

The SCAnner

SCA NEWSLETTER

© 1993 SCA International Service Organization



VOLUME 4, NO. 3

50 CENTS

THIRD QUARTER, 1993

WE NO LONGER HAVE TO HIDE

The first time we attended a meeting and stated, "I'm and I'm a sexual compulsive," the shame started evaporating and we found that we didn't have to hide anymore.

EACH STEP HOLDS A BLESSING

By Steve W., San Diego SCA

[Continued from the previous issue]

My preoccupation with sex goes back to the 5th grade. All the boys started wearing boxer shorts that year, and no one would be caught dead in briefs. My first erections were associated with

putting boxers on and the two quickly became

connected in my mind. I spent much of my time thinking about the other boys in their shorts and trying to catch glimpses of them.

By 8th or 9th grade I was obsessed, spending hours each day on the watch. I would take my memories home and masturbate multiple times imagining these guys having sex with their boxers on. This continued daily through high school. Ever since, my boxer-short fetish has constantly driven me. It is annoying, powerful and cruelly demanding, and I have spent years being bullied by it.

At college in Ohio I discovered guys having sex with other guys in the bathrooms all over campus. I was immediately hooked, and went there every day for the next five years having sex several times a day, sometimes sitting for hours when nothing was happening; just waiting. I'd think about sex when in class. Sex was constantly on my mind. I thought I was really enjoying myself, and I didn't realize how much time I was losing in those bathrooms, or how empty the experiences actually were.

I'd spend hours each week cruising the park near campus. The hunt meant everything to me, even more than the sex. When I moved back to San Diego after college this pattern continued. On days off I'd spend all day driving to different cruising areas all over town on the hunt. I'd drop by an acting-out place on the way to work and end up late. I'd take overly long lunches at home, losing myself in masturbation, getting in trouble back at work. My preoccupation with sex was all-consuming. It never occurred to me to challenge my opinion that sex was the greatest thing in the world. Sex was my Higher Power, and I was truly devoted. I didn't know or even begin to understand how dishonest I was being with myself, or how awful I really felt inside.

I am amazed at my denial. When I think back over my most recent acting-out history, the recent years of using crystal and the needle to jet-fuel my sex drive, and as I think of the three- and four-day sex/drug binges with trashy people week after week after week, my pain becomes very real for me. It was awful at the end. Dirty, disgusting, degrading and awful.

I am very aware that I am still preoccupied with sex most of the time. When outdoors I constantly catch myself sexualizing the people I see. I still have numerous sex dreams each week.

(continued on Page 5)

and PIECES

WHAT'S GOING ON IN SCA GROUPS AND INTERGROUPS...

A FEW WORDS FROM LOS ANGELES....

DENNIS B., Southern California Intergroup Chair reports that SCA members in Southern California are being asked to submit their "My Storys" and other writings. We need all we can get, so get out the pens, pencils and typewriters! Intergroup has a new Secretary in the person of Bill D., who has taken over from Michael T. The 1994 SCA West Coast Convention, sponsored by the Intergroup, will be held over President's Day Weekend (Feb. 18-20) at the Universal Sheraton Hotel. More details in the next issue of "The SCAnner." The next retreat will be held over the Labor Day weekend at Santa Barbara. Good hearing from you Dennis, and thanks for your good words.

CHICAGOLAND REPORTS IN....

JOE P. worked hard to overcome difficulties with the Post Office (would you believe that THREE SCA applications had been lost!) in obtaining a PO Box for intergroup. Determination finally won out, and the OFFICIAL SCA CHICAGO ADDRESS is: SCA, P.O. Box 138455, Chicago, IL 60613.

The Social Committee has been very busy. 17 members signed up for the canoe trip down the Fox River and the event was a huge success. A picnic was planned for August at Fargo Beach, but this was changed to a day at Great America, with half-off coupons being available for Tuesdays. JOE P., GREGG D. and JOHN A. are doing a lot of the leg work on this one. Plans are also underway for outdoor miniature golf in September.

(continued on Page 6)

MEET ME IN ST. LOUIS

NEWS FROM THE HEARTLAND OF THE U.S.A. — The Gateway to the West on the banks of the mighty Mississippi River!

By Mark M., St. Louis SCA

OUR TOWN ... WHERE WE MEET

SCA members meet in a building located in the historical Lafayette Square area of St. Louis.

