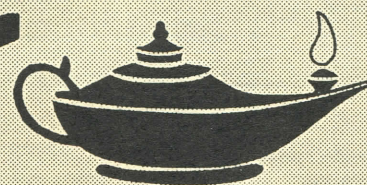


The SCAnner

SCA NEWSLETTER

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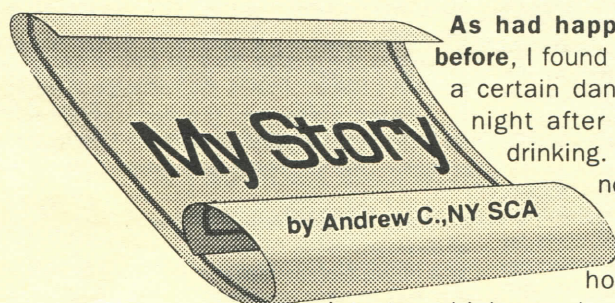


VOLUME 5, NO.1

50 CENTS

FIRST QUARTER, 1994

"Couldn't get myself HOME..."



As had happened too many times before, I found myself looking for sex in a certain dangerous urban park one night after midnight. I had been drinking. I had started with the notion that I was going to have just one drink after work before going home. One drink turned

into two drinks, and spontaneously I felt like going to other bars, to maybe run into some friends, to maybe have some fun. I started reminding myself that no matter what, I wasn't going to go to that park, that I wasn't going to have sex in a public place. Even though AIDS had already killed two of my friends, I still hadn't begun practicing safe sex. Intermittently I argued with myself during the next several hours, trying to get myself to go home, and reminding myself that the park was off limits. But my feet just wouldn't respond. They seemed to have a will of their own to get into trouble. Around 1:30am I heard my compulsion direct a cabdriver to drop me off at the park.

Then I was in the park, in a familiar yet baffling turmoil: against my will but it was me that brought myself there. For about 40 minutes I hung around in the shadows feeling ashamed of myself, wishing I could get myself to just go home. Then I saw an attractive man. And within 15 minutes I was on my knees in the dirt once again, engaging in unsafe sex with that stranger.

Then a miracle occurred. A voice inside my mind said, "If you don't stop doing this it's going to kill you." Instantly my mind responded, "But I wind up here or someplace like this every time I drink and I can't stop drinking!" I finished having sex with that stranger and went home. The next afternoon, I called Alcoholics Anonymous, wanting to attend one of their meetings to get tips about how to avoid getting drunk so I could stop acting out. I was feeling a lot of fear and shame about what people would think of me, but I forced myself to action anyway. Within a couple weeks I snuck into my first gay AA meeting where I was introduced to the concept of sobriety. Even though I was at that point unconvinced I was an alcoholic and could not imagine a life without alcohol and other drugs, I reluctantly started the first facet of my recovery - not drinking or drugging, one day at a time - to see what would happen. I expected it would probably help me stay out of that hated park. I had no idea it would turn out to be so difficult for me to abstain from alcohol and other drugs.

Though I hadn't yet mentioned my sex "problems" to anyone, after an A.A. meeting I heard mention of Sexual Compulsives Anonymous and

EDITOR'S NOTE

Greetings brother & sisters in recovery. My name is Joe F., and I'm the new editor of the Scanner. First of all, I'd like to take this opportunity to thank Richard K. for all his years of effort as the previous Scanner editor. And though he has stepped down, he will continue to contribute his "Food for Thought" column to the Scanner (as well as any other welcome offerings he may choose to make to future Scanners). I would also like to take a moment to thank some unsung heroes of the Scanner: Benno S. of LA, who has the arduous task of putting all Scanner material into a readable format via desk-top publishing; Maciek K. of LA, Joe P. of Chicago and Brian K. of New York who are responsible for distribution of the Scanner worldwide. From our home to your home!

