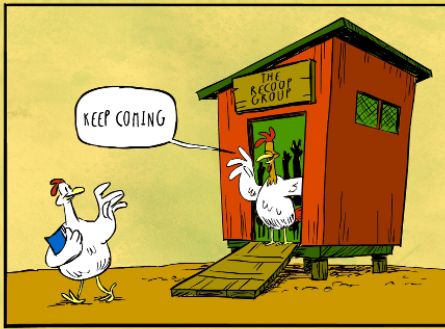
A few backward observations come to mind.

- We have always had circulation and readership issues with *Essay*. Once when I delivered my annual report to the Delegate Assembly I asked how many subscribed to or read the *Essay*? Out of over twenty-five people present only three or four raised their hand. Getting people to see and read the *Essay* is an ongoing challenge.
- We also have never succeeded in making the *Essay* self-supporting through our own contributions. The Trustees and Delegates have supported *Essay* consistently. Having *Best of Essay* collections available for sale will help that and keep selected *Essay* writings available to the Fellowship.

- Our founder Roy K. was insistent that some Fellowship-wide publication be available for free to all sexaholics. Thanks to the internet and to the advent of on-demand publishing, this is happening.

DAVID M., Oregon, USA





## The Spirituality of the SA Literature Kept Him Coming Bok

Taking over the *Essay* editorship from Roy K. in 1991 was the most fulfilling, rewarding, and challenging experience this old-timer has had in his life.

Just addiction and sexual acting-out brought me into SA, but it was the spirituality of the SA literature and deeper spiritual fellowship I found in SA meetings that kept me coming back and called me to perform service in SA. With a background in writing and editing, I served on the SA Literature Committee that edited the White Book and *Recovery Continues* as well as other SA literature.

I became the *Essay* editor after Roy K. turned over administrative functions he performed for the Central Office to the Fellowship at the Chicago conference in July 1991. I had been a reader of the *Essay* since I joined SA in 1985. I had worked on previous issues of *Essay* with the editor, as a contributor and editor.

As *Essay* editor I would be part of a newly-forming service structure that was overseen by the Central Office Oversight Committee, or COOC. The Central Office, then located in Simi Valley, California, would continue to

**It was the spirituality of the SA literature and deeper spiritual fellowship I found in SA meetings that called me to perform service in SA.**

manage the *Essay* distribution list, as well as oversee printing and mailing. Four issues a year was the expectation, agreed by all involved. The COOC

approved a stipend for the editor that covered expenses to attend the SA International Conventions.

Roy K. wrote the *Essay* editorial guidelines, incorporating input from SA members. In effect, by writing the guidelines Roy put on paper editorial principles he had been practicing since he began communicating with the SA Fellowship at large in the early 1980s. Since he became a member of AA in 1974, Roy had been an avid reader of the *AA Grapevine*.

The editorial process was pretty simple. The office manager provided copies of anything that might be useful to the editor. I made the

## **I learned to surrender many times my defect of approval seeking, and its twin, fear that standing on principle would provoke anger in others.**

selections, copy-edited, arranged the sequence. The “meeting in print” featured Group and Member News. The twice-yearly SA International Conventions served as prime sources of material, providing recorded talks which we transcribed, shares on topics and Steps.

A “Feedback Corner” featured accounts of new group practices, as well as comments on previous features and events. The “Box 300” section carried committee reports, business news from the Central Office, and announcements. The list

of group financial donations to the SA Central Office—always a popular feature among the readership—was provided by the office manager. I sent finished work to members of the Literature Committee for their review and comments. An *Essay* Committee of rotating members and with widely differing skills contributed to every issue of the newsletter.

Service at this level was the most fulfilling, rewarding, and challenging experience I had in my life. I felt trusted and my service was valued. For me the *Essay* also was a bridge, a familiar vehicle that linked my beginnings in the SA Fellowship overseas and at my new location when I moved to the USA a couple of years before.

I took great satisfaction in the work of carrying the SA message in the newsletter. I always had a sponsor and I remained active in my home group. I gained much benefit from check meetings, and from participation in committee discussions.

Service taught me more about the importance of making Tenth Step amends to others when fear-based thinking affected my service relationships with others in service, and I learned to express gratitude to others who made similar amends to me.

I learned to surrender many times my defect of approval seeking, and its twin, fear that standing on principle would provoke anger in others. I learned that perfectionism is a defect only when applied to others, away from myself. When I own it, I grow in humility. Humility taught me to ask for help, and to accept the help I received.

