

THE
OUTER CIRCLE

Carrying the message of hope to the still-suffering sex addict since 1988

RIGOROUS
HONESTY





International Service Organization of SAA, Inc.

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The Outer Circle Mission

The mission of *The Outer Circle* is to provide information from the ISO and to share the experience, strength, and hope members have obtained from working the SAA program of recovery. As the first iteration put it in 1988, *The Outer Circle* newsletter “carries the message of hope to the sex addict who still suffers”—especially prisoners and others who don’t have the Internet.

Through *TOC*, SAA members contribute articles and poems that focus on working the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. It also communicates ISO news, regional activities, and other items of interest.

SAA meetings are encouraged to reproduce *TOC* at no charge and display it alongside other SAA literature. To keep costs down, please print out the online version.

If you have comments or suggestions, please see contact information on p. 30. To have an article considered for publication, see our Submission Guidelines on p. 31.

To ensure that future issues can be offered without cost, please consider making a tax-deductible donation now to support publication of the newsletter. Visit saa-recovery.org/contribute.

July – August 2026

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Share *The Outer Circle* with your recovery friends in SAA and encourage them to submit their experience, strength, and hope (see p. 31).

FROM THE EDITOR

The Best Policy

BY ALEX B.

**THE OUTER CIRCLE
EDITOR**

In my recovery, I have come to believe that a Power greater than myself is the only way that I can find my way back to sanity in my life.

This Power is an amazing thing. It is always present, holding me when others have let me fall. It knows me entirely, seeing every action and

instinct, every second of the day. And through all of these moments and decisions, it holds a love for me that never fades or falters.

It's truly a magical gift that has been made available to me through the program of recovery through SAA.

Yet despite the safe harbor of this extraordinary presence in my life, I routinely find myself becoming unmoored from its love and healing. When this feeling starts to appear, I know it's time for me to do an honesty checkup.

When I am in my addiction, my most nefarious character defect is a tendency to obscure the truth. I am a world-class misleader — both to others and to myself. Whether it's from shame or convenience or laziness or simple selfishness, I have to fight my addict's knee-jerk reaction to lie — or omit the truth — in too many moments.

When I came into the mindfulness and self-reflection I have gained through my program of recovery, I started to identify these moments of deception. I could find the underlying emotions that put me on a path toward falsity, and, with practice, intercept those tendencies before they took root. With time, I began to realize that if I was in a difficult spot, my honesty would suffer. So I practice a system of checking in with myself to make sure my integrity remains intact. "Ok, self," I ask myself, "where would some rigorous honesty help right now? What is not the truth right now?"

Like all ingrained habits, this work took time. Practicing honesty with other people was one thing, but practicing rigorous honesty with myself was another one entirely. I can be so adept at rationalizing or explaining — and so stubborn as well — that I used to miss the lies I'd tell myself. But once I cracked that code and committed to rigorous honesty in all my interactions, my recovery began to flourish and my Higher Power could do its work.

What could rigorous honesty make possible for you? Read this issue and find out.

FROM THE DIRECTOR

Meeting Safety

BY TRACY R.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
ISO OF SAA, INC.

Safety in meetings continues to be a high priority. Unfortunately, there are individuals who wish to disrupt meetings, harass members, or use meetings as a place to find sexual partners.

In April 2025, we discovered a social media post explaining how to use SAA to meet sexually vulnerable people, especially women. Groups were flooded with requests for “the boy-to-girl ratio” from people who were “shy” and “embarrassed” and just “wanting to know how many actually attend.” (Does this language sound familiar?) These types of requests have recently risen, suggesting that the post is receiving more attention or that a new one has appeared.

We also learned of an unregistered group on social media that was hijacked and used to share pornography. We have found videos of people posting “pranks” being pulled on online video meetings. (This content has been reported to the appropriate platforms.)

Finally, there are always well-meaning people seeking recovery who have little to no boundaries. These people may share too much information, may interrupt others or break guidelines on crosstalk, or may even disrupt the meeting with bodily functions.

These incidents remind us that it is critical to hold a regular group conscience to share and discuss safety concerns. Relevant questions include:

- Has anything changed about the inquiries we receive? Is there anything that stands out or seems unusual?
- How can we best respond to questionable inquiries?
- How do people gain access to our meeting?
- What actions do we take if someone is disrupting our meeting?
- How are boundaries explained, especially to newcomers? How do people know what behavior is expected?
- How do they report something that makes them uncomfortable?

Last year, we published an article, “Safety in Meetings,” The Outer Circle, May 2025, saa-recovery.org/wp-content/uploads/2025-05-TOC.pdf#page=12, that provides additional information and suggestions.

It is best not to wait until there is a problem to hold a group conscience on safety. For more information on how to hold a group conscience, see the [Group Guide](#).

DEAR GRACE

“Grace” Goes to Convention!

BY WOMEN’S
OUTREACH
COMMITTEE

*Highlights from the
recently concluded
convention.*

The Women’s Outreach Committee cannot guarantee that this advice will be equally applicable to every woman, although it is our hope that such will be the case.

The Women’s Outreach Committee had a warm and visible presence at the 2026 ISO Convention in Rochester, NY.