S EPS ALANO, the umbrella group, hosts about twenty-five twelve Step groups a week. In addition to the SCA meetings, meetings are held there by AA, Alive and Living Well, CODA, ACA, and OA. The newest group is called Avoidance and Love Addiction. Some meetings are held at the same time, but on different floors. S EPS ALANO rents the top two floors of a three story building, and all the meetings there meet the needs of gays and lesbians.

SCA meetings are held three times a week, but the format is different for each one. The Sunday night meeting, held from 6:30 to 8:00 PM, is an open meeting. Members are able to address any problems or observations they wish to discuss. Once a month, a member presents his sexual recovery plan. About twenty-five individuals attend this meeting.

The Thursday night meeting - 8:00 to 9:00 PM - is a closed meeting. Members concentrate on following the "Hope and Recovery" blue book and answering in turn the questions posed in the "Workbook." About ten individuals attend this meeting.

The Friday night meeting, from 6:00 to 7:00 PM, is the latest-formed open meeting. Each member writes down on a sheet of paper a topic of his choice and places the topic in a basket. The chairperson randomly selects a sheet of paper and reads the topic. The members then relate the topic to their own situations. A recent topic was: What takes place in your mind after you have a slip? About ten individuals attend this meeting.

All SCA meetings begin with the Serenity Prayer and at some point in the introduction, depending on the particular meeting, someone reads the twelve Steps. A few people attend all three meetings. Unfortunately, some attend on a regular basis for two or three months and are never seen again. However, most members are consistent in attendance. Most feel that they cannot do without a weekly meeting. A strong bond is established among the members, and we rely on one another during the week.

Let's hear about your meetings.

OUR "MY STORY" WORKSHOP

The St. Louis SCA chapter hosted a "My Story" workshop on Saturday, July 17, from 10 AM to 4:30 PM at a member's home. Judy W., the Director of the Bi-State Chapter of the National

Council on Sex Addiction, moderated the activities.

At the morning session, the thirteen present gave short statements on what they hoped to accomplish during the day. This exercise allowed us to focus on the First Step; on our powerlessness over our sexual compulsion.

Since behavior is shaped and molded in our formative years, Judy asked us to fill out an Abuse Checklist whereby each would respond to a series of statements about any sexual abuse, physical abuse, and emotional abuse we had experienced in life. We were asked to fill out the checklist alone - some scattered to the front lawn, others out on the balcony, still others remained in the air-conditioned home to complete the assignment.

We then gathered in a circle. Each took his turn to describe those hurts, those images, those actions which had occurred so long ago. The setting was non-threatening which allowed each to put into words his personal pain; to bring to the surface the shame, the secrets, the hurt so long denied. His sharing was very painful to tell, and to listen to, but very therapeutic. We were all drained — silence came over the room.

Lunch time broke the trauma and silence. We enjoyed sandwiches from one of St. Louis' finest Italian restaurants. We even had cannoli for dessert. After a forty-five minute respite, back to work we went.

During the afternoon session, Judy introduced a few inventories and requested us to go off by ourselves again and check those items pertinent to our own experiences. The inventory directed our attention to the consequences of our acting out behavior. Categories of consequences included: emotional, physical, financial, spiritual, career, family or partner.

We again came back into a circle. Some talked about how they have lost their jobs and careers. Some related that they were assaulted and robbed. Some sacrificed their partners. Others admitted attempting suicide. Some had been arrested. Depression, loss of sleep, losing contact with reality, low self-esteem, guilt and shame, isolation and loneliness — these and other consequences members suffered. His session, too, drained us, but admitting our consequences made us realize how our lives had become unmanageable. By listening to ourselves speak, we mirrored ourselves.

At the closing session, Judy debriefed us on how the information we gained about ourselves and about others could serve as the source of each writing his "My Story." I'm home now in the dining room writing this article. I feel at peace this evening because today I felt a sense of inclusion and a bonding taking place between myself and the other twelve SCA individuals. I gained friends. *Z*

ATLANTA DEALS WITH A STICKY ISSUE

By Charles H., Atlanta SCA

An issue that we have been dealing with here in Atlanta concerns a member who has made it known that if she hears of any incidents of child abuse or molestation during a share at a meeting, she will report this person to the police. The question was raised whether we had a moral obligation to protect victims of abuse by turning in perpetrators to the authorities, or if this would be in violation of the 12th Tradition of Anonymity. The person in question said that we were not "above the law" and therefore had an obligation to report such incidents. The issue was discussed at length and the person who raised the issue originally would not commit to respecting the 12th Tradition as interpreted by group conscience.