LAWRENCE M., *Virginia, USA*





## My Favorite Illustration Was Of The “SA Shine”

It was my privilege to serve as *Essay* editor during the years 1999-2000. My service term was short, but memorable. I could not always keep pace with the *Essay* production schedule. I will always admire those before and after me who have produced regular *Essay* issues full of inspiring material. We owe them a debt of gratitude. Theirs is not an easy task.

I remember working with Roy K., the founding member of SA, to produce two *Essay* issues featuring his experience, strength, and hope about deeper levels of lust recovery. He had a burning desire to share with the fellowship and labored diligently to prepare his two-part series entitled “A New Look at Lust Recovery.” These were published in *Essay* December 1999 and *Essay* 2000,

Issue Two. Those articles provided the foundation of what became known as “Surrender and Accountability.” They were also Roy’s final original writings for the *Essay*. Later articles were reprints of earlier *Essay* articles or a reprint of Roy’s final letter to SA trusted servants in 2009.

I remember working on the *Essay* issue honoring the memory of the late Jesse L., a well-known and loved SA old-timer. It was easy to find material for that issue, and it was fun to put together. My favorite was the reprint of his pamphlet to the newcomer, “Why Stop Lusting?” His emphasis on prayer the moment lust occurs was especially meaningful. Jesse had written, “We found we could always pray longer than our lust would last. If lust comes back quickly again as it does so much at first, we pray again.” These memories were published in *Essay* 2000, Issue One.


I also remember experimenting, for the first time, with artwork in the *Essay*. Before going to print, I sent the content to a fellow SA member, and he added lots of clip art to illustrate the different articles and make the journal more visually appealing. That was a new venture, and it was fun, too. My favorite illustration was of the “SA shine” on the faces of sober sexaholics (see photo), as described in Jesse’s article.

*Essay* has come a long way since my brief time as editor 20+ years ago. We have moved into the digital age. *Essay* is now available online for free, and in print with a subscription. *Essay* is now in color. Each new issue is packed with meaningful articles and artwork. Keep up the excellent work!

DORENE S., Washington, USA







# My Path to SA, and to Essay

Her husband's *Essay* magazines led her to SA, and her former experience as an editor led her to editing them.

I'm Barbara, a grateful sexaholic, sober since December 12, 2001 and *Essay* editor newsletter since March 2007. I'm grateful to the fellowship for allowing me to be of service all these years; this has been one of the biggest blessings of my recovery.

So how did I become the editor? The journey began in June 2001, when I asked my husband what sort of therapy group he had been attending. When he said "It's for sex addiction," I thought, "That's what I have!" But I did not say anything. Our marriage was pretty much destroyed by then,

and I was unable to be vulnerable with him—and I certainly did not want him to know that I had the same thing he did! Plus, I did not think I needed a Twelve Step program. I thought it would be good for him, but I was too spiritual for that sort of thing!

Eventually, my husband's counselor insisted that I attend the Twelve Step therapy group for the partners of his clients. I finally went, just to get the counselor off my back, and intending to get myself kicked out. But then I learned that I could not "graduate" from the group until I had done all

of the Twelve Steps. So, reluctantly, I did the Steps for the first time there, doing the least work I could to get by. This was extremely difficult for me because of my complete inability to be honest with myself, but doing the Steps in that simple way was a start on the right track.

I knew I was a sex addict the whole time I was in the group, but I did not know how to bring it up there. However, about six months into that group, I was telling one of the women that I thought I “might” be a sex addict. She responded, “If you can stop masturbating without a program, you’re not a sexaholic.” I reasoned that since I had stopped (I knew the Sobriety Definition from my husband who was already in SA, and I hadn’t acted out since he

**I did not think I needed a Twelve Step program. I thought it would be good for him, but I was too spiritual for that sort of thing!**

told me the definition), then I must not be a sexaholic. I was not lust-free though, so after hearing her pronouncement, I deliberately acted out one last time—and that incident scared me so much that I knew I was a sex addict and that I needed to stop. I have been sober since then.

When the therapy group ended, I attended a church-based program for women of mixed addictions, and there I did the Steps a second time. In that group, I heard

a sexaholic woman share for the first time, but she shared so explicitly that I did not want to reveal my own issues, lest I would have to share like she did. After the church group ended, I reluctantly went to S-Anon, at my husband’s request, so that I could participate in social things with my husband and his SA friends and their spouses. There I met an S-Anon member who was also a member of NA. This was quite helpful to me because I was able to speak frankly with her about my own addiction.