Carrie, David, Deb, Thea, and Wendy attended in person, while our chair, Evah B and others supported us from afar throughout the weekend. This year, five women were also able to attend through scholarships provided by the Women’s Intergroup, making it possible for more voices and experiences to be represented.

The Women’s Welcome Room quickly became a peaceful gathering place. Decorated with banners of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, along with thoughtful posters, it offered a calm and welcoming atmosphere. Fresh flowers, mints, candies, meeting formats, and WOC information created a sense of hospitality, while a long table of healthy snacks, craft materials, and supplies for “recovery first aid kits” invited creativity and connection. Throughout the weekend, women drifted in and out, often finding one or two others quietly talking or journaling. Many shared how comforting it felt to have a space where they could pause and settle. One woman said she loved being able to sit and make a craft; another said the first aid kits were “amazing.”

As one of our guiding principles reminds us, we create a safe place for recovery by practicing honesty, openness, and willingness. This spirit was at the heart of the Welcome Room and shaped the way women connected throughout the weekend.

We also learned of one attendee who felt uncomfortable when a political discussion arose. While the room is not a meeting and outside topics may come up, we want the space to feel safe for everyone. Next year, we may include gentle reminders to help maintain that intention.

Because the registration area was too small, we were unable to host our traditional Women's Welcome Table. This meant that members of all genders who wanted to learn about women's outreach naturally gravitated toward the Welcome Room, which was right next door and visually inviting. Since the room is intended as a women-only space, we found ourselves redirecting male-appearing visitors. It highlighted how the room's name and appearance unintentionally suggested "a place to talk about women's outreach" rather than "a space for women," a helpful lesson for future conventions.

A bright alternative emerged at the Sunday evening ice cream social, where each outreach committee hosted a table. Attendees moved freely around the room, learning about different service efforts and connecting with committee members. We had many meaningful conversations, ultimately gathering contact information for three new members. The format was lively, engaging, and well-received.

This year's WOC-sponsored workshop featured three skits — "the ugly, the bad, and the good" — demonstrating different ways a woman might be welcomed (or not welcomed) to a mixed meeting. The skits sparked strong reactions. After the "ugly" version, one participant asked, "Does that really happen?" and was met with sorrowful nods.

As suggested in the *Safe and Sober Meetings* pamphlet: "Becoming a more welcoming meeting starts well before any newcomer shows up." This principle helped frame the discussion that followed, grounding the workshop in shared values of safety and respect. The 75-minute session was energetic and heartfelt, filled with practical tips, personal stories, and written resources participants said they found deeply useful.

The convention made a clear effort to create spaces where all members could feel seen and supported, including an LGBTQ+ mixer, a Spanish-language meeting, and a dedicated meditation room available throughout the weekend.

The weekend also offered many opportunities for connection and joy. As the booklet *Tools of Recovery* reminds us, "Developing outer-circle activities can help diffuse our impulses toward addictive behavior." Karaoke, the talent show, morning yoga, a boat tour, museum visits, and the game room all reflected this spirit of healthy fun and fellowship. It truly felt like there was something for everyone.

Get in touch with Grace at grace@saa-women.org if you have a question you'd like answered.

The Changing Definition of Sobriety

BY KEITH G.

Has the definition of the word “sobriety” changed? Well, not in the dictionary-definition sense. Not really. But what about its meaning in my life? What about its meaning in your life?

I propose three ways that sobriety can change in the life and recovery of a sex addict like me. One change is probably not good; another is understandable and possibly helpful; and the third seems to be associated with the result of a spiritual transformation that Twelve-Step recovery is meant to facilitate.

First is the not-good way that sobriety can change. Even before coming into the rooms of SAA, I had a definition of sobriety. It contained specific references to some particular behaviors that I knew I needed to stop, building on the list in Chapter One of the Green Book that highlights these kinds of behaviors. Masturbating to pornography, for example. One facet of sobriety in my life meant no masturbating to pornography, ever. Zero. Zip. Nada.

I found to my surprise and consternation that I was unable to maintain that definition of sobriety. I might be able to exert herculean willpower for a period of time and avoid masturbating to pornography. But I couldn't maintain that abstinence.

So, I changed my definition of sobriety. Not in a formal way, but in a not-so-good way. Now my definition became, “No more than five minutes of pornography.” Then, when I found to my surprise and consternation that I couldn't maintain that definition of sobriety, it became “no more than 30 minutes.” Then “no more than two hours.” You get the drift: it was an ever-changing, softening definition of sobriety in hopes of finding a landing strip I could hit.

Incidentally, that sounds like powerlessness.

A second way that the definition of sobriety might change — one that is understandable and possibly helpful — is moving behaviors between circles.



Quoting from the SAA Green Book, page 17: *“Sexual sobriety, then, means abstaining from these inner-circle behaviors. By the same token, relapse (or loss of sexual sobriety) means engaging in an inner-circle behavior.”* The Green Book also says that it may be helpful with feedback from my sponsor to move behaviors either into or out of my inner circle over time. Thus, my definition of sobriety would change.

Maybe abstaining from all behaviors that I initially included in my inner circle was overly ambitious. Maybe I should put the behaviors that are most problematic — those with which I am the most obsessed — in my inner circle and place the others in my middle circle. At least, that seemed like a good idea as I started working the Twelve Steps and moving toward recovery.