This person attends several different meetings in Atlanta. The first group to address this issue was an SLAA group which ultimately voted to have this person barred from the meeting. The Sunday, 5:30 PM SCA meeting held a group conscience meeting on August 1 and after much heated discussion decided to include in the meeting format the following: "If there is anyone here who feels that he or she has an obligation to report anything that may be heard in this meeting to anyone outside this meeting, we ask that you please leave now."

If anyone out there has any feedback about this issue and how it has been handled in other meetings, we'd love to hear from you. The issue has made us focus on the Traditions as we have never done before.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Please address your feedback on this issue to The SCAnner, c/o SCA, PO Box 13551, San Luis Obispo, CA 93406-3551. We are starting a Feedback & Comments column with this edition.

FEEDBACK AND COMMENTS

[Editor's note: We are adding this column to The SCAnner at the suggestion of Mark M. of the St. Louis SCA. We hope to fill it with your input in future issues. Send your feedback and comments to: The SCAnner, c/o SCA, PO Box 13551, San Luis Obispo, CA 93406-3551. Deluge us, guys and gals... deluge us!]

FEEDBACK to Steve W. on his "My Story", the first installment of which appeared in the last issue:

"I want to thank Steve W. from the San Diego SCA group for his "My Story." It took a lot of courage for you to write what happened to you. As you say, 'Each step holds a blessing...' Mark M. - St. Louis SCA.

IS SEX REALLY THE PROBLEM?

By Rev. Karen Wolfson, Atlanta Church of Religious Science

(Reprinted by permission of the author and of the "RSI Reporter") The pendulum has been swinging... from the days of "save yourself for marriage," to THE PILL- free- love- and- open-marriage, to STD's (sexually transmitted diseases) and safe-sex... it goes on. We talk about the "sexual revolution." There have been and will be many "sexual revolutions" until we recognize that sex is not the problem.

Sex is simply a behavior to which we attach an amazing range of identities and definitions, from the sacred to the profane. How could something that can be so pleasurable, that is essential to the propagation of the species, be so confusing?

Roles, moralities, practicalities and neuroses all figure in this kaleidoscope of perspectives on sex. So do traditions, theologies and stereotypes. But the most frightening is ignorance.

Educating our children about birth control, disease prevention, and the many basics of responsible sexual conduct is one area of continued challenge. Ignorance at this level is inexcusable and has devastating, often long-range consequences.

More pervasive is the ignorance with which we as adults have repeatedly tried to "fix the problems" associated with sex. We keep on aiming our remedies at the symptoms instead of at the underlying cause: Confusion of sex with love, particularly self-love.

It's easier to "cure the symptom." That's because curing ourselves of the outer symptoms of whatever our inner problems, can be done often with a pill or surgery. (Dr. Bernie Siegel in his book, "Love, Medicine and Miracles," says that "Surgery is popular because introspection is not.") Elimination of "symptoms" can also be done by government programs and legislation. It can be done by changing individuals' behavior and actions.

None of this is bad. It often alleviates pain and inconvenience, at least temporarily.

But unless each of us takes responsibility for healing ourselves at the deepest level of our inner being, those symptoms (individual and societal), ranging from pesky to fatal will reappear.

Symptoms resulting from lack of love, confusion about what love is, and how to experience love are diverse and sometimes heavily disguised. From chronic physical illness, to emotional disorders to violence and addiction, the "Hole in our soul," as Carl Jung called it, continues to beckon us to heal it.

This is acutely evident in our contradictory attitudes and behaviors as the "body human" about sex, and especially sexual problems.

Sex gets a bad rap. It's not sex, but what we do with it, what we think about it and what we think about ourselves that is at issue. Trying to change or improve or fix our sexual "stuff" by selecting a particular behavior is like trying to change our

identity by simply changing our clothes.

We can choose celibacy or promiscuity, monogamy, marriage- divorce- remarriage, extramarital affairs or live-in sexual relationships. We may be gay or straight or bisexual. The issue is the same.

Do we love ourselves? Do we have self respect and self esteem? Do we love others with respect and esteem? Have we forgiven, or do we still have bitterness and hurt eating away at us? Do we have a clue about the difference between "getting laid" and giving love? Are we able to receive love?

A purely sexual relationship is fine. Let's just call it that. A one- night- stand is fine. Let's just call it that.