So now I had someone to talk with who gave me tips on things like avoiding “triggers.” At some point I bought a White Book (I told my husband that I thought all S-Anon women should read the White Book, because I did still not want him to know I was a sexaholic!). But more important, one day I came across one of my husband’s *Essay* newsletters. That was the first time I “heard” an actual SA member share, and it was hugely powerful. After that I regularly looked through my husband’s belongings, searching for his *Essays*, because they were lifesavers to me.

Eventually, while working my Step One the fourth time, I became overwhelmed by looking at all the things I had done, and that is when I finally hit bottom—and then sometime in 2005, I started attending SA. When I’d been in SA less than a year, I volunteered to be a Group Service Rep for a small women’s group. During one of my first Intergroup meetings, someone announced that the fellowship was looking for a new *Essay* editor. My husband and another family member were also at the meeting, and the other family member kicked me under the table when he heard the

word “editor,” since that was my previous career. So I volunteered and sent in my resume, and eventually I was hired.

But then I was a nervous wreck. My biggest fear was that I would ruin the beautiful magazine that had helped me so much in my early recovery. When the job was offered, they

**God's grace has orchestrated everything. He has always brought the right people at the right time for everything I have needed in my recovery and in my time as an editor.**

suggested I find two local people to help me—one with professional editing background, and one with AA background—and then I was worried that no one would want to work with me. But I knew one SA guy who was an editor, and I asked him to point me to someone who had an AA background—and much to my surprise (and only by God's grace), they both agreed immediately. We added a third editorial member shortly thereafter, and from the beginning we have had awesome teamwork. What a blessing!

I am so grateful to have been of service as editor for 8 1/2 years, as I cannot think of anything I've enjoyed more than this service. I'm still so grateful to all of you who helped

out in so many different ways—by submitting stories or convention reports or artwork, or anything else we needed—and sometimes even at the very last second! And I'm also still very grateful for having had the amazing opportunity of being in contact with members from all over the world, because of *Essay*. The members of our editing team (who have chosen to remain anonymous) were wonderful, as well as my husband George, who knows how to keep all sorts of electronic equipment running perfectly at all times. I could not have done any of this without them, and especially not without George (who led me into SA recovery).

Most of all, I'm grateful to God, Who has by His grace orchestrated everything. So many people have helped on my path to SA, and to *Essay*, in so many ways that it could only be from God. He has always brought the right people at the right time for everything I have needed in my recovery and in my time as an editor—and I will be forever grateful to Him.

BARBARA F., *San Diego, USA*





## Lucky Eddie Rickenbacker Rescued From Pacific After Three Weeks on Raft

6 Companions Also  
Safe; One Died;  
3 Found on Island

watched Kaczmarczyk succumb  
to exposure and hardship. It was  
they who buried him.

# Reflections on Tradition One

“Our common welfare should come first. Personal recovery depends on SA unity.”

**W**hen Eddie Rickenbacker’s plane ran out of gas over the Pacific during World War II, he and his crew were in a perilous situation. Adrift on the ocean with three rafts and four oranges, they had to pull together or die.

A pigeon landed on Rickenbacker’s head, he caught it, and the group split it eight ways—leaving just a bit to use for fish bait. When a storm passed by, the group paddled to stay under the clouds so they could collect the rainwater by wringing out their clothes. When one man attempted suicide by starting to fall out of the boat, the others grabbed hold of him and pulled him back in.

In this manner seven of the eight men managed to survive some three

weeks on the open sea (one man was lost due to sickness from drinking seawater). This is not a picture of casual acquaintances, but of people who have a bond and rely on each other. Unity.

Bill W. mentions this story in his essay on Tradition One in *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, but through the passage of time Rickenbacker’s experiences have fallen out of the public consciousness, and I had to look him up to get the rest of the details.

I am glad I did, because it taught me something about Tradition One. It is about the group. That may seem obvious, but it is an implication of Tradition One that is not mentioned explicitly in the essay: “unity” is the group.

Bill W. frequently makes use



of substitutions or synonyms for recurring ideas; here I believe “common welfare” and “unity” are being used not only to represent the fellowship of SA as a whole, but also the local home group. Just like the men in those lifeboats needed cooperation with each other to survive, we need cooperation of the fellowship and of individual members to keep ourselves and the group sober. And make no mistake, that could mean saving some of our own lives as well.