In this line of thinking, I reasoned, if I am engaged in behaviors that are illegal or could cause me to lose my job, maybe I should put these behaviors in my inner circle and the others — though still problematic — in my middle circle for now.

Then, maybe after I have some period of abstinence from these inner-circle behaviors, and with guidance from my sponsor, I would move some of those other troublesome behaviors from my middle circle into my inner circle and now include abstinence from these behaviors in my definition of sobriety.

In cases like these, the change in definition of sobriety is an intentional attempt to assist the sponsee’s long-term prospect for recovery.

What about a third way the definition can change — a way that is associated with the spiritual transformation that Twelve-Step recovery is meant to facilitate?

Consider where I was in my addiction just prior to finding SAA: I was desperate. My marriage, my self-image, my character, and my very sanity were all headed toward destruction. These behaviors persisted, even though I knew I should stop, I knew they were destructive to myself and the people I loved and valued most in this world, and I knew I could not comprehend why I could not stop myself from doing them. I was actively engaged in behaviors that could destroy everything I valued in life.

I was poisoning myself, but that knowledge did not stop me from continuing to indulge in these behaviors. In my addiction, it was as though I had no choice.

It was in that context that I came to SAA. And it was in that context that sobriety was defined: I wanted to be normal; I wanted to be able to say “no!” At that time, sobriety meant not acting out. Sobriety meant resisting the temptation to behave in those ways.

Fast forward several years later. Now, my sobriety means being aware of my defensive patterns and making amends promptly when I have been defensive, disrespectful, angry, selfish, judgmental, or any of the character defects that were revealed to me when I took Steps Four and Six.

At night, when I retire, when I can look back at my day and see that I have effectively dealt with defensiveness, either by preventing it or by making amends, I’ve been sober.

When I have missed the fact that I’ve been disrespectful, but I realize it after-the-fact and make a plan to address it promptly the next day, that’s sobriety.

In this way, my definition of sobriety has changed — a change that speaks of the miraculous transformation in me. My sobriety today has nothing to do with acting out; my sobriety today has everything to do with character defects. I continue to watch for my character defects. When they reappear, I try to deal with them promptly and appropriately. (I try!)

I pick up sobriety chips at our local SAA meetings to celebrate the length of time since I last acted out. I do this both as a celebration of what a Higher Power has done for me through the SAA program, and as an encouragement to others who may need to be reminded that sanity is possible. But as for my actual, living,

breathing sobriety, I consider my personal sobriety in terms of my character defects.

If that does not describe where you are, don't panic. I've been in that uncertain place myself and it wasn't too terribly long ago. What brought me to this definition of sobriety was taking the Twelve Steps with my sponsor. I encourage you to take the Steps quickly, as was the practice when Twelve Step recovery began. In doing so, I made myself available to be changed, bringing to life the following passage from page one of the SAA Green Book – which includes a significant past-tense reference:

“Our addiction nearly destroyed our lives, but we found freedom through the recovery program of Sex Addicts Anonymous.” ©

ISO Wants to Hear from YOU!

At the Conference in May, the ISO Literature Committee approved a revision of the first 100 pages of the Green Book. This set of changes, the first in nearly 15 years, will help make our foundational text more relevant and open to anyone seeking recovery from sexual addiction. Sometime soon, this version will be available online for members to read and offer feedback on.

Now comes the fun part: **We need your stories!** Our committee is now reviewing submissions for the personal stories of recovery that make up the balance of the Green Book. Whatever the nature of your sex addiction, wherever you are in your recovery journey, your story could help inspire the sex addict who still suffers.

Help your fellowship! Visit <https://saa-recovery.org/news/new-green-book-stories-wanted/> for submission instructions.





Honestly Cataloguing the *Nature* of Our Wrongs

BY JIM L.

Since early in recovery, I have been fascinated and challenged by the progression from Step Four to Step Five to Step Six. Clearly, Bill W intended for these to be three separate steps, although in his early writings he does not offer a detailed explanation of the reason for that progression.

So, I ask myself, how best can I partition this self-examination into three different and presumably important exercises?

Although there is significant overlap among these three steps, the facts remain the same, but the analysis of those facts and the discovery of the underlying drivers open new opportunities to understand why we have behaved the way that we did. The intention seems to be diving progressively deeper into understanding and accepting our behavior — a self-awareness that is an essential beginning to the new way of thinking and living offered by the Twelve-Step program.

In Step Five, we find an interesting and often underappreciated phrase — *the exact nature of our wrongs*. How does this differ from the facts documented in the inventory of Step Four? To begin, Step Five drills deeper than the facts, asking me to examine what my behaviors represent.

Some of the following may ring true as the *exact nature* of our wrongs:

- Selfishness and self-centeredness
- Ego-driven behavior and narcissism
- Desire to control or dominate
- Dishonesty
- Pride
- Perfectionism
- Lack of consideration for others
- Abuse
- Unethical behavior
- Persistent anger and resentments
- Laziness (or sloth, in the language of an earlier age)
- Fear of rejection
- Overriding desire to look good
- Comparison with others
 - Envy and jealousy
 - haughtiness
 - Self-deprecation
- Unrealistic expectations
 - ...of self
 - ...of others
 - ...of institutions
 - ...of situations or circumstances

This is not an exhaustive list, but each of these various characteristics require deeper self-examination than simply stating the facts about our behavior. This work helps us to see more clearly the roots of the behaviors recorded in Step Four.

