

# The Plain Brown Rapper

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*Editor's Note: The ideas expressed in the literature section of the PBR reflect the opinions of the authors of those articles and do not necessarily represent the opinions of the ISO or of the SAA fellowship as a whole.*

*“ ‘Want’ sounds like I could take it or leave it. ‘Desire’ says, ‘I have to have it!’ Desire is ‘want’ with a fire under it!”*

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## Reality vs. Fantasy—Can We Tell the Difference?

By Jim L.

A fundamental problem exhibited by most of the sex addicts I have known, including myself, is blurring of the distinctions between reality and fantasy. Reality is based on objective truth. It can be observed, documented, verified by others, or reasonably deduced from what is observed. In contrast, fantasy lies entirely within the mind – in feelings, desires, and imagination. Although creative imagination may not always be bad, in the mind of a sex addict fantasy can be a dangerous prelude to addictive behavior. In our effort to be real, to be honest, and to live in the here-and-now, let's examine important practical differences between reality and fantasy and the implications those differences hold for us as addicts.

Reality is rooted in the truth. As such, it is inextricably linked to honesty. For this reason, honest appraisal of our thoughts and behavior are essential components of recovery from addiction. For example, a realistic view of our problem is required by Step One. If we are not honest in recognizing or admitting our problems, we will likely fall short of accomplishing sustained recovery. In Step Four, our moral inventory must be complete, and, for it to be complete, we must be brutally honest—sometimes painfully real. Again

in Step Five, as we share our innermost secrets and wrongdoings, honesty is essential. There is no room for fantasy. What might have been, what I would have liked to have happened, or what I hope might happen in the future are irrelevant. I must stick to the here-and-now. I must deal with reality.

Fantasy, on the other hand, is rooted in our imagination, stemming for the most part from feelings rather than facts. Indeed, our emotions tend to drive fantastic thoughts. A principle that I learned several years ago has been very helpful for keeping feelings, thoughts, and actions in proper perspective. Although feelings themselves are real and must be dealt with, feelings do not necessarily correspond to the truth. For us as addicts, feelings—loneliness, shame, fear, anger, desire—may launch us into thought patterns that are unreal and thereby lead us to compulsive and addictive behavior. Unreal thoughts beget inappropriate actions.

Another point worth considering is that the images, feelings, and thoughts entertained in our fantasies often spin out of wants and desires rather than needs. Evidence for this lies in the fact that our fantasies are almost always based in the past, as in euphoric recall, or in the future. In either case, fantasy is by definition outside of the here-and-now. In addition, most of our fantasies are

## Reality vs. Fantasy—Can We Tell the Difference? Continued

more titillating than reality. The chase is often more exciting than the catch. If we are honest, we realize that our imaginings are often idealized, unrealistic, and absurdly self-centered.

For the addict, fantasies often fall into a pattern of compulsive thought, and, as they are rehashed many times, they become increasingly more fantastic and attractive, even though they may be unacceptable, unattainable, or even forbidden. As we fantasize, we commonly find ourselves outside of what we would consider appropriate thinking or behavior. We may even venture into thoughts about persons and plans for activities that are outside of our own personal moral code. In a very real sense, our fantasies become increasingly irrational and self-destructive, even to the point of insanity. Insanity may seem like a harsh diagnosis, but does not sanity demand that we live and act in the realm of reality?

In the final analysis, we must come to appreciate that most of our fantasies are lies. They are not real; they are not true; they can not possibly serve as the basis of healthy relationships. Fantasies work against our commitment to be rigorously honest; they undermine recovery.

What tools then are available to combat fantasy and to live in reality? I believe that the first and most important is self-

reflection grounded in honesty. If we accept the premises that feelings are real but do not necessarily correspond to the truth, we can understand the importance of pausing whenever we experience strong feelings—positive or negative—and reflecting on what is true with respect to that strong emotion. Before we respond or act, we should also remember that thoughts do not require action. So in the interest of remaining in reality, we should invoke self-reflection in which we line up every feeling and thought with what is true. Only then can we calibrate our actions to what is real rather than chasing that which is fantasy.

A second tool to help us stay in reality is close and strict accountability. Another person can often see the fallacies in our thinking much quicker and clearer than we can. For many in the Twelve Step program, the sponsor provides that accountability, but another trusted friend can be the person who holds us accountable for our thoughts and actions. We learn early in the program that recovery from addiction is difficult and perhaps impossible for someone in isolation. This is why. Power to resist the attraction and pull of fantasy comes from sponsors, friends, the group, and our Higher Power. We recover together.

Finally, we learn to relate to persons, not images—to reality, not fantasy. We must distinguish our needs from our wants and our de-

sires. We must learn to live in the here-and-now—not in our imaginations. We must learn to appreciate truth and to eschew lies. We must be ourselves, not the false images that we built to cover our hurts and insecurities.

If we work the SAA program

conscientiously, we will realize that God will do for us what we could not do for ourselves. We will learn that His will is superior to our desires and our self-wills. With His help we can become the persons He created us to be—honest, real, and free.