The sadness comes when we pursue sex to prove our attractiveness; keep looking for intimacy by having sexual involvement; when our propensity for sex short-circuits the satisfaction of our longing for love.

We used to save sex for marriage, because we feared pregnancy out of wedlock, and because of our idea of "morality." Thus, often, the mystique of sex seduced us into marriages that were empty of the qualities necessary for a rich, lifelong commitment. Pregnancy did happen, (birth control for the unmarried was a taboo). "Shotgun marriages" often resulted in dysfunctional or broken homes for innocent children.

And did I mention the "double standard?" It perpetuated hypocrisy and guilt. Men could "do it," but women involved were considered "second- hand- Rose" or worse! They got the guilt. The virgins got the husbands. (Said the myth!)

Then came THE PILL. "Free love" appealed to our disillusionment with the hypocrisy and guilt. There was a sense of liberation. We had options. We could live with our potential spouse. No more need to hide. We women could be more honest about our sexuality. Dating became more openly sexual. "Illegitimate" pregnancy was no longer a threat.

Marriages became open: "You can have occasional dalliances and so can I. It will keep us on- our- toes... alleviate boredom."

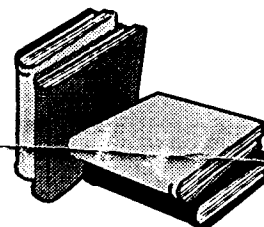
There was a flaw. Married couples became suspicious and jealous. Sometimes, the "dalliance" became the next spouse. And the next and the next. Open marriage became anything but open.

Then came AIDS and an escalation in other sexually transmitted diseases. There is "no free lunch" and it turned out that there was no free love after all.

We're in the midst of another "sexual revolution." We have the opportunity to elevate it to revolutionary healing change. If we don't, as soon as AIDS and other STD's are eradicated, there will be some new symptom appearing, trying to make us aware of our starvation for love and self esteem. And the pendulum will swing... until we get it right.

THE SEARCH FOR A NEW EDITOR

The present "SCAnner" Editor, Richard K., is resigning the position after completion of the November issue. So we need a new Editor to pick up the reins for the February issue and beyond, and to render a valuable service to the Fellowship. Those interested should contact: SCA/ISO, PO Box 1585, Old Chelsea Station, New York, NY 10113-0935. Jump in and give it a try! ☺



CHECK OUT OUR SCA PUBLICATIONS

SCA literature is one of the tools toward our recovery - our meeting away from meetings. It's always there for you when meetings or the phone might not be available. Order for yourself and as thoughtful gifts for your friends in the Program.

The following SCA/ISO publications are now available (prices include shipping and handling):

SCA: A PROGRAM OF RECOVERY (The Little Blue Book), including SCA history, sample meeting format, recovery plans, slogans - single copy: \$5.50; two or more \$3.00 each

SECRET SHAME - Sexual Compulsion in the Lives of Gay Men and Lesbians - \$1.50 each

The SCA "FOUR-FOLD" informational brochure, especially useful for outreach - \$16.00 per 100 (minimum order is 100)

The "QUESTIONS & ANSWERS" (Q&A) Pamphlet for newcomers and outreach - \$1.50 each (minimum of 2 per order)

To order, or for information on these pieces, write SCA/ISO Literature, PO Box 931181, Hollywood, CA 90093.

We are beginning to get it right. Couples, gay and straight, are dating again. They're discovering friendship, respect, even true intimacy instead of being distracted by immediate sex. Sex is becoming an expression of these qualities, rather than a substitute.

Books, speakers and seminars abound, teaching us to love ourselves, respect our sexuality and sexual preference, and to forgive. These don't preclude use of common sense, nor the value of our sophisticated medical and psychological expertise. But they are leading the way to healing ourselves from within with integrity and wisdom.

Sex never has been the real problem. Love has always been the real and challenging solution. ☺

MATURITY

[Reprinted from an Ann Landers column quotation - no permission requested]

Maturity is the ability to control anger and settle differences without violence and destruction.

Maturity is patience. It is the willingness to pass up immediate pleasure in favor of long-term gain.

Maturity is perseverance, the ability to sweat out a reject or a situation in spite of heavy opposition and discouraging setbacks.

Maturity is the capacity to face unpleasantness and frustration, discomfort and defeat, without complaint or collapse.

