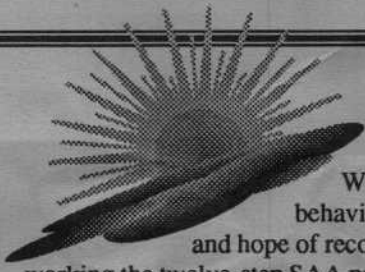


# THE Plain Brown Rapper

The SAA Newsletter

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November, 1989 Edition

The purpose of the Newsletter is to be a voice of the SAA membership. Written by and for brothers and sisters recovering from compulsive sexual behaviors; to be informative, sensitive and expressing the experiences, strength, and hope of recovering members. It is intended as an additional tool of recovery for those working the twelve-step SAA program.

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## A Third Step

STEP 3 — MADE A DECISION TO TURN OUR WILL AND OUR LIVES OVER TO THE CARE OF GOD AS WE UNDERSTOOD GOD

It has been said that the simplicity of this step is summed up in the phrase, "made a decision...." That may be true for some folks, but my recovery has been more dependent upon the latter part of the step — "...as we understood God."

In my addiction — primarily fantasy and masturbation — I had created a "dream" world where I could easily escape from reality. Early in my life I had experienced perceived rejection and something died inside of me. I would not or could not trust anyone. I had placed my trust in people, places and things and had been disappointed. I had developed a tremendous fear which I masked by gregarious behavior and everyone thought I was happy.

In the meditation book, *One Day at a Time*, the issue of Higher Power is presented this way: "May I find my own best way to God, my own best technique of meditation — whether I use the oriental mantra, substitute the name of Jesus Christ, or just allow the spirit of God, as I understand Him, to settle in me and give me peace."

I began to study the Gospels of Jesus Christ and saw that He suffered many of the same circumstances I experienced. He was misunderstood, rejected, and opposed even though He was trying to help people. But He had inner courage I didn't have and I noticed He prayed a lot for God's will in His life (Step 11) even when it meant His death. The more I meditated on His life, the more I began to think that someone could understand the pain I was feeling. I would talk to Him, and I felt like I was getting answers.

My vision of God was colored by my religious upbringing and the god that other people told me about, not the God I was experiencing. I had perceived an angry God that was harsh, judgmental, and expected me to live a perfect life. If I didn't do good enough, I would go to hell. My spiritual awakening referred to in Step 12 came before I became involved in the SAA program. God showed His sense of humor and compassion because the man that told me

the story of Jesus' love for me as a person was named Pastor Harry Fullilove. No one could get the attention of a man who was absolutely convinced that he was unlovable like a man who had the name "Full-i-love." But, I listened, I heard, and I believed.

It took years and miracles to convince me that God could love me when I was so sure I was unlovable. Even with my spiritual awakening, I was convinced that I was such a sinner because of my addiction that some day God would get fed up with me and He, too, would reject me. Little did I understand God.

God helped me to re-parent the little child within me. Constantly, I was reminded that there was hope and there was love. I almost got into the behavior of being as bad as I could so that God would reject me and then I could say, "see, I told you so." But, God wouldn't quit. Each time I messed up, God went out of His way to send some sign that all was well and He still loved me — didn't like or approve of my behavior, but He did love me and nothing I could do would ever separate me from that love. It was a real dogfight, because I was hard-hearted and scared stiff to come out of my shell and trust even Him.

I still have doubts, sometimes I feel rebellious and I don't want to hear God, I don't want to hear the program and I don't want to do anything except act out. Much of my religious training has been reprocessed and I find much of it incorporated in the program. I am recovering. I am trusting. I am growing. I am coming to understand three things from God:

1. I am loved, therefore,
2. I am lovable, therefore,
3. I can love.

Thank you for letting me share my Third Step.

— Stu W.  
Minneapolis, MN

## ***The Iowa Retreat***

On September 22-24, recovering sex addicts and codependents from a five-state area gathered to attend the first Iowa SAA/COSA Retreat. Surrounded by the beautiful fall countryside of the St. Thomas More Center in Panora, Iowa, retreatants enhanced their own sobriety by sharing their experience, strength and hope with one another.