## Recovery—The One-Sock Method

By Perry

*[Editor's Note: This article originally appeared in the July 1994 issue of the PBR.]*

I am a recovering sex addict, with a little over four months of sobriety. I want to share a very helpful idea which was given to me by another member of the program. She tells the story of her problems with housekeeping during her early days of recovery in another fellowship. She let her house get dirty, and then felt so defeated by the mess that she wouldn't attempt to begin cleaning. This put her into a "downward spiral" of slovenliness and overwhelm.

She finally discovered what she calls the "One-Sock Method." She began giving herself permission to pick up just one sock, instead of beating herself up for not getting the whole house clean. She found that once she allowed herself to make a small beginning, she would often continue and do some more housecleaning. In this way, she was able to make housekeeping more manageable.

In the past, I would put

off many self-care tasks until I had a big block of time to devote to them. I now am getting better at taking a few minutes in the midst of a busy day to do some important self-care work.

One of the promises of the program is "We will intuitively know how to handle situations which used to baffle us." The "One-Sock Method" is helping that promise to come true for me one day at a time.



## Willing to Do Whatever It Takes

By Mike B.

What does it mean to be willing to do whatever it takes? It sounds so extreme, so harsh, so cut throat. My girlfriend is trying (for the third time in a year) to stop smoking. She also suffers from obsessive/compulsive disorder. She is very big on “setting dates” to stop smoking, but finds difficulty in following thru. When I compared it to my own battle with sex addiction, I came up with some interesting thoughts that I would like to share with you.

First off, addicts (of any kind) should make forever/never promises or commitments, so to set a date to stop ‘acting out’ is fruitless (I know, I did it for years). Addicts can only be sober . . . today. I cannot change yesterday and tomorrow will take care of itself. I told her “today is not only the first day of the rest of my life, it is the only day that matters.” For any addict to rationalize a “date” to start their sobriety (in food, smoking, gambling, sex, etc) means that they feel they have the strength to control the addiction, at any time, which means they really haven’t done the first step, yet. For how can we be “powerless over our addiction” if we can simply pick out a date & stop? Either we are not powerless over it, or we are being fooled.

I realized that I needed to make a commitment to sobriety

before I ever was able to find out why I responded to stimuli and situations. I am all for counseling, sponsors and groups, but the addict must make a commitment to recovery, first, before anything else really has a chance to help. In fact, it is the commitment to sobriety that drives my desire to understand my past and how it ties into my addiction and to who I am, today. As I learn more about how I am wired, it strengthens and deepens my commitment to being sober, it doesn’t “start” my commitment. This was a huge revelation as I realized I had been going about the whole process wrong. I felt if I knew why I acted out, that I could stop, but that is not acknowledging the power of the addiction to begin with. Only after a commitment to sobriety is made can a commitment to the 12 steps be begun and progress on issues of the past be adequately addressed.

When one becomes “willing to do whatever it takes,” the reasons why someone acts out are really secondary. Being willing to do whatever it takes can start today, right now, this very moment in time. I don’t have to wait for a circled date on your calendar or my next slip.

“Willing to do whatever it takes” means recovery becomes my first priority (over job, family, primary relationships, hobbies, etc). As I work my recovery, all of these areas (which are important) come

into focus, within the context of my new-found sobriety.

“Willing to do whatever it takes” is not easy. It is very hard work. The easiest thing to do is nothing, continue in my addiction until the pain of living my addicted life is greater than the pain or fear of recovery. The 12 steps are all about surrender, humility and willingness to do things differently.

“Willing to do whatever it takes” means I will do anything

to not live that way anymore. These are drastic words that cause me to remember how cunning, baffling and powerful my addiction was.

“Willing to do whatever it takes” is a powerful affirmation of my own self-worth, self-love and acknowledgement that I am worthy to live better. My addict will do whatever he/she can to defeat me. So the question becomes: am I willing to do whatever it takes to see that it doesn't happen?

## **The Bubble**

By Jeremy S., October 25, 2005

Trapped in a bubble I cannot escape  
Addicted to something I have grown to hate  
As the bubble grew bigger I became consumed  
To serve this addiction I thought I was doomed  
I looked to the Lord for a sign of relief  
He said all you need is to have belief  
I have escaped the bubble and am free today  
All with the help of God and SAA

## My First Step

By Cathy

*[Editor's Note: This article originally appeared in the July 1990 issue of the PBR.]*

My consequences of acting out sexually are varied—some emotional and some physical. I lost my marriage, became sterile (unable to bear children due to STDs), got cancer and, in the emotional pile, I found mountains of self-hate and shame were there too. I was ready to take the first step. I was ready to become powerful. The power to surrender totally is spiritual. Even though I have those who will help me, I still have to do it alone; no one else can do it for me. To let go completely is very powerful. This is the paradox of the program.