Maturity is humility. It is being big enough to say, "I was wrong." And, when you're right, you need not say, "I told you so."

Maturity is the ability to make a decision and follow through. The immature spend their lives exploring endless possibilities and then do nothing.

Maturity means dependability, keeping one's word and coming through in a crisis. The immature are masters of the alibi. They are conflicted and disorganized. Their lives are a maze of broken promises, former friends, unfinished business and good intentions that never materialize.

And, based on the Serenity Prayer: Maturity is the art of living in peace with what we cannot change, the courage to change what we know should be changed and the wisdom to know the difference. ♪

SCA'S ISO NEEDS YOUR SUPPORT

SCA's International Service Organization coordinates literature generation and distribution, provides experiential support for SCA groups, interfaces with other sexual recovery fellowships, encourages and supports outreach projects, publishes "The SCAnner" and the national meeting list - generally promoting SCA UNITY. All this takes time and money. So far, the time has been provided by SCAers doing service. The money has come from members, literature sales and fundraisers. As with all worthwhile activities, both are hard to come by, and more of both are needed.

Won't you consider participating in ISO activities. Donating time in service, working up suggestions and drafts for new literature, sending submittals to "The SCAnner" keeps SCA going and growing AND are valuable tools for your own recovery. And send in a check! Remember all the time and money spent in your old sexual compulsive and addictive activities? Now that you're freeing yourself of them, that time and money can be put to a greater use.

Contact your meeting Secretary or Intergroup or ISO Rep about ISO service and send your check made out to SCA/ISO, to SCA/ISO, PO Box 1585, Old Chelsea Station, New York, NY 10113-0935. Your contributions will return to you in many ways! ♪

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

WE DON'T HAVE TO HIDE ANY LONGER

"Shame is the motor behind compulsive behavior" - Anonymous

Our addiction very likely had its roots in shame. Perhaps we were told we were ugly, worthless, good for nothing, God didn't love us — by parents, relatives, siblings, contemporaries, ministers. And that brought us shame. Perhaps we were treated and looked upon as outcasts by those whose responsibility it was to nurture us — and our shame multiplied. Perhaps we were violated physically and sexually — there could scarcely be a more shameful thing for us to go through. Perhaps we got the idea planted in our minds, one way or another, that anything sexual — masturbation, touching, intimacy, sex with another, being gay — was not to be talked about, not to be indulged in, was SINFUL. Sex in all its forms became the utmost manifestation of shame. Even God looked upon us as shameful beings; or so we were told. Yet, somehow, we became addicted to things sexual; our lives became compulsive slaves to sex; sex became our master; our way to make a mark in the world; our way to find "love."

And each episode of acting out our addiction brought with it additional shame. It got so bad that we finally decided that we couldn't get much lower — more shameful — so, what the hell, we acted out all the more. And we felt more and more shamed. And our lives became unmanageable. And the more we tried to manage our lives — all by ourselves, not asking for or accepting any help — the more unmanageable our lives became.

By whatever means — an arrest, words from a friend, a seeming accident, a shove of some sort by our Higher Power — we found ourselves in our first SCA meeting. Scared shitless! When the meeting began, everyone in that room identified as a SEXUAL COMPULSIVE. We did too, even though some of us had to look up the word "compulsive" in the dictionary when we got home. And we heard others sharing their stories. Shameful things for the most part — shameful at least for those telling of them. Yet, no one put any of them down for the things they told about. No one shamed them for the shameful things they had done.

Then we too started telling our secrets; secrets which had been locked up for so long inside us because we didn't dare trust anyone with them. Maybe it was at the first meeting, maybe several meetings later. But the secrets started coming out little by little, piece by piece. And each time we shared one of our shameful secrets, we felt much lighter; the weight of our shame was actually being lifted off of us. We began to realize that we were beautiful human beings with an illness from which we were beginning to recover. We began to know what life is about, and how beautiful it is.

We began to realize that we didn't have to hide behind our shame any longer. ♪ — RK

THE SCANNER IS YOUR NEWSLETTER

The SCAnner is published and distributed quarterly by the International Service Organization of SCA as a means toward unifying the Fellowship and getting the SCA word out. The opinions expressed here are of those who made them and do not necessarily reflect the principles and traditions of SCA. Take what you like and leave the rest.

The SCAnner depends on the input of the SCA membership to provide a meaningful means of communication and support within the Fellowship. We need your help. We need your recovery stories, news of your groups, comments and criticisms.