The Scanner is the voice of SCA. And not just NY, LA or Chicago, but all of SCA. This is why we need your stories, letters, thoughts and news, so that we can all feel connected to what is going on in SCA. Both on a personal and fellowship level of sharing. As isolation is a major element of our disease, the Scanner is yet another tool of recovery to break that isolation. The Scanner, like the AA Grapevine, is a "meeting between meetings." On a personal note: I had lived in Paris for awhile. At the time, there were only 2 SCA meetings weekly, and an on-again, off-again SLAA meeting. I always eagerly awaited the arrival of the Scanner because it made me feel part of the greater fellowship at large, especially when I would feel discouraged by the low attendance rates of the Paris meetings. Sometimes, I would be the only person at the meeting. I would read the SCA opening and closing to myself, maybe a story from Hope & Recovery and then maybe the Scanner. It

continued on Page 3

continued on Page 3

2 and PIECES

WHAT'S GOING IN SCA GROUPS AND INTERGROUPS

NEW YORK, NEW YORK

Group Guide:

Tony R. of NY, and Scott C. of San Diego, are independently working on a group guide for starting up your own SCA meeting. This piece is especially written for groups or individuals wanting help starting an SCA meeting where they live. The group guide was presented at the national ISO meeting in February in San Diego.

Meetings, meetings, meetings:

Brian K, SCA national coordinator, reports there are new meetings in Cairns, Australia and upstate New York. Santa Fe is going strong with two meetings. There are possibilities of new meetings in Virginia Beach and Kansas City. There is a new meeting in DC. Rochester, New York is now down to one meeting a week.

Holiday party:

The holiday party held on December 4th at the Lesbian & Gay Community Center, was a rousing success, bringing in almost \$2,000 (which immediately went out again for the party's expenses). There was a gratitude meeting, followed by a potluck dinner, a fabulous show and a dance.

April fundraiser:

The "Third Annual SCA Fun(d) Raiser Extravaganza," a NY Intergroup fundraiser dance will be held at the Lesbian & Gay Community Center on Saturday, April 9th from 8:30-12:30. There will be "fun, fun, fun!, fellowship, hors d'oeuvres and anonymous celebrities and more!" Be there or be square!

A Star is Born:

A documentary filmmaker was looking for sex addicts (in SCA) willing to talk about their experiences in pornography (like shooting fish in a barrel...). Discussion (and a few arched eyebrows) ensued at the December Intergroup meeting, where it was agreed that individuals can speak to whomever they wish, but with the 10th, 11th & 12th Traditions as a guide. The anonymous nature of the program should be kept in mind when one is sharing with non-addicts about sex addiction and SCA, and to remember that one speaks as an individual, and not as a representative of this fellowship.

Much Ado About Newcomers:

A lot discussion was had at the January Intergroup meeting, about newcomers to SCA—specifically, how we welcome them and work, as a group, with newcomers. Some members complained that, unlike AA, SCA doesn't do enough to welcome and encourage newcomers to keep coming back. Perhaps the literature person could be the "welcome person," perhaps beginners meetings could be highlighted in our meeting lists—there were suggestions aplenty! Someone pointed out that due to the very nature of our illness, SCA members, unlike AA members, are bound to have issues about approaching newcomers (i.e., attractive strangers).

Upcoming NY Convention

The May New York SCA conference (entitled "Back to Basics") is proceeding according to plans and scheduled for the weekend of May 20, 21, 22. The Conference Committee **Chair list include:**

Conference Chair.....Mark S.
Treasurer.....David G.
Programs & Speakers.....John K. & Chuck S.
Registration.....Joe S.
Hospitality & Lit.
Food.....Howard A. & Barbara B.

The show this year is SCA The Greatest Show On Earth and has a circus theme. Get out your calendars and mark that date.

In the Eyes of the beholder...

There was a slight scandal at the Lesbian & Gay Community Center. Recovering addicts have had to deal with a "provocative" (for some) Keith Haring men's room ("provocative" in terms of artwork). Now, the Center has decided to turn the main bathroom into an artistic homage to acting out, complete with pornographic images pasted on the wall, and written odes to the "good old days." Some SCA members, offended by the artwork, took it upon themselves, to the chagrin of many members, to destroy the artwork, making mention that the artists should perhaps become SCA members. There was much talk in the rooms, including about how in the 10th Tradition, there is mention of SCA having no "opinion on outside issues; hence our name ought never be drawn into public controversy" and the singleness of SCA purpose being SCA recovery. My own personal feeling, is that I would not have destroyed the artwork (in fact, it didn't bother me. I just didn't look at it.), but I do think a center, in which the largest group is SCA, might have considered our feelings about having such a display in the bathroom, considering it was the main bathroom. Well, the issue has been resolved at the moment, since the artwork seems to have been removed—whether by vandals or design, or perhaps divine intervention, I don't know. Any comments?