Tradition One aligns closely with Tradition Twelve, in that we place “principles before personalities.” The thing that helps unite us in Tradition One is adherence to spiritual

principles. The group (common welfare) is more important than the individual (personalities). Without the group, no one will recover.

We need someone to pass the principles to us, and we need to carry the message on to others to stay sober and for the survival of the fellowship. When we practice Step Twelve, we are keeping ourselves alive for another day. When someone we work with practices Step One or just comes to a meeting, we have another member in our lifeboat helping keep the group afloat. “Personal recovery depends on SA unity.”

SCOTT N., *Kentucky, USA*



## It Comes Down to Trust In My Higher Power

**T**he words of Step Two roll off my lips. “Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.” They are so easy to repeat. I think, “Of course I believe in a Higher Power, otherwise I wouldn’t be here.” I ask myself, “Really?”

Am I trusting my Higher Power that if I let go of this lust temptation, everything will be alright? Am I actually willing to give up what my lust is seeking? Am I trusting myself or my Higher Power?

To be honest, I need to ask myself these questions. I have been physically sober for a number of years, but my sobriety still hinges on my making a complete surrender of each and every lust temptation.

At times, I have played with temptation. By playing, I mean that I didn’t surrender it right away. I doubted whether it would be all that harmful to indulge it. In my sane sober consideration, I know this is dangerous. I know that I cannot indulge just a tiny bit, not even a millimeter.

For me, it comes down to TRUST in my Higher Power. Last night I watched part of a movie

and turned the TV off when it was getting late. This morning I found myself thinking lustful thoughts about the actress in the movie. I knew I would have to let the movie go. I wanted to see the end of the movie, but that was not as important as staying sober. I turned to my Higher Power and surrendered that movie, trusting that it would be all right to give up something that I wanted for the sake of what was most important, my sobriety. When I say, “Your will, not mine, be done,” I trust that everything will work out all right as I trust my Higher Power.

ANONYMOUS, *Missouri, USA*



# REMEMBERING THOSE INCARCERATED

Currently there are 11 fellows in prison, who have written to SAICO requesting sponsorship in SA through mail or email and are waiting for YOU. This is a valuable service, bringing huge benefits of hope and sobriety to those incarcerated. Sample letters and guidelines for writing letters are available from members on the Correctional Facilities Committee. Contact your Regional CFC representative or, if you don't have one, contact a member of the SA International Committee at [mesam93@gmail.com](mailto:mesam93@gmail.com). In the absence of a local CFC chairperson, please consider assuming that coordinating responsibility. We are currently sponsoring over 400 friends in prison. Let's keep paying it forward!

**D**ear *Essay*, I am an incarcerated member due to my lust/pornography addiction, sober by the grace of God and SA since Dec 11, 2019. I have been very blessed to remain in contact with my SA sponsor allowing me to complete the Steps and start working on the Traditions. Many sexaholics in prison are not as blessed as I am.

First of all, I want to thank you so much for providing meetings in print via the *Essay* magazine which is a wonderful resource! Congratulations with your 40th Anniversary.

Second, I want to make a request for the sake of all incarcerated SAs everywhere. Please send letters, short notes, cards, whatever works for you, to an SA in prison!

Close your eyes and imagine having to be apart physically and emotionally from loved ones, friends, and involvement with SA. Not just for days, weeks, or months, but for years! Being alone with strangers in jail or prison just trying to survive. Again, think of not being able to touch, hold,

hug, kiss, talk to, or socialize with them at all—or only for extremely short amounts of time.

Now, think about receiving a letter, note, or card from someone you care about. Think about the connection you feel with that person or group. It brings joy and happiness to what otherwise would be a “down” day. Specifically, with SA you feel a connection with the fellowship, the group, the program; you don't feel so cut off and distant.

Before I was incarcerated I probably wouldn't have written to an inmate. I'd “forget,” get busy, or think “it wasn't important,” or “someone else will do it,” or “inmates probably get enough letters”—but I would have been wrong on all accounts! It is important. Others don't do it and inmates don't get many letters!

Take five or ten minutes to write a short letter, note, or card to a friend in prison today! It means a ton to us on the “inside.” It sustains us and helps us to keep working the program, and it is a great opportunity for you to serve another sexaholic.