Friday evening was devoted to registration, get-acquainted fellowship, and fun and games. Early risers walked or jogged through the countryside before breakfast on Saturday morning, then gathered for workshops on Steps 1, 2, and 3; and professional presentations on intimacy and conflict resolution. After dinner John B., NSO's District Representative, gave the group excellent insight into some goals of the NSO, and shared the outcome of the NSO convention in Houston. SAA and COSA meetings were then held on Saturday evening. A number of people arranged to have their Fifth Steps heard by other recovering addicts throughout the weekend.

Sunday morning began with a rousing and powerful spiritual hour and was followed by brunch, during which participants shared ideas for the next retreat. I am looking forward to meeting many new brothers and sisters in recovery next year. We will advise *The Plain Brown Rapper* when the date, time, and place have been determined.

— Jim J.  
Story City, IA

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## ***Letter From Lisa***

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I read Michael B's letter in the July issue and was moved by his account of trust and closeness at the convention.

I have been in SAA for nearly 5 years. I am also blessed with recovery from my addiction in some other 12-step fellowships; I love them all, but often think the folks in SAA are the most tolerant and warmest, as a whole.

Michael's letter caused me to reflect on how easily we could focus on our differences. As long as I've been around, there have been plenty of those: gender, race, sexual orientation, age, health problems, legal problems, all the different ways of acting out. The list is limitless. We are each unique, and yet, in SAA the focus is on our commonality.

I remember once feeling "different" in SAA. I helped found the fist meeting here and for a long time prayed for the arrival of at least one other woman. One night, I shared my feelings. My shame had overtaken me, and I told the guys I felt like it was somehow O.K. for men to admit being sex addicts, but I felt like a tramp. I shall never forget the response of one dear friend. He practically jumped out of his chair, "No! No!" he cried. "There are other women addicts — they just aren't here yet. You aren't a tramp — you're a pioneer. I think you're just...just...exactly like Eleanor Roosevelt!" Needless to say, we all laughed 'til we cried. And I was healed. Other women did arrive, in time, but those men have been as close to me and as understanding as any woman.

I remember, too, the other two people who started SAA here. One was gay; the other a long-time homophobe. The straight fellow didn't realize the other was gay until the meeting was over. He was shocked to realize he'd been sharing with "one of those" kinds of men. It didn't take long for the two to become fast friends; they would even joke about that first meeting and their mutual fear at it.

In SAA, in disclosing such personal information and emotion, we find tremendous acceptance and love. I have certainly seen prejudice and misunderstanding walk through the door, only to be quickly replaced by understanding as we trustingly and honestly relate both the common pain from our addiction and the joy we share as we progress in recovery. SAA has not only given me respite from my acting out and obsession; it has given me people who accept and love me as I truly am; and given me those that I may love in return.

In loving fellowship,

— Lisa W.  
Bloomington, IN

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## A Retreat Poem

I attended my second SAA mixed retreat. It was a warm feeling of welcome seeing the same fellowship from last year. On arriving (funny me) I thought I have this boundary of not hugging anyone. I built this wall and dare not let anyone in. I'd found I couldn't get out. Fear had crept in.

But I knew that in recovery I had found my answer: SHARING. I put my light in what I can add to the group, giving that which is a part of me (not how I can sound good). "Well," I thought, "what can I share?" But share I did. Two years ago I couldn't even say to another woman, let alone a man, that I had S.E.X. thoughts, needs and behaviors. I never wanted anyone to know that I ever had sex. It meant to me I was a bad person.

Sex for me = bad me.

Today I can say I have sexual needs, and sometimes I choose to act on them. Being good or bad doesn't come into the picture anymore. The questions that do come to mind are: did I enjoy it? If not, what part of it or all of it did I not like? what have I learned from this?

Being in recovery means to me reaching out unselfishly, unselfseeking and giving to another hope and trust and faith that equal love.

My attitude has changed: my fear of people has changed to an abundance of security within my mind. And I can speak out, care for myself, treat myself nice, make healthy choices. I intuitively handle what needs that arrive. My trust in my Higher Power is doing it for me. I would like to share my poem with you.