This power to choose to have boundaries, to not give in to the fantasy life of being loved by everyone; thinking about how and who I would seduce next to keep my power and to feel safe in every situation in my life. Setting boundaries is like stripping away negative conditioning, obsessions, and opening up to learn about myself. This power is having boundaries about fantasy, or not being sexual when I'm angry or feel lonely—not being sexual with myself or someone else to fix my feelings or medicate myself. These boundaries open up my awareness to be with myself in all my anxiety fear,

anger and abandonment. With these markers, boundaries, fences around me, I can visit my addictive places, notice when I “feel” sexual or like I want to cruise, or sexualize other human beings. I can notice and visit these addictive places, but I do not have to live there.

I can push through my fears of new situations, meeting people without sexualizing them. I can push through my fear, anger, and fear of abandonment with my healthy powerful side by not trying to control, but by just noticing how I am feeling and being with myself. I can talk to friends, my group, my support system about my feelings, and let them get to know me as I get to know myself.

I'm more fun to be with the better I get to know myself; the more I like myself and accept myself as a human being capable of joy, love, and mistakes. The power of my surrender of my life and my will over to the care of a higher power enables me to come into contact with my sacred inner self. The discovery of the sacred core of my being gives me power to change my life by enabling me to be gentle with myself.

I am willing to go whatever it takes. The power is in complete surrender.



## Hope

By Charles J.

Powerless has a cure  
It is in going to meetings  
Sharing with a sponsor  
Talking to accountability friends of the same sex  
Doing step work  
Or writing letters to family and friends  
Today I am no longer powerless  
Because of SAA, my sponsor, and friends who  
Care enough about me to write articles in the PBR  
To put together the SAA book  
And most of all just to be themselves with us.  
Today life is much better than before  
Because today I have you all in it.  
You may not know me, and I may not know you  
But together we share a common purpose and bond  
Together to stay clean, sober and free from the past  
Of our addictions, pains and bonds.  
Today powerlessness has a cure:  
It is in my God for he keeps on giving and saving  
Each and every day.  
He loves me more than I ever thought possible  
Of me loving myself.  
Today I do love myself and I love you all too  
Like it or not.  
Today powerlessness has a cure  
You can choose to accept  
My love or not.  
But either way I'll love you.  
God Bless!

## **Step 11 Worksheet**

Submitted by Anonymous

*[Editor's Note: The following article represents a method of working Step 11 that has worked for some members of our fellowship.]*

### **Step 11**

Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, as we understood God, praying only for the knowledge of God's will for us and the power to carry that out.

Step 11 is to remind us that ours is a spiritual program that relies on a power greater than ourselves.

1. Some of us came into recovery with a belief in a God or a Higher Power. Some of us had no concept of a Higher Power. Define your Higher Power today. Has it changed since you began? If so, in what way?
2. Many of us have found that we needed to schedule a time for prayer and meditation. How do you describe your prayer life? What has worked in helping you develop a deeper prayer - meditation life?
3. Have you found others means to improve your conscious contact with your HP? An example would be to take time to commune in nature and fill yourself with awe at the HP's magnificent creation. Another way would be to attend 12 Step meetings or do charitable work.
4. We have found that when we pray for the knowledge of God's will for us and the power to carry it out, we have found our way and recovery became somewhat easier. Describe how you seek God's will. Can you describe how you know it is God's will and not your own?
5. While this is a spiritual program it does NOT require a belief in a specific HP. If you have not found belief in a specific God, have you found a way to work this step? Do you have any suggestion for those who may be struggling with step 11 due to not having defined an HP?
6. This is another ongoing step. Describe how you view your ongoing improvement in your conscious contact with your HP. Can you see and can you describe this improved conscious contact?

## Bumps in the Road

By Michael R.—Houston

For purposes of clarity, I'm writing as an incarcerated fellow, from an SAA group at a prison unit in Texas. Peace and sobriety to all sex addicts, everywhere; especially to those of us who are incarcerated by our "addict"!

For certain, since very early times, there have been "bumps in the road." I'm talking about the pitfalls within my own humanity which threaten my sobriety; even inside the walls of SAA meetings too.

If there is a classification system to measure the seriousness of my sexual addiction, then I would rate as a most serious addict. Therefore, I believe this article will appeal to those who share the same habits of mind (levels 3-4).

By my human nature, I'm a pedophile. I'm the same person who could be your neighbor, brother or best friend.

I know just how sober I am if I'm really honest about myself and my own actions, thoughts and feelings. Yes, I could list those behaviors in my inner circle which "only" could get me thrown in jail. But am I really being true to myself? I must ask this question, or my addict could kill me. Rigorous honesty in all my affairs; that's what I'm

talking about, my fellow SAA brethren.

If this business of recovery were easy, then everyone would be doing it; staying sober, I mean. It's not, though. In some of our meetings, there sits a chair in the center of the circle, a reminder of how un-easy this addiction really is.

Rigorous...thorough...honest. It's not a mantra, it's not a religion. It's not sainthood, either. It is life...sober.

Sure. I said to myself, "Go ahead and figure out, Michael, how you can hold onto all of the things that aren't exactly crimes, okay?" I replied to myself, "I got some clarity around this issue by doing the Three Circles with a sponsor to guide me."