These are attitudes, behaviors, and characteristics that we need to be able to recognize when they occur. They are essentially our underlying character defects. Recognizing them allows us to be more self-aware, so that we can begin to develop specific measures to avoid repeating the behaviors that are self-defeating or are harmful to others.

As we work Step Five from this new perspective, we discover that it leads logically to further examination of the underlying character defects that drive both the nature of our wrongs and the behaviors chronicled in Step Four. We can then move on to Step Six, becoming willing to let go of the character defects that had us trapped in our addiction. ©



BY VINCE

Today marks eight years of sobriety since I came through the doors of SAA and began my recovery from sex addiction. It is a miracle that I've remained sober all this time.

What is truly amazing is that my wife is still with me. Even more incredible is the fact that she is sitting right here next to me on this beautiful beach as I write this. Neither of us has been to a beach, a pool, or a gym over these past eight years because these are target-rich environments that have many potential triggers for both of us. Over the years, I have worried about being triggered there, and she has worried about my having a major relapse.

Yet, despite the potential triggers, we have traveled here to spend a week's vacation on this beautiful sunny beach together. Although there are many beautiful women sitting near us or walking right in front of us, I am not triggered. Now that is a true miracle.

As my wife and I walked along the beach, a scantily clad woman in beachwear with a beautiful figure walked by us. After she passed, my wife asked if I was triggered. I answered honestly, "No, I am not triggered. I am right here with you, and I am present."

In the past, I could never imagine being in such a place without being triggered. I would be staring, objectifying, and fantasizing about women around me. What a difference it makes to be sane and sober.

Today, in a healthy way, I can simply admit that I find these women very attractive, but I don't go into my middle circle. I don't see them as sexual objects. As a heterosexual man, I can appreciate their beauty. They are beautiful people, but they are not objects that exist simply for my pleasure. That is how I used to perceive them.

Am I still a sex addict? The answer is definitely a resounding yes!

But fortunately, the Twelve Steps have worked their magic on me. I've been transformed in ways that I could never have imagined and that never seemed possible before. During recovery, I've experienced many spiritual awakenings and have received many gifts and blessings. The Steps and the spiritual principles are now the lights that guide me every single day — no matter where I am. Especially here on this beach by my wife's side.

Earlier, my wife and I went into the ocean to enjoy the warm waters. After a short swim, I sat in the shallow waters letting the waves pass over me. Feeling the sand beneath me, I reached down and discovered many broken seashells and pieces of coral. Many of them were rough with sharp edges. Others had been smoothed by the force of erosion from the waves passing over them.

In that moment, I suddenly realized that my Higher Power was sending me a message. As I stared at the rough and smooth pieces of coral, it was like looking into a mirror. I saw myself within them.

The rough coral represented the formerly addicted and insane version of me that was still acting out. Like that coral, I was rough with jagged and sharp edges that often hurt others. I was a broken person, and my "sharp edges" caused irreparable harm and wounded many people.

But after working the Twelve Steps, I've changed. I am gentler and kinder with myself and with others. My edges are not as jagged or sharp. Now I am more like the smooth coral that has been transformed into a different shape and appearance by the ocean waves.

As I watched the waves crashing onto the beach, I felt something stir within me. I felt a sudden wave of emotions — another moment of awakening. In that moment, I was overwhelmed by the immense power of the ocean waves which had transformed the shells and coral into smooth and beautiful new shapes. I imagined that over thousands and millions of years, the incredible force in all those waves had turned them into the tiny grains of sand that covered the beach.



Watching those waves, I felt humbled yet again. I felt the awesome power of my HP which has somehow restored me to sanity and transformed me into a better version of myself. Just like the shells and coral on that beach, it took many years and many spiritual waves to transform me into who I am today.

On the eighth anniversary of my sobriety today, I have received some remarkable gifts. I've experienced both a physical and spiritual awakening. It felt like my HP was right there by my side on that beach. I witnessed my HP's awesome transformative power within those crashing ocean waves. I was also given the grace of my wife's acceptance and love as she sat by me and we enjoyed each other's presence.

More importantly, I was granted one more day of sobriety. I've heard it said many times in SAA meetings that in recovery one must learn to live just one day at a time. Early on in recovery I did not understand exactly what that meant. After eight years of sobriety, I now know what that means and why it is so important. Each day that I remain sober is a true gift because I get to be present and enjoy the shared experience of a sane and sober day shared with others whom I love. That is precisely how I have remained sober for the past eight years, by living just one day at a time.

Tomorrow is another story. I don't know what could happen tomorrow, or even if I will live to see tomorrow. I'm not powerful enough to control that. So being granted just one more sane and sober day is the greatest gift that I could ever receive. This gift of sobriety was only made possible because of my HP, the Twelve Steps of SAA, and all of the spiritual principles that they embody.