JIM D., Wisconsin, USA



The CFC committee is asking each region, intergroup and groups to make

# 2022 the Year of CFC

## 1. Have “2022, Year of CFC Service” as a theme

- The Year of CFC 2022 will be the background focus of international, regional, intergroup and local groups.
- There will be weekly promotions through Whatsapp and email. The main theme is to see people in prison as our “friends” inside.
- Each region is encouraged to hold quarterly meetings and communicate ways to help our friends in need.

## 2. Have at least one CFC keynote speaker at each of the upcoming conferences

- Each region is asked to hold quarterly events featuring speakers who give testimony of their experience of helping friends in prison.
- Show videos of testimony of friends in prison or prison chaplains.
- Ask their member groups to hold workshops on corresponding with friends in prison.
- Groups should be encouraged to raise funds for books to be sent to friends requesting them.

## 3. Have the hat passed around for CFC at each of the conferences

- We will not be able to do this alone. We will need help from SA international, regions, intergroups and groups.
- To be self-sufficient, we will need help from SA international, regions, intergroups and local groups to raise money for the program.
- Donations will be greatly appreciated <https://www.sa.org/donate/>

*We are here to help, please contact the CFC: [zantinger@gmail.com](mailto:zantinger@gmail.com)*



## 2021 Newcastle Convention Was Very Powerful

**T**he Nov 14 Newcastle Convention was one of the most powerful experiences we have ever had. It was face to face as well as online. Hal and Scott related how they took many people through the steps the old way, the way Bill and Bob did it.

Dennis and Jason smashed it out of the park. Jason spoke about how the Zoom revolution helped him in recovery.

We had one woman who attended which really made the conference.



She discussed her struggles in SA and how we were there for her, with her, supporting her, and offering so much love and support. We were privileged to have the attendance of a newcomer—who committed to doing the Steps in four hours in the near future.



We went Go Karting after the conference, where there was lots of healthy and unhealthy competition, however lots of fun was had by all.

Jason C., Newcastle, Australia





# SIM 2021—A Recovery Braindate

## What if recovery could be SIMple?

Thousands of sexaholics all over the world tuned in to find out how numerous speakers and panelists do just that. One speaker compared it to showing up to the emergency room: everyone is there for help, regardless of culture, age, gender, religion, education, or any other distinction.

Recovery is always a work in progress. Sobriety is a good start, but a relationship with a Higher Power of our own understanding is the foundation for it all.

Ever secretly thought that a Higher Power could love others ... but not you? So did one of our speakers! He went back to Step Two to “close the huge gap between the intellectual belief and the belief I had on a feeling level.”

Various panels, including Channel C international panels, were true joys. Members from North America, Europe, Africa, and elsewhere were in the French session. *Young SA* drew dozens of participants on several

continents. In the Hindi session, some had their first experience as event organizers and speakers. In the breakout lounge, one participant said how happy he was to see folks that he had not seen since SIM 2020. One Farsi-speaking member shared that, so far, he has taken 200 sexaholics through the steps!

We stayed until Zoom kicked us out at the 24-hour mark! We sang the Serenity Prayer together, while visualizing holding each other’s hands. Off-key was O-kay, but one of our sisters

in Singapore jokingly suggested, “We should all keep our day jobs!”

Dennis in Alaska, our SIM 2021 Planning Committee Chair, gathered ideas from the committee about specific action steps to plan SIM 2022. As before, we plan to incorporate feedback from participant surveys.

On behalf of the entire SIM Committee, Happy 24, and see you next year!

RINA R., *New Jersey, USA*



Special thanks to Michael S. from Israel for the SIM artwork.

## What about you?

You can do more than read about this event. There is always room on our team for people who want to lend a hand to making this fantastic event a reality. Register on <https://simhp.com> for next year’s event, and drop us a note in the upcoming survey about being a part of it! Service keeps us sober, and service rotation is key to that opportunity.

# Worldwide Fellowships

## *SA Egypt Plays a Leading Role in the Arabic-speaking World*

**T**he very first SA meeting in Egypt was held over Zoom in 2014 by a few members. Later on, in 2015, the first face-to-face meeting was held in Cairo. Today, there are seven weekly face-to-face meetings all over Egypt and six weekly online meetings including two women-only meetings, joined by members from different countries like Sudan, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, UAE, Canada, USA, and Oman. Any Arabic-speaking member can attend the meetings from practically any part of the world.

Our Intergroup was first formed on March 5, 2017. It joined the EMER region later in June 2020.

Many members have been coming over the years and have been welcomed into the rooms. More than 470 members have registered on the Egyptian SA Online Zoom meetings since its creation last year (the meetings are allowed only for registered fellows to avoid harassment). More than 20 members are sober for one year or more, including two who celebrated more than four years of SA sobriety this year.