Faits divers:

In November, New York Intergroup agreed to send SCA literature (the Bluebook, Four-fold, & Secret Shame) to Gay/Lesbian Psychiatrists of New York.

Michael H. agreed to begin work on an SCA pamphlet about staying sober while travelling.

CHICAGO, CHICAGO, A HELLUVA TOWN

The SCA phone number in Chicago is now listed in the white and yellow pages.

MEET ME IN ST. LOUIS

Outreach:

St. Louis is host to a very active (in a program sense) SCA fellowship. They are considering (and sent!) a letter to legal professionals, based on a letter sent by LA SCA to judges and courts, suggesting that sex offenders be referred to SCA meetings, as alcoholics are often referred to AA meetings.

St. Louis has also decided, once again inspired by outreach efforts in other cities, to mail a letter to clergy in the St. Louis area about SCA.

Anonymity

At the February St. Louis Intergroup meeting, the topic of anonymity was brought up (especially in reference to the incident that occurred in Atlanta (Scanner, 3rd Quarter, 1993). In response to that, Mark Mc., St. Louis Intergroup Secretary,

addressed a letter to the ISO Chairperson, Frank H. in which he raised the following questions:

"If physicians and health care providers while performing their duties have the obligation to report child abuse, does this obligation remain true if those physicians and health care providers are attending SCA meetings as SCA members?

-In other words, could physicians and health care providers lose their licenses or be reprimanded if they don't report individuals admitting to child abuse at SCA meetings?"

Any comments?

Faits divers:

St. Louis is considering adapting a radio script of a public service announcement by Brian K of New York for local airing.

A survey on masturbation, based on a piece by a New York SCA member, will be distributed among the St. Louis fellowship. We've heard the "professional" opinions, now it's time to hear from our members, the true professionals, about this topic.

A holiday party was held in December at a member's home. True to the nonreligious aspect of 12-step programs, the party celebrated DECEM, or the 10th month of the Roman calendar. The rest of the country take note!

St. Louis SCA now has a PO box number. Send all correspondence to:

SCA Pierre Laclede Station

P.O. Box 8254

St. Louis, MO 63156

The St. Louis Intergroup wishes to officially thank Richard K., of San Luis Obispo, CA., the former editor of the Scanner, for his efforts and work over the past 3 years as Scanner editor and to welcome the new Scanner editor, Joe F. of New York.

LA IS MY LADY

LA Convention

The 1994 SCA convention was a big success with over 150 participants, despite the earthquake which caused a shift in convention site from Universal City to the LAX Hilton. Entitled "Building Our Future: Spirituality, Intimacy & Sexual Recovery," the convention was held in LA on the weekend of February 18-20.

Always thinking to the future, at a business meeting on Sunday night of the convention, the 1995 Convention committee was elected and are as follows:

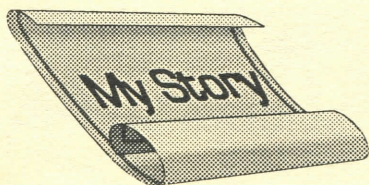
Chairman.....Jud W.
Co-Chairman.....Dennis B.
Treasurer.....Mark B.
Secretary.....Neil B.
Co-Secretary.....Manuel F.

The January 1994 Intergroup elections resulted in:

Chairman.....Dennis B.
Secretary.....Bill D.
Treasurer.....Gary S.
12-Step Committee.....Marshall L. & Steve K.
Literature Committee.....Doyle S.
ISO Committee.....Maciek K. & Michael K.