I must also express my sincerest gratitude for all the connections with my brothers and sisters in SAA. Without their kindness, love, and support, I could never have remained sober. My endurance is largely due to their presence in my life. So many people have helped me to recover that I've lost count. I see them all as an expression of my HP who has shown up in many different ways throughout my life.

Little did I know that my HP was going to show up on this beach today in the form of spiritual waves. This was an extraordinary gift that I wasn't expecting. I'm often surprised because I can never predict exactly when or how my HP is going to show up. But I am always grateful when it happens! ☺

This piece comes from Andy N., who attended the recent SAA convention in Rochester, NY. After attending a workshop called "Experience, Strength, and Hope: Poetry as a Tool for Working the Steps and Easing Anxiety" (hosted by Mark P.), Andy received some work-related news that led to anxiety which caused him to slip into fantasy. The next day, drawing on the workshop's inspiration, he turned anxiety into art through this poem.

Fantasy

by Andy N.

Fantasy is a blessing
Fantasy is a curse.
You must think, I am crazy, how is it a
blessing?
You will know by end of this verse.

Fantasy is a neural path etched in my brain
To deal with life's emotions but it only
leads to more affliction
Only recovery helps retrain
Observe your thoughts
Surrender, ask "Why?"
There is a lot of wisdom in the "Why"
breaks the cycle of the false high.

Pick up the phone
Call a friend
Turn addiction to connection
Isolation to intimacy
The last time I wrote poetry when I fell
in love with my wife
Now I am writing poetry because I fell
in love with myself and my life

This is insanity
I am writing poetry about my fantasy
What a beautiful insanity
Guided by a rush of divinity.

DEAR WILL

What Can SAA Do For Me?

*How can each
of us define sex
addiction?*

Do you have
a question for Will?
Please email
info@saa-recovery.org.

Dear Will,

SAA literature lists a lot of different ways of acting out, but I just need to stop looking at pornography. Is SAA right for me?

**Signed,
Just Porn**

Dear JP:

It is common that newcomers wonder if their behavior is serious enough, or conversely, too serious, for SAA to help.

Tradition Three states, "The only requirement for SAA membership is a desire to stop addictive sexual behavior." It says nothing about minimum (or maximum) amounts of acting out. Nor does it say that we've needed to suffer a certain level of loss. All that matters is that the behavior is sexual and addictive.

It may seem at times that our problems pale in comparison to others'. Let us learn this lesson now: Our personal recovery must only be compared to itself, never to the recovery of other members. The real question is, "How am I progressing from one day to the next?" and not, "How am I progressing relative to this other person?"

If we insist on comparing our recovery to others, we are more than welcome to come back once the problem reaches whatever we believe is a sufficiently severe level. But if we wait too long, we risk thinking, "My behavior is worse than everyone else's and can't be helped by SAA."

Both modes of thinking are ways our inner addict tries to trick us. The one lie tells us that everything is OK. It leads us to believe we can stop on our own, but even if we can't, we can return to SAA when we "really" need it. Never mind that we would never do that with any other illness. "Precancerous polyps? Wake me up when it's in my lymph nodes!" The other lie tells us that once we cross some imaginary line that our addict made up to serve itself, we're hopeless.

Sex addiction is a progressive disease. It's important to catch it before the behaviors get worse, before we lose our jobs, our money, our relationships, our freedom, or our lives. The sensible thing to do is to be grateful that we have come to SAA when we did and to stop comparing ourselves to others!

Just as there is no minimum level that SAA can help, there is no maximum level. No matter what we have done, the commonality is the addiction itself. If we desire to stop it, SAA can help.

What about those on the other end, who believe they are in the worst phases of the disease and can't be helped? If they are living and breathing, there is hope! It may not be easy, but sponsors can still work with them through the Steps. They may not have acted out in the same way or as severely as their sponsees, but they have struggled with the core addiction, just like everyone else in the program.

Again, it is crucial that we focus on our own recovery, one day at a time, and not compare ourselves to others.

We come into the program as we are. We don't wait to build up an acting-out resume, nor do we get to delete the most unsavory aspects. Each member's life is their own experience. Their presence is their strength. The program is our hope.

Come as you are, but compare and despair!

**In Service,
Will**

LIVING IN SOBRIETY

Nuggets of Gold

BY KEITH G

"Living in Sobriety" spotlights stories of people with five or more years of continuous sobriety.

In my meetings, I frequently write down some nugget of wisdom that has been offered, and these short sayings have been extremely helpful in my recovery journey. None of these sayings originated with me; I'm just the messenger. Some of them, you may have heard before. Some are practical ideas for implementing our Twelve-Step program or of how to live life, while others deal with the motivation for — and importance of — working the Twelve Steps.