The local fellowship participated in translating two recent online events from English to Arabic. The translation committee has translated the three PI videos into Arabic. We have hosted several conventions and workshops, and, since the pandemic, have had many local and international speakers on our Zoom meetings.

Some challenges are lack of experience in service and/or how to apply the Traditions in service; lack of By-Laws for our IG; service rotation in the IG as well as in local meetings.

Dealing with harassment has been an issue as well. A local committee of long-term sober recovering members has been formed and is being active in dealing with harassment. Announcements are made in the local WhatsApp groups to guide members on how to deal with such problems.

The Arabic version of the SA White Book is in the final stages of finishing the first review after completing the translation of the whole book. However, a draft version is available for printing and distribution to be used temporarily. SA in Egypt is still growing, however, we're trusting that the power that flared the spark at Akron, Ohio in 1935 and did once more over the past 40 years in SA, will lead us to another sexaholic who will want to hear our story.

NOURA T., *Benisuef, Egypt*



# In The Limelight

*SA Belgium Was Started by Members Who Couldn't Stay Sober in Other S Fellowships and Needed to Move to the Last House on the Block, Sexaholics Anonymous*

**I**n Belgium, some fellows were attending meetings from another S fellowship since 1997, but after more than 10 years no one was able to stay sober for longer periods of time, even while trying to stay sober according to their own sobriety definitions. In July 2008, one very desperate member decided to go to an international convention in the States and the first one he found on the internet happened to be an SA IC. He went there, not knowing what SA really was about. He came back as a changed man, telling the others about the concept of lust and not taking the first glass of lust. He also brought with him a couple of White Books.

Together with three other desperate members he left his first fellowship in Aug 2008 and this was the beginning of SA Belgium. They were astonished to experience the love and international strength of SA. For the first time, we found out what real sponsoring was, what real sobriety was, and what serenity, joy, and service was.

We immediately started going to the bi-monthly English Recovery Days in London and were, together with Israel, the first country to join the UK and Ireland into what would become the EMER region. From the very beginning we invited old-timers from other countries to give workshops and retreats, and we traveled to as many abroad conventions and workshops as we could. Traditionally, many of us are multilingual which helped us to get sponsors from abroad, travel to other countries, and do service on the regional level.

Today SA is meeting in six different Belgian cities and we have about 25-30 members. That is still relatively small, but we are very happy that we are strongly united around the SA Sobriety Definition; that we cooperate well; and that we are in contact with the worldwide fellowship.

Living in a bilingual country, where Dutch and French is spoken, we are also in close contact with our brothers and sisters from the Netherlands as well as with those in France. We have cooperated with newspapers, thereby carefully safeguarding our anonymity. We have presented SA at several Public Information meetings, have gone to teams of therapists, and have had information tables at mental health fairs. SA has given us a second life and we are forever grateful for that.

VANHOVE JEAN, *Sankt-Vith, Belgium*



## THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE



### 1. SA Group

Elects and sends its GSR to



### 2. Intergroup

Elects and sends its IGR to



### 3. Regional Assembly

Elects and sends its Delegates and/or Alternate Delegates to



### 4. General Delegate Assembly

Decides SA Policy and elects and instructs the Trustees



### 5. Board of Trustees

- Oversees SA International Central Office
- Supervises the International Journal Essay
- Appoints



### 6. Committees

Carry out the work commissioned by the Board of Trustees

Serving on Trustee Committees of SA is one of the most rewarding ventures I have experienced in recovery. Why? It promotes humility in me, as relatively few know of what the Committees do (low attention to self). No awards or pins for years of service (little room for self-exaltation). But there ARE rewards for service on the Trustee Committees, like:

- Meeting and serving with SAers I would likely not get to know well in any other venue.
- It is a great way to carry out the Fifth Tradition of carrying the SA message of recovery to the still suffering sexaholic.

I serve as a member of the International Committee (IC). A majority of the members of Sexaholics Anonymous reside outside the US. Our role is to support the areas of the world that are not served by an SA Region. Of these there are currently three: Africa, India & vicinity, and Pacific Rim. In these areas there are many loners and meetings without Intergroups, with minimum contact with SA. We get to support them in developing in their SA connections.