Outreach:

A special congrats to the 12-step committee chairs Marshall & Steve who are instrumental in SCA LA's court letters and hospital panels.



during my first sober week I walked into my first S.C.A. meeting, to learn about how to say "no" and how to avoid engaging in risky sex and going to degrading places to find sex. There I heard about sexual sobriety, people, places & things, and the idea of the sexual recovery plan. I knew that a recovery plan was for me, but I was too ashamed of myself for being sexually compulsive, and at the same time feeling egotistically superior to all the other people in the SCA,

to speak **"A voice inside my mind said, with 'If you don't stop doing this anyone. it's going to kill you.'** Instead I

immediately made my first sex plan by myself, which, against the odds, turned out to be not too hard and not too soft for me to follow.

I intuitively knew that even abstaining from alcohol and other drugs I didn't yet have the ability to say no to unsafe sex with certain people, so I decided that until that ability would develop, I would, one day at a time, have no sex partners. This simple plan left me at home solitary masturbation as a safer sex life than what I had known, and I found that without alcohol or other drugs in my system I felt much less compulsion to seek out degrading and dangerous sex. This plan would serve me well until I became ready to explore safe and sane sexuality with another person. Attending more meetings, I would later come to learn more rewarding ways to work the program, like sharing and sponsorship.

That is how my recovery started. I have come a long way since then. My issues are much more subtle and on a much more beautiful level. My focus, now that my sexual behavior has a long-term basic stability, is on experiencing intimacy and love and connecting with other people. And I'm very

glad to be working on these issues, painful as they are at times, rather than risking my life for anonymous "potato-chip" sex.

I have faith that there is a great deal more for me to learn, probably enough to last far beyond any one lifetime. I am grateful to both SCA and AA for together they not only saved my life but transformed my life.

I feel I couldn't have recovered successfully in one area without the other. Having attended lots of SCA meetings and hearing about other people's acting out, I now know that alcohol and other drugs are very slippery, not only for alcoholics, but for anyone trying to stay sexually sober.

Today I have the ability to live by my own boundaries that are safe and loving, not only in sexual relationships, but also in family, friend, and work relationships. I have learned how to say no; I have learned how to say yes; and when I don't know whether it's yes or no, I have learned that I can take more time to think my answer over. The principles of SCA have given me a life more rewarding than any I'd ever known before.

"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. Your contributions and comments are always welcome and are sincerely invited. Send them to: The SCanner, c/o SCA, NY PO. Box 1585 Old Chelsea Station New York, NY 10113-0935

EDITOR'S NOTE (cont'd from Page 1)

was an important part of my staying sober. It also gave me a forum to read about other sexual compulsives in recovery, and how they used the tools of the program. This was crucial then since I did feel so isolated, and there were so few people to talk to about my sex addiction in Paris. (I'm happy to report that times have changed since I lived there. There are strong SLAA meetings in Paris now, and rumors of an SCA meeting starting up again).

In this issue we have a "My Story" from Andrew C. of New York entitled "Couldn't Get Myself Home," an anonymous contribution entitled "I Admit that I am Powerless" and another "Food for Thought" ("What Comes After Abstinence") from Richard K. of California. There are also reports from LA, NY & St. Louis Intergroups, as well as a report on the recent ISO convention in San Diego, and the SCA convention in LA. I'm changing the look of the Scanner a bit. I hope that we will get more regional contribution for future issues. Besides the usual stories, letters & new items, I'd appreciate any humor, cartoons or otherwise, that people would like to submit. Having written skits and shows for the SCA NY convention myself, I have found over the years that SCA members have a wonderful sense of humor. I don't know if it goes with the territory, but I do feel if I wasn't laughing I might be crying instead.

Also I was considering have theme issues (i.e., "Sponsorship"; "The Third Step"; etc.) Mark Mc. of St. Louis has already suggested "Anonymity", especially after the recent incident in Atlanta (Scanner, Vol. 4:3). Any other suggestions?

I look forward to serving you as editor of the Scanner and I hope to hear from all of you. Because it's your Scanner!

THE SERENITY PRAYER

God, grant me the serenity,
to accept the things I cannot change
courage to change the things I can,
and the wisdom to know the
difference.