Wherever you are in your journey of recovery, may you find help and strength in the words that follow:

- If I'm trying to justify what I'm doing — or feeling — that's probably a good indication that I'm not in a good place.
- If I'm irritated about something, I likely have a part in it.
- How is powerlessness a gift? If I'm powerless, then I'm no longer responsible for it. I can't do it. I must find help from a Power greater than myself who can.
- My addiction had to beat me into a state of reasonableness.
- The biggest lie: I'm not really worth it.
- Maybe it's not "act-as-if you had faith"... but "if you had faith, how would you act?"
- My fear is always about what's going to happen to me.
- Unwillingness is a risk: If I'm unwilling to let go of my character defects, I could be led back into acting out.
- I can have all that misery back if I really want it.
- To be forgiving and tolerant means that I forgive that which is unforgivable, and I tolerate that which is intolerable to me.
- I am not my defects.
- Sometimes Step Eight requires a return to Step Four to understand our part, before we can understand how we hurt others.
- We have a feelings-based disease with an action-based treatment plan.
- When overwhelmed or in doubt about what to do, ask myself, "What's the next right thing?"

- Step Nine is a test to see if Step Seven really took.
- It's not about a strategy; it's about surrender.
- "Love and tolerance of others" includes me.
- There seems to be no such thing as surrender in the abstract; surrender is giving up something specific.
- When I'm in pain, remember that there's a purpose in pain. After all, pain is what drove me to SAA and sobriety.
- Stop trying to be a good person and just do good things.
- If I stay focused on the problem, it will grow.
- Don't let fear control you — even the fear of "going back."
- Courage: Trust God and get on with it.
- Expectation is premeditated failure.
- If I think I understand God, that ain't God.
- Holding a resentment is like drinking poison and hoping the other person dies.
- My anger is a barometer for where I am in my recovery.
- If my attempt at the First Step contains the word "but"... I need to start over.
- Fight the battle between the outer and middle circles. Don't let the battle get to middle vs. inner circles.
- When it comes to my step-work, I can believe in God or I can disbelieve in God, but as long as I don't think that I am God, the Steps will work.
- Simple avoidance — just not acting out — is a half-measure.
- Don't put sobriety above honesty. Flip it! Honesty is much more important than sobriety.
- Tell the truth, because I can't save my face and my behind at the same time.
- The Twelve Steps are suggestions for addicts wanting to recover in the same way that a parachute is a suggestion for anyone wanting to survive jumping out of a plane.
- The first word in The Serenity Prayer is not "Keith" or "self."

STORIES OF SERVICE

Carrying the Message: A Chance of a Lifetime

**BY JON D. & FRANK T.,
MEMBERS OF
BAY AREA SAA**

*What does service
actually look like?*

For us, the real value of service is working with others; being around people who genuinely care about this program, now and for the future; people who want to make sure SAA is there for anyone, anywhere, who reaches out for help.

We didn't come to service easily. At first, we questioned it. What's the deal with all this? We didn't want to commit. We figured others would take care of these things. We didn't trust ourselves to do a good job. Ego alert! Then we started meeting people already in service roles, and something familiar happened: We were first intimidated, then inspired.

So, what does service in SAA actually look like? It starts close to home — setting up the meeting room, collecting the Seventh Tradition contributions, handing out milestone chips, maintaining the relationship with the meeting location, being trusted with the keys — trusted with showing up. And woven through all of it, as soon as we were ready, becoming a sponsor.

Beyond the meeting room, there is a whole infrastructure of service that keeps this

program running. On a broader level, this can include maintaining a website, coordinating meetings, and managing communications for one or more groups. There may be retreats to plan and manage. There are even roles connecting groups with the broader network across the country and the world — sharing what works and making this program as accessible as possible to anyone who needs it.

Two roles in particular are worth highlighting. An intergroup representative brings the voice of a particular group to the intergroup, which usually requires only ninety minutes a month. A group service representative joins a quarterly meeting of an area assembly, where a group's voice connects with the International Service Organization and participates in the conversations and decisions that shape the future of the SAA fellowship. Neither role requires special expertise. Both require a willingness to show up and participate.

Most of these roles don't require skills we don't have. They simply ask for a "yes," a little action, and the humility to ask for help, which in our community is never in short supply. Everyone currently in these roles is ready and willing to walk a newcomer through the role.

The personal benefits have genuinely surprised us. We've met people we never would have known otherwise and built real trust and fellowship along the way. Our world got bigger. Our fear of people got smaller. We experienced a real shift away from self-centered thinking toward something more outward-looking. And we've come to believe that a Higher Power can help us learn and do almost anything when we serve others.

Most importantly, carrying the message keeps our own recovery strong — one day at a time. It gives our gratitude somewhere to go, turning it into action and showing newcomers the same care that was once shown to us.

It works for us!

The authors have served as Intergroup Representatives, church liaisons for their groups, Group Service Representatives to the International Service Organization, and leaders of the SAA Bay Area phone line and PICPC efforts. Both are sponsors.

FROM THE BOARD

“You Gotta Give It Away to Keep It”

BY LIZZ O.

**CHAIR, ISO BOARD
OF TRUSTEES**

One of the first Twelve Step principles I learned in early recovery is “You gotta give it away to keep it.” I started as a greeter, made coffee, and eventually became a secretary for my home group. I ordered literature and sponsored others. I became a GSR for my home group and when a woman called the local hotline to be twelve-stepped, I met her in the parking lot to escort her in — like a woman had done for me.

They wouldn’t let me contribute to the first meeting as is our tradition in my area, but after that I put the suggested donation of \$2 in the basket and another one in the separate basket for ISO. Over time, as my means grew, I added a little more. We tell everyone who walks in that we need you more than your money; and we mean it!