In order to help me remain sober from my own bottom line behaviors (very much inner circle), first I identified some of my own "bumps" in the road. And now I continually ask myself, "Michael, are you engaging in any behavior that you know is morally wrong today, especially considering the reasons for which you were convicted?"

And finally, I ask myself one more question. In order to live 24 more hours free from my own bottom-line behaviors, I ask myself, "Am I now—today—ready to get rid of all these 'bumps' in my own road?"

## How I Put Some Fire in My Desire

By Santi L.

One of the keys to success in recovery is staying motivated because it is being motivated that keeps us going out the door every day to change the world and reach our destiny. It is our desire for a better life, for change in us and others, and for personal growth and fulfillment that moves our mountains!

Without that desire we are destined to be slaves of our fantasies . . . and that is a horrible place to be! A friend of mine in recovery says "Our minds are like bad neighborhoods. . . We shouldn't go there alone. It can be a mighty lonely place!"

Desire is a word with much more richness to it than the word "want" though they are essentially the same. "Want" sounds like I could take it or leave it. "Desire" says, "I have to have it!" Desire is "want" with a fire under it! And it is what is needed to go from the Discovery phase of our program to the Recovery phase. I have yet to meet an individual who is in solid recovery who does not have a passion for the program.

Unfortunately, we tend to ebb and flow from want to desire, even with the same goal! One day we may be passionate about building our recovery program and growing our relationship with our higher power and then, the next day, we find ourselves simply in the "want" camp again. The key to keeping on is to re-

light the fire under want so it roars into a raging fire of desire! Then, and only then, will we have the passion needed to be tenacious pursuers of our dreams! Keeping my desire aflame is what sees me through the mountains and valleys of life and the journey I am on to my spiritual destiny.

So what do we do? We light the fire! Here are a few thoughts that have helped me build the fire of my desire.



### The wood:

I try to keep a clear mental picture of the goal. What would I look, act and feel like if I were a godly person? I find this clear mental picture to be imperative. The picture of the goal is like the wood in a fire. It is the raw material. I know what my goal is and what it looks like.



### The fuel:

I keep a list, if simply just a mental one, of all of the benefits of pursuing and reaching

my goal. Being honest means never having to remember what I said. Being loving means I am committed to wearing a smile and ready to help anyone anytime and anywhere. Being trustworthy, responsible, kind, and thoughtful means having the world note my character, but, more important, it means seeing myself as a true work in progress exactly as I am--still with flaws--but focused on growing in the likeness of my creator. This is like the fuel that we add to a fire to get it going. Now all we need is a match.



**The match:**

I keep myself active in recovery. I know what to do! I make meetings (two or more per week), read literature of this and other 12-step programs, speak to my sponsor regularly, read daily devotionals, make contact with others, volunteer for

service opportunities, attend step meetings, pray, speak to God, and, most important, listen to God. This is the match: Action! Even when I don't feel like it, I press myself to act and soon I see the fire burning, because I have again ignited the dream! The more desire I have the more the fire burns.

Eventually if the fire is not tended, it will begin to die out,

because life is not easy; moreover, we all have to deal with personal setbacks that temporarily stunt our growth and zest for life. This is when we throw the wood on again, pour on some fuel, and if need be, strike another match. I do not let the fire go out, though, because it is easier to continually throw wood and fuel on an already burning fire than it is to start one up again!



**Persistent Pursuit:**

Persistence is one of the key ingredients to ultimate accomplishment of recovery goals. Whenever I begin to get discouraged by setbacks or failure, or I feel that I am not reaching my goal, I simply take a moment to reflect upon where I have come from. I most assuredly see that, although I may not yet be what or where I want to be, I have come far from what, where and who I used to be! I carry on, knowing that my time will come if I desire it.

## Wrongs and Moving Forward

By Paul H.

In the last week of the past year, I began recalling wrongs I did to myself and others—some having very serious consequences. I also remembered wrongs that were done to me in the past. Each time I remembered a wrong, feelings of anger, fear of it happening again, unworthiness, isolation and blame would envelop me. As the year drew to a close, I found I was running through an inventory of these wrongs on a daily basis and even adding to the inventory wrongs, small or large, that were done within the past few minutes. This growing inventory and negative feelings associated with it drew me down into sadness and despair to the point that physically my body would shake and I would cry for hours. A voice in my head kept repeating “My life is just wasted because of all these wrongs.” Further, I felt the wrongs kept coming one on top of another making my life more wasted than before. Each verbal or mental repetition of the word “wrong” was keeping me down and in the past.