ISO UPDATE

ISO CONVENES IN SAN DIEGO

by M.K., ISO Secretary

The ISO representatives met in San Diego on the weekend of February 4-6, 1994. SCA members inevitably ask, "What is ISO?" It is the International Service Organization of SCA. ISO consists of representatives elected by intergroups or individual meetings from all over the United States. This year there were representatives from New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Atascadero and San Diego.

ISO is probably best known for developing and eventually publishing of SCA "conference-approved" literature. Two upcoming submissions were discussed in San Diego: a piece on masturbation and a group guide for starting an SCA meeting.

Masturbation literature

Most of the ISO representatives had positive feedback about this piece. Some reps had read the piece at SCA meetings with a positive response from members. We will submit our editing suggestions to Andrew C. of New York, the writer, and vote on final approval as soon as he incorporates these changes into the original submission.

Group guide

The group guide was also well received. But regional input is necessary for this piece, since ISO publishes literature that reflects the entire SCA fellowship. Meetings vary and have regional nuances. But a group guide is vital for the many requests we get from all over the country from individuals interested in starting up an SCA meeting where they live. The guide describes the nature of SCA meetings, the various types of meetings, the service positions, and the traditions as they apply to meeting dynamics. This group guide will thus be helpful for orienting those new to twelve step programs as well as for those recently elected to service positions. We agreed that editorial suggestions should be sent to Anthony R., of New York, the writer, for incorporation into

the final draft of the group guide.

SCA "Hope & Recovery"

Much discussion centered on developing a book of SCA stories. But rather than duplicating Hope and Recovery, we decided to center our stories around the 14 Characteristics of SCA. In addition to just requesting stories, we suggested encouraging SCA members to write shorter vignettes about their experience, strength and hope in regard to one of the characteristics. We recommended that intergroups, meetings, or just several SCA members set up a specific place and time to get together and write, or otherwise, we feared these stories will never be written. The Scanner was suggested as a possible forum for these vignettes, along the lines of a recent article entitled "Recovery is..." There has been much discussion over the years about writing SCA recovery stories, but few — except as "My Story"s to the Scanner — have been submitted.

Other items: 800 number, women, interfellowship communication

Other action items included voting to allocate money to establish an SCA 800 phone number, which would make SCA more accessible for those seeking recovery. Brian K. in New York will be handling this new twelve-step endeavor as well as a possible public service announcement for TV and radio. George M. of San Diego has translated all the SCA literature into Spanish. We will proceed with publication of Spanish literature once it is proofread. Joe F. from New York has taken over as Scanner editor and is seeking regional input. We want the Scanner to reflect the experience of the entire SCA fellowship.

We continued our discussion of women in SCA. Since there were no women present at the ISO meeting, we did not want to speak on their behalf. Yet there was unanimous agreement to encourage and enhance the participation of women in SCA. There was similar support for continued pursuit of interfellowship communication with other sexual recovery programs. We discussed at

\$

For the period March, 1993 - January, 1994

INCOME

Literature Sales	\$3,955.89
Individual Contributions	\$ 215.00
Group Contributions	\$1,821.28
Total	\$5,992.17

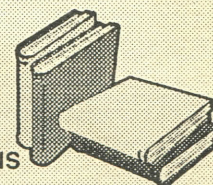
EXPENSES

Literature	\$7,268.58
Office	\$ 181.88
Scanner	\$ 222.62
Miscellaneous	\$ 40.59
Total	\$7,713.81

Present Balance.....\$2,681.23

length a request from an SAA group for co-publishing a piece of literature entitled "Measuring and Celebrating Progress." This piece of literature discusses all the various ways the different recovery programs and individuals have of measuring recovery, abstinence, and sobriety. SCA members are featured in this piece of literature, but it was written by an SAA group. We decided to investigate this request further, particularly in regard to editing the piece and more clearly defining our role in publication.

If you would like your own copy of the ISO minutes, or a copy of the literature drafts discussed, contact M.K. at 310-301-1071.



SCA/ISO PUBLICATIONS

SCA literature is one of the tools toward our recovery - our meeting away from a meeting. 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) - \$3.00 each

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

The SCA "FOUR-FOLD" informational brochure - \$16.00 per 100 (minimum order is 100)

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

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

WHAT COMES AFTER ABSTINENCE?