In gratitude for my recovery I often throw in a few more dollars in support of the addict who still suffers. There was a time when I could not afford the dollar and no one batted an eye. Those books, coins, pamphlets, and supplies were still there for the taking.

When I came to my first convention, I learned about Lifeline Partners and signed up, starting with the equivalent of one coffee a month. A gesture found in a cup of coffee for the sex addict who still suffers. After being afforded the opportunity to be a keynote speaker the following year, I applied for international service

and joined the Board of Trustees. We simultaneously put the bid in to host the convention in Rochester, and I became one of the 2026 Convention Committee co-chairs.

This is what the Seventh Tradition means to me. You’ve got to give it away to keep it. Secrets keep me sick and service keeps me sober. So, whether you have time, talent, or treasure to offer, we all have something to give. How can you incorporate the spiritual principle of the Seventh Tradition into your personal program of recovery? If you have an extra dollar to give, put it in the basket at your next meeting.

Was SAA a lifeline to you? What about becoming a lifeline for others? Join the ISO LifeLine Partners program with a monthly donation, no matter how small. Would you give \$4 a month? The equivalent of a dollar a week.

Speaking as a Board member, it really, truly helps us to know that we can budget to cover expenses of the services the ISO provides. Remember, we are self-supporting,

declining outside contributions. There are no grants, no dues, nor fees for membership. Every dollar you contribute keeps the phones on and answered, the meeting search updated, and the literature printed and shipped.

There are many service opportunities available for anyone with any length of sobriety. Some of our committees are in crisis and need to foster a spirit of rotation. Dedicated trusted servants are looking to pass the baton after decades of service and finding there is no one to pass it to.

Our membership is growing — more meetings, more sex addicts seeking a solution — but service at the international level isn't matching the pace of our growth. There are 125 prisoners awaiting sponsors. Again, we need you more than your money. Can you give us your time? Your talent?

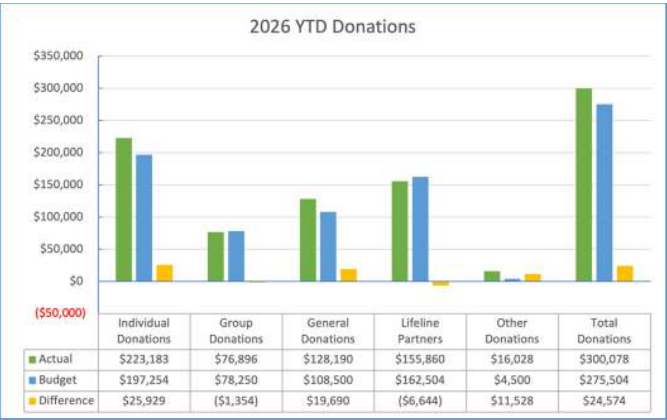
Find something that interests you to help turn your character defects into character assets through acts of service with your fellow sex addicts. One of the bonuses is getting to meet people you would otherwise never meet. An unexpected gift of recovery has been getting to know people from around the world; we are of service when we show up.

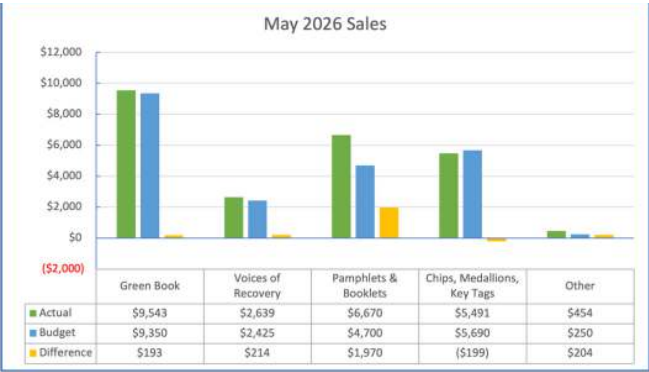
How can you give it away to keep it?

The Board would like to hear from you!

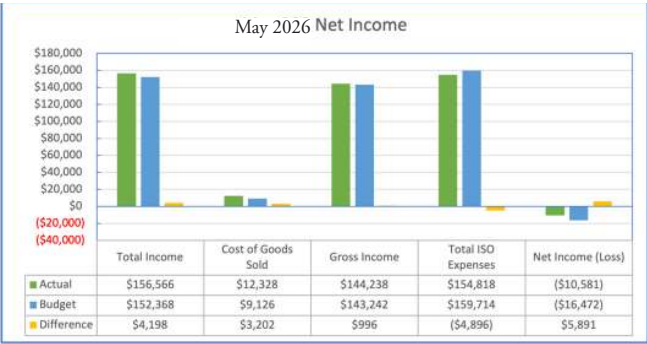
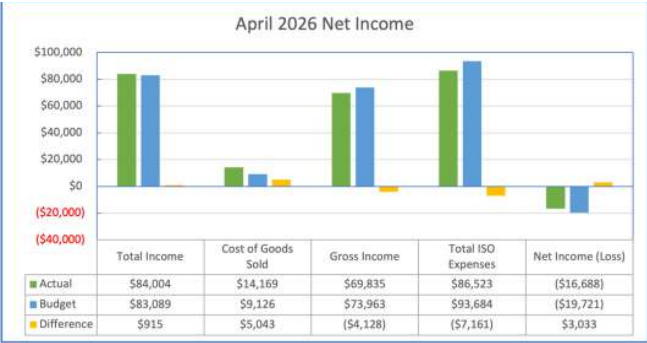
Make your voice heard
by emailing: board@saa-recovery.org

FINANCIAL SUMMARY





FINANCIAL SUMMARY



While year-to-date donations are on track with the budget, there is a concerning decline in LifeLine Partner donations. LifeLine Partners provide the steady, predictable income that sustains our services and allows us to plan complex, long-term projects.