I could not and must not remain with those attitudes. I needed and wanted to move forward. I had poured my emotions out at SAA meetings and to trusted friends who knew of my addiction. Their

acceptance of me and their provision of reality checks to my thoughts relieved some of the pressure I was putting on myself. With some of the emotions calmed, I was able to take a clearer look at the thoughts concerning mistakes I made. What I found out on my own, and was supported in various articles on the subject of wrongs, was that honestly admitting I committed a wrong was what I needed to do. By the admission of my role in the situation, I felt I could step back and address my part without the extraneous energy spent on blaming others or the situation. I could now take a careful look at myself note what I did wrong and use that knowledge for the future. It seemed when I took a critical look at the wrong and my role in creating it, the anger and shame diminished and a feeling of empowerment developed. I was gaining knowledge. I was viewing situations more clearly. I was not pronouncing judgments. I was empowering myself with knowledge by taking an honest inventory of the wrong and my role in it for future use. If I stayed with the anger, shame and blaming, I was not moving forward. I was standing still.

The process of working through a wrong this way is hard and painful. It seems easier to remain with the anger or

blame because that is the familiar way I dealt with wrongs in the past. However, when I have processed a wrong this new way I have found that I can be in some situations again and not make the same error twice. Progress. These small triumphs tell me I have found another tool I may use in my recovery. Now, when I think of the wrongs of the past or commit a wrong, I quickly try very

hard to see my role, take responsibility and not let the negative feelings stay for too long. I review the situation and the wrong that was done. I try to learn from the wrong so it will not happen again. This has helped me move forward and given me encouragement to move forward even more.

My name is Paul. I am a sex addict and I sometimes do wrong things.

## First Step

By Sam W. of Maine

*We admitted we were powerless over our addictive sexual behavior—that our lives had become unmanageable.*

I admit—I am very powerless over my addictive sexual behavior and that my life was not ever manageable: hence, I'm in prison. "Help! My life is out of control and unmanageable; I can't stop!" Nope—that's not me, I didn't yell—didn't even think there was an issue, until God stepped in.

It took three years in prison to get me off drugs/medication I was abusing and another seven years to get to this point in my life where I can see just how unmanageable my life was. My modus operandi was public indecency. It changed when meds came into my life; what put me in prison was me, I betrayed a girl's trust through my acting

out.

My life was so unmanageable that I'm scared to death of getting out—you see, I'll be a registered sex offender upon my release—July/Aug 2006. I don't scare me now, people out there scare me. Most are unforgiving—some will even try to set me up or come gunning for me without even knowing who I have become now. That's how unmanageable I had become.

Today, I have to trust in God—Higher Power to some—because I don't ever want to go back to where I was or come back to this negativity-filled prison. I have more than five individuals I can/do write/call if I start thinking negatively. When I get out I'll join the SAA group here in Maine because I need it and want it!

Thanks for your support through the PBR; it's my "meeting" in prison.

## Believing in the Program

By Marjorie E.

*[Editor's Note: This article originally appeared in the July 1991 issue of the PBR.]*

Recovery is a road we all travel. We all work our own program "not alone." There are a lot of us walking different pathways. I was once told there is no elevator in a 12-step program.

I am learning the warning signals of my sex addiction.

When the urge comes I know there is some pain to feel. I've learned I need to put it aside until I am in a safe place to feel it, meaning at my home. I am learning I can feel it without acting on the feelings. I heard a long time ago from a friend in the program, feelings will not hurt

me. That person is right. It takes me awhile for words to enter within. I become a stronger person when I feel the pain. The pain is very deep. I do not need to do it alone. God is right there holding me as I cry.

I want to thank my friends in the SAA program. I pray for them every day.

My favorite steps are the 3rd and 11th steps. I would not be where I am if I hadn't taken the 1st step and entered those doors four years ago.

I now have quality sobriety. I've got 7 1/2 years in AA, 2 1/2 years in ACA, and now I have 2-3 months or longer sobriety in SAA at a time. I use the program now. I go to 12-step meetings and work a real program. I take my program very seriously. It keeps me alive and sober.

I do not shame myself anymore. That only seeds the addiction.

I've done a lot for me. I went and took a writing class at a college and received a B+. I entered a drawing in a fair and got a 3rd place ribbon. I am using the energy positively.

When I use the energy positively it amazes me and builds my self-esteem. My biggest goal is to be a spiritual counselor--and also to have my son living with me.

First, I continue to work on me. I am enjoying life a lot more. I can honestly say the program has saved my life.

I am a beautiful, bright, courageous woman. I believe in me.

Grateful survivor,

Marjorie

**The pain is very deep. I do not need to do it alone. God is right there holding me as I cry.**



## My Nascent State, the Ability to Feel

By Rich W.

[Editor's Note: This article originally appeared in the July 1995 issue of the PBR.]

Throughout most of my life, I have been out of touch with my feelings. One of my childhood-learned core myth-beliefs was that negative emotions like anger and sadness were too painful to bear. Thus, I could not feel, could not cry, could not directly express anger. I stuffed my emotions and medicated unpleasant feelings with compulsive sexual behavior. My sexual addiction led to progressively more harmful acting-out until I hit bottom (I hope). My recovery means a new awareness of what I'm sensing within my heart right now. I am aware of my feelings.