Serving as Committee Chair has helped me grow in dependence on my Higher Power and reliance on Committee members for guidance and support. Organizational and creative skills have been exercised in new ways. And that muscle of willingness to do “whatever” has been stretched from time to time! SA is a thoroughly spiritual program.

If my spiritual growth as an IC member is any indicator, you also will experience growth as you accept the challenge of growing as a member of a Trustee Committee.

For more information, contact our Central Office: [saico@sa.org](mailto:saico@sa.org)

DUANE D., *South Carolina, USA*



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## New SA Groups December 2021

### *North, Central, & South America*

- ◆ Slidell, Louisiana 
- ◆ Los Alamos, New Mexico 
- ◆ Huntsville, Alabama 
- ◆ Manchester, New Hampshire 
- ◆ Bakersfield, California 

## SAICO Financial Position October - December 2021

◆ Revenue	\$77,811.31
◆ Expenses	\$65,953.55
◆ Net Income	\$11,857.76
◆ Prudent Reserve	\$132,676

## Convention Bids Needed!

SA holds an International Convention twice a year in January and July. Each convention is organized and run by a local Intergroup with help from the International Conventions Committee (ICC). We currently have no Intergroup bids for conventions from January 2022 and beyond! In today's world, conventions may be either virtual (as the recent successful Atlanta and Utah convention) or live at a hotel of your choosing. The ICC is more than willing to hold an information session for your Intergroup.

If your Intergroup can consider hosting an international convention, please contact the ICC by sending a note to SAICO at [saico@sa.org](mailto:saico@sa.org)

### Love Essay ?

Thank you for keeping our  
worldwide magazine available

Click here to donate:  
[www.sa.org/donate?src=essay](http://www.sa.org/donate?src=essay)

# SA Notice Board



## Accessibility Committee

There are no unique sexaholics, but there are members and sexaholics who experience barriers to accessing the SA message. Our Third Tradition states, *The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop lusting and become sexually sober.*

Some members have particular accessibility needs such as persons who are blind or visually challenged, deaf or hearing at low levels, homebound, wheelchair users and other needs.

**There are Zoom meetings for deaf and hard of hearing with sign language interpretation.**

**&  
Direct access links to online international events for blind members are also available.**

Please contact SAICO and the Accessibility Committee for more information at [saico@sa.org](mailto:saico@sa.org). We look forward to hearing from you.

## Need of female sponsors who speak Slovakian or Czech

The Slovakian Fellowship is looking for help for their female members who don't speak any other language.

Please contact us at:  
[post.sa.sk@gmail.com](mailto:post.sa.sk@gmail.com)

## Female Speakers Needed

Do you know of any women with 4+ years of sobriety? Please contact Nancy S. at [howp310\\_11@yahoo.com](mailto:howp310_11@yahoo.com)

## Please consider supporting our group which has been struggling

Join Newcastle Beginners Group (Sydney 6PM and 7am UTC)

<https://zoom.us/j/82754040603>

Meeting ID: 827 5404 0603

Password: 647571



Haven't played the Essay Game yet? Join every quarter more than a hundred other fellows from all over the world for 28 days of practicing new Recovery Tools! Next round starts on Jan 4, 2022.

For more info or to register, contact:

<https://forms.gle/YwXup5LY1KPNshuA8>

## ANNOUNCEMENTS?

**This is YOUR notice board!**  
Send your SA-related announcements to:  
[essay@sa.org](mailto:essay@sa.org)

# COMING IN FEBRUARY

## 2022, the Year of CFC

All about the heartfelt service work of  
SA's Correctional Facilities Committee

### NEXT EDITION

*In the February issue, read the stories of our friends in prison and the devoted CFC members connecting them to the SA fellowship and program of recovery.*

### *What Is the CFC and What Does it Do?*

What is its structure and mission? Who is serving on it? Is it all over the world?

### *Serving on the CFC*

Who can join it? Can it be set up in any country and how to do so?

### *Stories From Our Friends in Prison*

Courageous SA members in prison show how this sober way of life can be practiced under extreme circumstances.

### *Sponsorship-by-Mail*

The CFC needs *you*. More and more incarcerated fellows are looking to get sponsored by mail or email.

### SUBMIT YOUR STORY

**May 2022 edition: Sponsorship—Benefits and Challenges (stories due April 1)** Sponsees and sponsors alike, what is the tool of sponsorship doing for you? How is it helping your daily recovery?