Although there have been some periodic dips, overall SAA literature sales are strong.

Our net income continues to be above budget. However, when we begin building the new store this summer, the gap will decrease.

Thank you all for your generous support!

Tracy R.,

Executive Director

Become a Lifeline Partner!

Lifeline Partners pledge a fixed monthly donation that is pooled with those of many other members from around the SAA fellowship.

Become a LifeLine partner today by calling 713-869-4902 or by going to saa-recovery.org and clicking “Contribute.”

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The ISO of SAA Board of Trustees also has an e-mail box, which may be used to register comments, positive or negative, from the fellowship about the ISO staff: board@saa-recovery.org.

Board of Trustees and Literature Committee

Board

Bill I (Vice Chair); BJ M; Brian S (Treasurer); Enan S; Jim L (Secretary); Juan V; Lizz O (Chair); Mark R (Vice-Secretary) Michelle P; Mike K; Tom B

Board: board@saa-recovery.org
CSC: csc@saa-recovery.org

Literature Committee

Alex B (TOC editor); Bernie B; Brett S; Briana H; David C; Don C; Himanshu B; Jason R; Jenny M (Secretary); Keith G; Ron R (Vice-Chair); Ruth; Zach R (Chair)

LitCom: litcom@saa-recovery.org

Calendar

The most up-to-date information about joining any ISO committee can be found at saa-iso.org.

Prisoner Letter Writing Program

The Prisoner Outreach Committee encourages members of the fellowship to consider sponsoring prisoners or even starting SAA meetings in a nearby prison. Meeting by videoconference can open new opportunities to carry the SAA message of recovery into prisons. If interested in learning more, contact the ISO office by telephone (713-869-4902), email (info@saa-recovery.org), or postal mail (PO Box 70949, Houston, TX 77270).

PI/CPC (Public Information/Cooperation with the Professional Community)

The Twelfth Step says that, “we tried to carry this message to other sex addicts and to practice these principles in our lives.” At the ISO level, this is done in part through the work of the Public Information/Cooperation with the Professional Community (PI/CPC) committee. If you would like to work the Twelfth Step at the ISO level, email info@saa-recovery.org or call the ISO at 713-869-4902.

LifeLine Partners

LifeLine donations provide steady income that allows the ISO to operate and help groups carry the SAA message. Become a LifeLine partner today by calling 713-869-4902 or by going to saa-recovery.org/contribute.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Get Your Story Published in *The Outer Circle*

The Outer Circle newsletter relies on submissions from the SAA fellowship. Don't worry if you're not a writer. Tell us your story and we'll do the rest. If we have any questions, we'll contact you.

There are three ways to submit your story.

- First, you can submit online at saa-recovery.org/toc. This is the easiest for most people.
- Second, email toc@saa-recovery.org. If possible, include a copy of the release form below.
- Third, mail your submission, with the release form, to ISO of SAA, PO Box 70949, Houston, TX 77270.

Requested deadlines and suggested topics are below. Email toc@saa-recovery.org if you have any questions.

Issue	Deadline	Topic
» September/October	» August 1	» Humility
» November/December	» October 1	» The Power of Amends

Here are some general writing guidelines:

Living in Sobriety: For those with five-plus years of sobriety. 750-900 words on how you got sober and what you're doing to stay sober.

Stories of Service: 300-500 words on why you do service and how it helps your recovery.

Feature articles: 650-1,200 words on any of the topics listed above. It may be helpful to think of your submission as a written form of a share you'd give in a meeting — something that's working for you or that you're struggling with in recovery as it relates to the steps or traditions.

All submissions must complete a formal release granting usage rights to the ISO of SAA, Inc. Visit saa-recovery.org/toc for more information and a standard form.

SAA TWELVE STEPS AND TWELVE TRADITIONS

The Twelve Steps of SAA

1. We admitted we were powerless over addictive sexual behavior - that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood God.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked God to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood God, praying only for knowledge of God's will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to other sex addicts and to practice these principles in our lives.

The Twelve Traditions of SAA

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon SAA unity.
2. For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as expressed in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.
3. The only requirement for SAA membership is a desire to stop addictive sexual behavior.
4. Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or SAA as a whole.
5. Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry its message to the sex addict who still suffers.
6. An SAA group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the SAA name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property, and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.
7. Every SAA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
8. Sex Addicts Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers.
9. SAA, as such, ought never be organized, but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
10. Sex Addicts Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the SAA name ought never be drawn into public controversy.
11. Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, TV, and films.
12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.