I do not judge my current emotional state; feelings are. They will come. I can expect them. My mood will shift over time. I must surrender control over my emotions' arrival, and gently allow my feelings to occur and evolve. Recovery opens up a wide spectrum of possible emotions. I am capable of multiple simultaneous emotions, including those that might seem contradictory or mutually exclusive. The SAA old-timer "loves to see the newcomer hurt," and is not too quick to console insincerely,

lest the power of "healing emotional pain" be lost. By knowing how to feel, I risk experiencing that healing pain.

As they say at the treatment center, "Feel those feelings!" When I feel, I may share these inner sensations with others I trust. I can analyze my errant thinking with my therapist in an attempt to understand their origins, and I accept knowing "why?" is not always possible or even a must for me.

How can I discern what is a true feeling? After all, my old patterns of dishonesty and denial enabled me to distort what I was perceiving in order to fulfill my unhealthy desires. Validation of my true feelings remains a challenge. I can seek help from my higher power through prayer, and share what I'm experiencing with my sponsor and therapist. I must be willing to listen for guidance and trust feedback that fits. Once confirmed as true via this process, I can express some of my emotions safely, especially the positive ones. I can laugh, I can cry, I can tell someone I'm angry, I can feel the joy of recovery. This is a new experience for me. It's wonderful and I like it!

**The SAA old-timer "loves to see the newcomer hurt," and is not too quick to console insincerely, lest the power of "healing emotional pain" be lost.**

## From the Editor

By Mike L.

I hope you're having a nice summer. I've just about come back to earth after the great convention in Indianapolis.

It seems as ever since my trip to Indianapolis, where I had been back in 1987, also over Memorial Day weekend, I've had a chance to relive a lot of the good times in my life. I marched in Houston's gay pride parade for the first time since 1989, and waved to some of my friends along the route. I saw the new Superman movie which is really a remake of the original disguised as a sequel. I had forgotten how much I enjoyed the original when I saw it back in 1978 until I saw the remake. I went to my first-ever concert by John Prine, who has always been my number-one favorite pop artist since I first heard him in 1972. And I'm having the opportunity to learn the choral music for the operas Carmen and Rigoletto to sing in upcoming productions of those operas, and this takes me back to two of the very first operas I ever got to know, back in 1964. All of these has reminded me that, despite the pains, the heartache and the things that led to my acting out, I have to say that I've enjoyed a lot of my life as well. I really have no regrets as to the things I've done that even back then I could have classified as "outer circle," other than perhaps a little more travel-

ing and I have a suspicion that I'll still have time for some of that as well.

We have a few articles in this issue from previous PBRs (all July issues, I might add). I always enjoy going back through the old PBR and re-reading the articles from those issues. AND I can always use new articles as well. So if you have an article in process, this would be a great time to get it ready and send it along. You can send it by regular mail to ISO, P.O. Box 70949, Houston, TX 77270-0949, or else by e-mail at [pbr@saa-recovery.org](mailto:pbr@saa-recovery.org). If you have suggestions as to a new name for the PBR, you can send them by these same means. Deadline is January 31.

By the way, I received a mail release for an article that was apparently e-mailed to me on May 23, and I never received the article. So if you e-mailed me an article around that time and it isn't in this issue, chances are it's your article, so please send it again.





# ISO News



## Board Committees Up and Active!

The ISO Board has always had a number of standing committees. In the past, however, few of them have been active. A major goal in reorganizing the ISO Office was to provide a staff able to increase outreach, to facilitate communications within the SAA fellowship, and to foster broader participation in the international service organization.

The first two months following the 2006 Convention have marked a heartening beginning for the goal of broadening participation in the ISO. All Board committees – fourteen in all – have been active, with a combined total of 18 meetings by teleconference and six face-to-face meetings. The following is a list of current Board Committees:

2007 Convention	General Outreach	Office Oversight
2008 Convention	Interfellowship Relations	Online Outreach
Code of Conduct	Intergroup Communications	Prison Outreach
Disclosure Advisory	International Development	Women's Outreach
Fund Raising	ISO Website	

About 104 members are now participating in these committees. Some committees need additional participants. Others are still accepting participants. Contact the ISO Office about service possibilities through Board Committees.