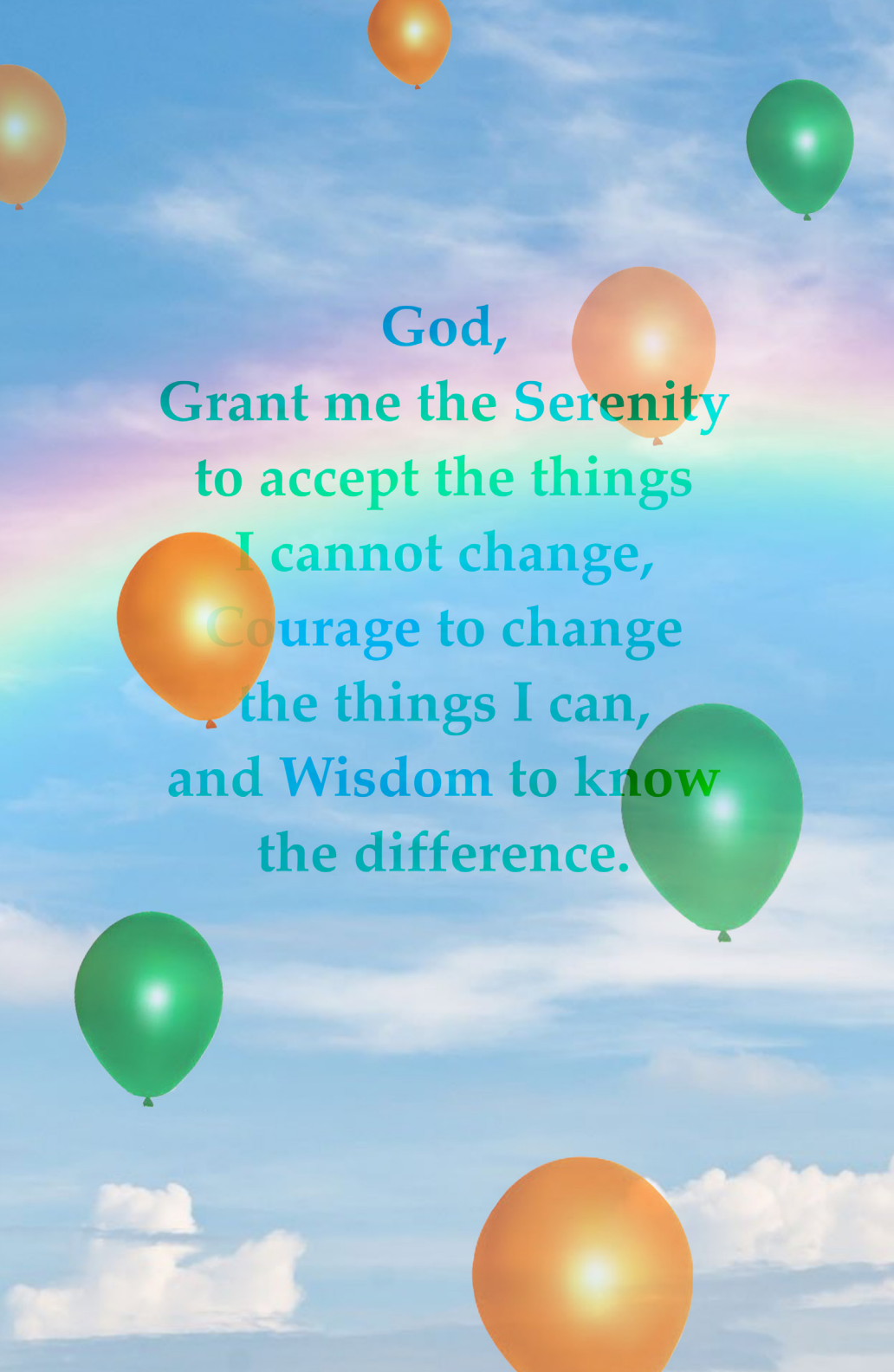
**August 2022 edition: Emotional Sobriety (stories due July 1)** “Sober Is Not Well,” we hear often. What is this thing called “emotional sobriety” and how to attain it?

**October 2022 edition: The Slogans—How to Use Them in Our Daily Lives (stories due Sept 1)** The Slogans are one of the best kept secrets in SA. How do you use them?

**December 2022 edition: Cooperation With Professionals (Stories due Nov 1)** Send us your experience in working with therapists, doctors, medical students, and other kinds of professionals.

Opinions expressed in *Essay* are not to be attributed to SA as a whole, nor does publication of any article imply endorsement by SA or by *Essay*.





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.