Please send your submittals to: "THE SCANNER", c/o SCA, P.O. Box 13551, San Luis Obispo, CA 93406-3551. Don't worry about fancy typing; just so it's readable — and from the heart! Your anonymity is assured. The SCAnner is YOUR newsletter — dedicated toward promoting the common welfare and unity of SCA and getting the word out. Thank you for your support over the past years. ♪

MEETINGS

For information on SCA meetings, or listing a new meeting, write to:

SCA New York

PO Box 1585 Old Chelsea Station, New York, NY 10113-0935, or

SCA Southern California

44 0-10 Sunset Blvd., #520, Los Angeles, CA 9002 , or call the New York Information line.

SCA INFORMATION LINES

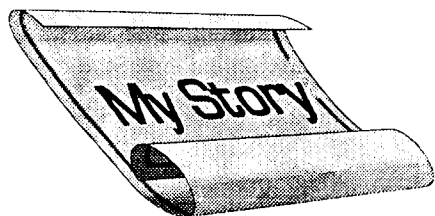
(recorded message and call-back):

New York	(212) 439-1123
Los Angeles	(310) 859-5585
Chicago	(312) 589-5856
Orange County, CA	(414) 664-5105
San Diego, CA	(619) 685-8540
Odessa, TX	(915) 560-5240
Milwaukee, WI	(414) 963-1189
St. Louis, MO	(314) 921-62 2

For information on SLAA and SAA meetings in the US and overseas, write to:

SLAA, PO Box 119, New Town Branch, Boston, MA 02258; Phone (617) 332-1845

SAA, PO Box 3038, Minneapolis, MN 55403; Phone (612) 339-021



I have found I cannot control these feelings, thoughts and behaviors, although I sure have tried. As a boy I tried to control my excessive masturbation for years, but to no avail. I remember being very frustrated by this, and beginning to feel afraid and ashamed, thinking something was wrong with me.

During high school I prayed to have my constant thoughts of guys removed from me, and I tried desperately to stop thinking about sex so much; again to no avail.

or the next ten years after high school I repeatedly attempted to control the amount of time I spent in parks, or cruising in general. Over and over again I'd ask myself, "How did I end up here again? Why can't I stop doing this?" Yet I couldn't stop, and I knew it. I needed that sexual fix more than anything, even when it became apparent I wasn't even enjoying it; that it was actually destroying me.

I had forgotten about these control attempts. Denial is like that. How sad I feel at having wasted all this time fighting a losing battle I didn't know I was losing; a battle I could not win.

My sex addiction negatively affected every area of my life. One of these was the integrity of my work. While working as a bellman and as a front desk clerk at a large resort hotel by the beach, I made sexual advances to or sexual innuendo towards many customers in the two years I worked there. This has continued at other jobs. When I made parts runs in the company truck for the boatyard where I worked I'd end up cruising. I've already related one of those experiences. I've missed work or been late to work because of going to acting-out places on the way. Or, if I was still with a trick on Monday morning, I'd call in sick. The quality of work at all my jobs was less than it could have been because of the hours I spend sexually day-dreaming on the job. The quality of my college education was probably cut in half because of the incredible amount of time I spent acting-out during school.

I am amazed remembering this. It is incredible to me the amount of risk I was willing to take with these jobs, and, because of the denial, it didn't even seem particularly risky at the time, I'll say it once again: I

was being driven by an urge I couldn't control, an urge that was such a part of me by this time I had finally accepted it as just the way I am. Never did I think something could be done about it.

Another area seriously affected by my sex addiction was my social life. My close friends started seeing less and less of me as I started spending more and more time cruising. Of course I was lying to them about where I spent all this time and this, combined with my carefully hidden homosexuality, forced a decline in the quality of my friendships. My friends were wonderful people, and I felt phony, ashamed and undeserving of their friendships.

Gradually I left my circle of friends completely and began living and socializing with the low-life types I felt were more my equals. By the time the end came I was living exclusively with other addicts as I became completely consumed by the disease.

It is painful remembering how I sold myself out to this addiction. I had no idea I had an illness. I suffered horribly thinking I was a defective person; born a sick pervert. I am extremely angry at being led so far astray. Until now I had intellectualized, justified and rationalized my behaviors, minimized the consequences and denied the destruction going on inside me at a very fundamental level.