## ISO Income/Expense Summary As Of July 31, 2006

	July	Monthly Average	Year To Date
<b>NET OPERATING INCOME</b>			
<b>Net Sales</b>	<b>6,734</b>	<b>7,277</b>	<b>50,937</b>
<b>Donations</b>	<b>10,887</b>	<b>9,579</b>	<b>67,055</b>
General Donations	6,588	6,341	44,388
LifeLine Partners	3,186	2,885	20,193
Designated Donations	1,113	353	2,474
<b>Miscellaneous Income</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>1,037</b>	<b>7,262</b>
<b>TOTAL NET OPERATING INCOME</b>	<b>17,642</b>	<b>17,893</b>	<b>125,254</b>
<b>OPERATING EXPENSES</b>			
<b>Wages/Benefits/Taxes</b>	<b>10,760</b>	<b>11,418</b>	<b>79,928</b>
Outreach Related	3,522	3,090	21,630
Wages - Other	4,575	6,239	43,670
Benefits	1,779	1,301	9,104
Taxes	884	789	5,524
<b>Insurance</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>296</b>	<b>2,074</b>
<b>Depreciation</b>	<b>191</b>	<b>192</b>	<b>1,345</b>
<b>Postage</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>174</b>	<b>1,220</b>
<b>Communications</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>369</b>	<b>1,894</b>
<b>Rent/Utilities</b>	<b>1,242</b>	<b>1,162</b>	<b>8,131</b>
<b>Office Related</b>	<b>1,478</b>	<b>840</b>	<b>5,878</b>
<b>Financial</b>	<b>1,119</b>	<b>870</b>	<b>6,089</b>
<b>Plain Brown Rapper</b>	<b>1,093</b>	<b>530</b>	<b>3,707</b>
<b>Translations</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2,118</b>	<b>10,590</b>
<b>Outreach Expenses</b>	<b>865</b>	<b>1,083</b>	<b>7,580</b>
<b>Total Operating Expenses</b>	<b>16,992</b>	<b>18,348</b>	<b>128,436</b>
<b>TOTAL NET OPERATING SURPLUS</b>	<b>650</b>	<b>-455</b>	<b>-3,182</b>
<b>NONOPERATIONAL INCOME</b>			
<b>Delegate Fees</b>	<b>0</b>		<b>46,813</b>
<b>TOTAL NONOPERATIONAL INCOME</b>	<b>0</b>		<b>50,628</b>
<b>2006 ISO Convention</b>			
<b>Delegate Meeting</b>	<b>0</b>		<b>3,702</b>
<b>Board/LitCom/Staff Travel</b>	<b>3,781</b>		<b>14,318</b>
<b>TOTAL NONOPERATIONAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>3,809</b>		<b>47,114</b>
<b>TOTAL NONOPERATIONAL SURPLUS</b>	<b>-3,809</b>		<b>3,514</b>
<b>ISO SURPLUS - ALL INCOME/EXPENSES</b>	<b>-3,159</b>		<b>332</b>

Now that all 2006 Convention costs have been booked and all Board, Literature Committee, and staff related travel expenses paid, the ISO's midyear financial is clear. The organization shows a bottom line that is practically even, which is as it should be. The balance between convention surplus and travel expenses left over enough to fully fund the four-month Operational Reserve at \$64,592.34. Equally important is that all of this was accomplished without taking from money needed for day-to-day expenses.

The final half of the year and the first five months of 2007 will be challenging, however. This is the time when the ISO must operate solely from donations and literature sales. Last year, as in the two years before it, the Giving Thanks event sponsored by the Bay Area fellowship brought an infusion of funds that made it possible to finish up in the black. Hopefully, such events will begin to catch on in other areas. For information about starting an annual Giving Thanks tradition, contact the ISO Office. Events such as these, along with regular group and individual donations, will determine how this year ends and the new one begins.

The push to enroll 100 new LifeLine Partners is still a long way from reaching its goal. Since the campaign was kicked off during the convention in May, 19 new members have made pledges, and three existing partners have increased their commitments. Combined, they will add about \$9,000 to the annual total of LifeLine Partners giving. With more than 600 enrollment cards distributed throughout the fellowship, more pledges are expected. Many more are needed.

Though falling short of projections, sales of *Sex Addicts Anonymous* continue briskly and contribute greatly to a positive cash flow. Without them, the ISO would not have been able to build up the reserves it needs to fund its commitment to increase its work of outreach and service. As of July, reserves and the amounts in them were as follows:

Capital	\$1,200
Translations	\$4,919
Operational	\$64,592
Travel	\$1,217
Green Book Printing	\$5,222
Phase III	\$4,000

## **Five Reasons (among many) For Attending An ISO Convention**

If you have never attended an ISO convention, one of the best reasons to make this your first might be to find out if it is a recovery gathering you can bring to your city. After experiencing it firsthand you are likely to want all the members in your area to have the opportunity to participate in this unique experience. Here are five reasons you might feel this way:

1. Each year's convention offers workshops on a wide variety of subjects, providing the opportunity both to learn from others and to share one's own experience, strength, and hope. For many this is the primary reason for going convention.
2. Women in SAA often express enthusiasm about the convention, especially those from an area with few or no women in the fellowship. The convention presents a once-a-year opportunity to network with women from many areas.
3. This harkens to another popular reason for attending the convention, namely, the opportunity to fellowship with other sex addicts from all over the world. In the past, conventioners have come from as far as England and India. Meeting recovering addicts from many different places is powerful! It continues the process that begins at regular SAA meetings, where many an addict first experiences the feeling of terminal uniqueness melt away. Not only are there people just like me in my local fellowship, there are people just like me the world over! At convention, many of these people become friends for a lifetime.
4. Then there are those inspiring keynote speakers from whom we learn not only that long term recovery is possible but also how it is working in their lives.

Registrations are now being accepted. Contact the ISO office for information on how to obtain a registration form.