### *Sharing the Promise*

Openness and truth  
 Speak of my experience  
 Can they hear  
 Can they see  
 Can they feel  
 Let them into my world  
 Through my eye  
 My pain, my joy  
 Good or bad no longer hold  
 Enter glow of light  
 With love and acceptance  
 we are never alone  
 verbal words shared  
 I can hear  
 I can see  
 I can feel  
 Happiness fulfilled  
 This new world of freedom  
 Thanks Higher Power

— P.

## The Old Violin

T'was battered, scarred, and the auctioneer  
 Thought it scarcely worth his while  
 To waste his time on the old violin  
 But held it up with a smile.

"What am I bidden, good people," he cried,  
 "Who'll start the bidding for me?  
 A dollar, a dollar! now two, only two;  
 Two dollars, and who'll make it three?"

Three dollars once, three dollars twice;  
 Going for three?" but no!  
 From the room far back a gray haired man  
 Came forward and picked up the bow.

Then wiping the dust from the old violin  
 And tightening up the strings,  
 He played a melody pure and sweet,  
 As sweet as an angel sings.

The music ceased and the auctioneer  
 With a voice that was quiet and low  
 Said, "What am I bid for the old violin?"  
 And held it up with the bow.

"A thousand dollars, and who'll make it two,  
 Two thousand, and who'll make it three?  
 Three thousand once, three thousand twice;  
 And going and gone," said he.

The people cheered, but some of them cried,  
 "We don't quite understand  
 What changed its worth?" Swiftly came the reply,  
 "The touch of a master's hand."

And many a person with life out of tune  
 And battered and torn with sin  
 Is auctioned cheap to a thoughtless crowd  
 Much like the old violin.

A mess of pottage, a glass of wine,  
 A game and he travels on.  
 He is going once, and going twice;  
 He's going and almost gone.

But the Master comes and the foolish crowd  
 Never can quite understand  
 The worth of a soul, and the change that's wrought  
 By the touch of the Master's hand.

— Anon

## One Day at a Time

One Day at a Time  
To make your sun shine  
Do you ever wonder why  
There's lightning in the sky  
And as the thunder follows  
You wonder what of tomorrow

The lightning will never cease  
It will always be here to stay  
The thunder will start to increase  
It will never go away

Do you ever fear the sun won't rise  
Well try this one on for size  
One day soon it will never come  
And we will all be struck down dumb

The sun is gone for good  
Never to return again  
Moon and stars would shine if they could  
They left too, they had to ascend

Soon the wind will never blow  
And surly nobody and nothing will grow  
As cloudy darkness fills the sky  
You'll be wondering if anyone hears your cry

Nature has evened the score  
Earth is under other power  
And done so with a giant roar  
So you'll never see another flower

You have just witnessed  
God's Power — our Higher Power

— Bob P.  
Minnesota

## Letter From V.S.

I've really been struggling with something and wanted to share my experience.

I've been active in SAA for about 5 years and have used it for my base — my safe home to come to as I also used other 12-Step programs to aid in my recovery.

This summer I was in a step study using Patrick Carnes' workbook, "The Gentle Way Through the 12 Steps." Instinctively I knew it was time for me to do my 1st Step on my co-addiction.

After having many layers of my denial ripped away, I saw a glimpse of the depth of my damage yet untouched from my abusive childhood.

As I started to include COSA in my recovery program I started "coming to" to the startling realization that some of the behaviors and feelings I thought were about my sexual addiction were also about my sexual codependency.

I felt like the legs had been kicked out from under me. And I went into a shame spiral that has lasted for 2 months. I felt like I had betrayed SAA and failed in my program.

Now that I am finally pulling out of it, I can see that I had plugged into another level of shame left over from the incest. As a child I had made the abuse about me...so naturally my discovery of my sexual codependency must be about me also.

Today I have a much clearer picture of who I am by including this hidden part of me. I need both SAA and COSA, for I am both a sex addict and a sexual codependent.

— V.S.  
Dallas, TX

Do you have a story, a poem, an experience of growth, or would you just like to share your emotions and feelings? Please write The Plain Brown Rapper. Your brothers and sisters in SAA would like to hear from you. We have much to share with each other. Please write to PBR Editor, c/o SAA, P.O. Box 3038, Minneapolis, MN 55403. Please submit all writings for the December newsletter by November 30, 1989.