* * *

When I was a boy I felt very awkward and afraid. I didn't have any brothers, and my father was not around very much. I yearned for a male role model, and not finding one I became very shy and withdrawn. I felt very different from everybody else. My feelings were fragile and overly sensitive. I felt strange and alien. I felt I didn't and couldn't fit in. Discovering erotic pleasure instantly fixed me and I immediately escaped into a sexual fantasyland. Here I was safe. Here I felt good. Here they couldn't hurt me. Later, when I began having sex with others, I finally found the validation that was always missing before. Here I was accepted. Here I belonged. Here I could and did fit in.

I escaped into sex, running away from my feelings, and the worse I felt, the more sex I had. A vicious cycle had begun, and years passed before I realized the sex itself was making me feel bad. Once again my denial had prevented me from identifying this. Sex fixed me, and I've had a hard time admitting it's not working anymore.

or years I had blamed homosexuality for my suffering. This was the subtle subterfuge my disease used to hide itself. It made me

think that being Gay was a sick, dirty and perverted thing. It made me think being Gay was sex in restrooms, hundreds of anonymous partners, no possible hope of love or happiness, a lonely and empty life. This trick worked so well I strenuously exerted myself fighting homosexuality, trying desperately to change my orientation. I believed if I could become heterosexual my pain would end. I lost the battle to change my orientation and grew to loathe homosexuality and, therefore, myself. To escape the pain of this, of course, I travelled further into my addiction. What a cunning enemy my disease is!

My physical health had suffered.

Becoming HIV positive over four years ago because of unsafe acting-out practices has caused serious health consequences. I had abused drugs and alcohol for twelve years escaping the pain of my addiction and this, too, has had serious health consequences.

My mental health had suffered. The loss of my self-respect and self-esteem, the collapse of my self-reliance and the general hopelessness from demoralization had led me to the point of a critical emotional crisis.

My spiritual health had suffered. I had developed strong resentments against God, blaming Him for my sexual problems and hating Him for making me Gay.

Other people had suffered. Lovers were hurt, unable to understand why I cheated on them. Friends were hurt as I pulled away or disappeared without explanation. Family were hurt as I became aloof, secretive and emotionally absent. Employers were hurt as they saw their trust betrayed and the quality of my work decline.

My finances had suffered. I've spent thousands of dollars on condoms, lube, sex toys, pornography, prostitutes, hotel rooms, gasoline, video booths, fetish items, drugs and alcohol, court costs, medical expenses, therapy costs and voluntary institutionalization fees.

My disease has been terribly destructive. I did not have enough power to stop it, for the only tool I had was my willpower, and my willpower proved repeatedly to be incapable of stopping this compulsion. My life became crippled and unmanageable. I am powerless over sexual compulsion. To recover I had to find some other power to help me, and it had to be a Power greater than myself.

I found that Power right inside my own consciousness — the last place I ever dreamed of looking for it. Inside my own being I found the Creator Himself; a loving,

caring, nurturing God waiting to help me if only I'd ask. This Power had already relieved me of my drug addiction and alcoholism after twelve years of abuse, so it only made sense He could remove my sexual compulsion as well. I further figured anything that powerful must be able to run my life better than my own painful attempts, and so I make a decision each day to allow God to enter and guide my life.

Presently I'm beginning a Fourth Step inventory. As I found out in other Twelve Step programs, my addiction is but a symptom of the real problem, and to truly recover I must discover the causes and conditions of that symptom. I must identify them, admit them, and then, perhaps most difficult, become willing to let God remove them. Am I ready to let go of lust or my fetish desires? How about my feelings of inadequacy that make me seek validation in anonymous sex? Or the shame that keeps me imprisoned in the obsessive / compulsive cycle? I'm still afraid to let go, but I get more willing each day as I learn to trust my Higher Power.

Of course I harmed many people in my disease, and amends need to be made, but that is several Steps away. It's great just being in the process, and it doesn't matter to me which particular Step I'm working on, for each one holds a blessing.

I've received tremendous healing from this Program in the eight months I've been attending meetings. I have been able to stay away from acting-out places. Most of my compulsive sexual behaviors have stopped. My obsessive thoughts are beginning to lessen. Following my sex plan I've begun dating and socializing; breaking out of isolation. I'm beginning to relax, to really like myself, to feel moments of real peace.