**ISO, PO Box 70949, Houston, TX 77270**  
**800-477-8191**  
**[info@saa-recovery.org](mailto:info@saa-recovery.org)**

**See you there!**

## Agenda Item Request

Each February the ISO publishes the *Call to Convention*. This document provides all the information needed by delegates to participate in the annual Delegate Meeting. Among other things, it contains all New Business that has been received by the January 31 deadline for submitting such items. New Business items are important, because they are published in the *Call to Convention* and take precedence over any Additional Business items submitted after the January 31 deadline, including those items submitted during the Delegate Meeting itself. In order to give all individual members and groups the opportunity to submit New Business items the New Business Item Request Form is printed below.

### GUIDELINES FOR SUBMITTING NEW BUSINESS ITEMS TO BE CONSIDERED AT THE 2007 ISO OF SAA DELEGATE MEETING

All items are to be submitted in writing to the International Office by January 31, 2007. Items received after that date will be kept for consideration as Additional Business.

#### NEW BUSINESS ITEM

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(Short Title)

**Champion's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_  
(Can be SAA individual member, group, intergroup, committee)

**Proposed Motion:** (Proposed motion just as intended to be voted on by delegates) “ \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_”

**Issues/Background:**

(Whatever the champion deems relevant to the issue, e.g., presentation of an existing situation or policy, why change is needed, how the proposed motion makes that change. This part should be concise but can consist of one or more paragraphs. In short, here the champion is "speaking for" the motion.)

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**Other Concerns:**

(Perhaps the proposed motion will impact another area, e.g., a significant rise in expenses or loss of revenue. Perhaps the champion foresees what some of the objections to the motion might be and wants to address these objections beforehand.)

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**Priority:**

(Some actions need to be taken immediately, others can be implemented over time, others still might be contingent on some other action taking place.)

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Please do not hesitate to call the ISO Office at 800-477-8191 with any questions you might have.

**Mail Or E-Mail New Business Agenda Items To:**

<p><b>ISO, PO Box 70949, Houston, TX 77270</b> or <b>info@saa-recovery.org</b></p>
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## How to Submit a PBR Article

### ***First:***

Write from your experience, strength, and hope. Others may need to hear exactly what you have to say.

### ***Second:***

Send your article by e-mail to: PBR@saa-recovery.org

or mail to: ISO  
P. O. Box 70949  
Houston, TX 77270

### ***Third:***

Send the **Article Release Form** below. Download an extra from the SAA website if needed or feel free to make copies.

“Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these Steps, we tried to carry this message to other sex addicts...” Step 12

### **Submission deadlines:**

**Dec. 1, Feb. 1, April 1, June 1, Aug. 1, Oct. 1**

**Release Form:** I hereby give this newsletter, its successors, assignees, and those acting on its authority permission to copyright and/or publish any articles, poems, other written material, or art work pertaining to my personal story of recovery from addiction and my personal experience with or opinions about the SAA fellowship or program. I understand that additions may be made to my written material and that it may be changed or edited. I further understand that every effort will be made to assure my anonymity. I possess full legal capacity to exercise this authorization and hereby release the ISO newsletter from any claim by myself or my successors.

**SIGNED:** \_\_\_\_\_ **DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**WITNESS:** \_\_\_\_\_ **DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Mail to: ISO, P.O. Box 70949, Houston, TX 77270**

3890-D North Freeway  
Houston, TX 77022

Phone: 713-869-4902  
Toll Free: 800-477-8191

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web: <http://www.saa-recovery.org>  
Office e-mail: [info@saa-recovery.org](mailto:info@saa-recovery.org)  
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Layout Editor

*Sex Addicts Anonymous is a twelve-step program of recovery based on the principles of Alcoholics Anonymous. Our primary purpose is to stop our addictive sexual behavior and to help others recover from their sexual addiction. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop addictive sexual behavior. Our fellowship is open to women and men regardless of religion, race, ethnic background, marital status, sexual orientation, or profession. Our members define their own sexual boundaries with the guidance of their sponsors and other group members. We encourage our members to discover and explore what healthy sexuality means to them.*

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<u>Region</u>	<u>Board Members</u>	<u>Board Alternate</u>	<u>Literature Committee</u>	<u>Lit. Com. Alternate</u>
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Great Lakes	Ken S. <i>Chair</i>	Ted M.	Morris B.	Marc D.
Intermountain	Shelley K. <i>Secretary</i>	George D.	Dolores F.	Vacant
North Central	Greg B.	Jim A.	Thea D.	Shira R.
Northeast	Gary C.	Mike D.	Tom K.	Chris J.
North Pacific	Tim E.	Mary Joy S.	Jeff W. <i>Chair</i>	Lawrence S.
South Central	Don K. <i>Treasurer</i>	John L.	Jim L.	Randy E.
Southeast	Carla P.	Santi L.	Jim L. <i>2nd Chair</i>	Mark S.
Southern Pacific	Ed B.	DeJon M.	Larry C.	Mitch G.
At Large	Jeff B.		Chris D.	
PBR Editor			Mike L. <i>Secretary</i>	