I am very grateful for the SCA Program and my friends in the Fellowship who have given me so much support. I truly believe it is possible to recover from sexual compulsion and to live a happy, peaceful and satisfying life. ♪

and PIECES

The 12-Step Committee is getting the word out for anyone interested in taking over as "SCanner" Editor. JOE P. and JOHN A. are handling the distribution of "SCAnners" to Chicago and the outlying SCA meetings. SCA is not able to get a listing in the "MaBell" yellow pages unless another phone service is used. JOHN P. is checking out the options. Applications for listings in the Gay Pink and Yellow pages have been submitted and SCA has an ad in "Gay Chicago." The Chicago SATURDAY 6:30 PM meeting has closed. The Committee is working on a temporary (three-month) sponsor program. This program will rely on Reps bringing updated lists of sponsors to each Intergroup meeting.

More discussions were held concerning the idea of establishing better relations with the Police, Health and Security Departments in various acting-out locations. JOHN P. will talk to an attorney for advice on how to proceed.

Intergroup loaned \$75 to purchase 50 copies of the new "QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS" publication so that they would be easily available to the groups. TODD has been answering the phone line for three months.

The earlier mailings to doctors prompted requests for SCA to sponsor seminars. Discussions are being held as to possible conflicts with the Tradition dealing with promotion of the SCA Program as contrasted to attraction.

How to deal with inappropriate behavior? After some discussion, the group decided that each group would have to seek its conscience about dealing with specific individuals. The chair of the meeting is responsible for reminding the group about the behavior guidelines and to confront members when their behavior is inappropriate. Intergroup suggests that each group read "how it works" in the meetings from time to time.

Thanks Chicago for sending us your Intergroup minutes. They really help in keeping us up to speed.

THE "BIG APPLE" TELLS ALL....

Busy.. busy.. busy.. that seems to be the story with SCA's New York Intergroup. Here are some of the more recent goings-on...

The election of new Intergroup officers and chairpersons took place in April, and here are the results: JOE S., Chair; CHUCK S., Secretary; MICHAEL H., Treasurer;

JEFFREY J., Literature; MICHAEL F. and JIM S., Retreat; BRIAN K., National Coordinator; BRIAN K., FRANK H. and MICHAEL RE., ISO Delegates; ROBERT J., Phone; ORISON A., Special Events; ROB S., Distribution; ACHEEM N., 12th Step Co-chair. DONALD K. was appointed the other Co-chair in June. Our best wishes to these new trusted servants and robust thanks to the previous officers and chairs for their service.

The Literature Committee has been working on several pamphlets, including ones on abstinence and on prayer and meditation. Drafts are in hand for the Abstinence, Recovery Plan, Steps, Sponsorship and Telephone portions of the proposed TOOLS three-fold. More writing is needed on Service, Dating, Literature and Meetings. Chair JEFFREY J. is asking for additional writers, as well as pushing to get the in-progress work completed.

Intergroup has voted to have monthly meetings rather than bi-monthly.

The Distribution Committee was authorized to order printing up 200 Little Blue Books 100 Shame pamphlets and 1000 Four-fold brochures.

The Retreat Committee reported that the January retreat, attended by 43 members, including 7 women, brought in a "profit" of nearly \$400, part of which was donated to ISO, with the rest going to the scholarship fund. The next retreat is scheduled for August.

Special Events is planning a picnic on the Labor Day Weekend.

Research is being done by BRIAN K. on behalf of ISO toward obtaining a national 800 number for public service announcements. Brian also reports that a new meeting has started in GALWAY, IRELAND on Thursdays at 8:00 PM. ANTHONY L. has taken on the job of national phone-information person, replacing BILL D.

BILL A. was elected chair of a new committee to write by-laws for Intergroup. Transcription has begun, but Bill is looking for Committee members.

TONY R. was elected chair of a committee to draft a piece of literature on how to start a meeting.

Our deepest thanks for all the recovery work going on in New York... AND all across the country!

Let's hear from your group or intergroup. Let us know of your successes and problems. You may think of your news as being insignificant, but that's not at all true. It's one way of knowing that we're all pulling for each other. Send your items - written, typed or scribbled - to "The SCanner", c/o SCA, PO Box 13551, San Luis Obispo, CA 93406-3551
DEADLINE FOR THE MID-NOVEMBER ISSUE IS OCTOBER 20, 1993!

Thank you, Steve. We each have a story of our own to tell. Why not tell us yours, with special emphasis on your recovery. Send it to: "The SCanner", c/o SCA, PO Box 13551, San Luis Obispo, CA 93 06-3551.