Through the concepts of the Program and the guidance of our Higher Power, we've been able to let go of the more serious aspects of our addiction - being in places which, or with people who reinforced our addiction; debasing ourselves with activities which only added to the shame that had been imposed upon us in our earlier years; equating sex, anonymous or otherwise, with intimacy while being terrified when any sign of true intimacy came on the scene. Yes, we now have a pretty good handle on these things and we've gotten at least some feeling of what recovery is.

But for many of us, there's an emptiness left. There's still something missing in our lives. For many of us, sexual fantasies still loom heavily in our minds - far too often for our own good.

We might not actually be engaging in sexual activities which are harmful for us, but we're sure thinking about them. For many of us that might be thinking about the "old days" of our acting out and embellishing those episodes with "hot stuff we could have done" to make them all the more exciting. Or we might fixate on those great legs that this guy at the gym has; or the way that number walks and carries himself...

For some of us, true intimacy — being vulnerable, feeling and acknowledging our real feelings and talking about them, physical closeness without sex - has manifested from time to time and we feel horribly uncomfortable with it. So uncomfortable at times that we might totally shut it out - freeze up to defend ourselves from it; push ourselves away from it. And sex - loving, intimate sex with someone we know well and have deep feelings for - many of us don't even have a clue of what that might be. We've read book and seen movies about "romantic" sex, but somehow we can't see that happening to us. In fact, many of us fear any kind of sex, except perhaps sex with ourselves and our fantasies, for fear of going back to our acting out patterns, or for fear of what is UNKNOWN to us.

So, we've stopped acting out; we're into recovery, yet there's this void that we can't seem to be able to fill. We are certainly sexual beings - God gave us that attribute and we have every right to have it - but somehow that got so screwed up in our lives, that healthy sexuality doesn't seem to compute for us. We keep going to our meetings and hear our brothers and sisters expressing much of these same feelings, or perhaps relating how they've slipped, or maybe talking about having intimate sexual experiences which later turned sour out of fear or for whatever reason. And, occasionally, we hear a warm story of a member actually accomplishing an intimate, happy life with another being which includes sex as an integrated element rather than a debilitating addictive fixation or obsession.

But so many of us are still stuck, or so it seems - and we wonder if we'd be better off going back to our old patterns. Yet we know deep down that we can't do that and live. The inner voice, that we've learned to listen to, keeps telling us that message; we can no longer stifle it as we used to. Some of us try to reconcile celibacy with our lives, but that horniness keeps coming through - whether it's our God-given sexuality or our addiction. We're not so sure that would work either, and it certainly doesn't sound like much fun. So now what?

The "now what" is going to be different for each one of us, and there's no cookbook answer available. We seem to sense that we just can't sit back and let God, our Higher Power, do it for us, without much of any effort on our part. Things just don't work that way. We're going to have to work and work hard. It will take a lot of time and effort, something a compulsive finds difficult to deal with. But work on, or at, or with what? In what way?

The Program, therapy, books, church and all that, are certainly helpful in trying to sort this all out, but they can only go so far. The answer seems to lie in that Presence, or Being, or Power that

many call God, however one might understand God. That Presence is always with us, whether we acknowledge It or not - ready to guide us to the choices that are healthy for us. It's up to us to sort out these choices, and to surrender to, and follow, that guidance. Or, to go on our own way - bumbling at times - hopefully learning from each mistake we might make. Somehow we know deep inside that, as we slowly let go of our own egos and let ourselves listen to that Presence, we will be making the right choices for ourselves and get ourselves back on the path to a rich, loving, serene, abundance life, including a healthy sexuality.

Nebulous? Yes? Absolutely? But that's the way things seem to work. We've tried it our way, and we all know how that turned out. Now it may just be the right time to try God's way. Let's give it a try. The only thing we have to lose is our misery.

— Richard K.

San Luis Obispo



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, 4470-107 Sunset Blvd., #520, Los Angeles, Ca 90027, 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	(714) 664-5105
San Diego, Ca	(619) 685-8540
Odessa, Tx	(915) 560-5240
Milwaukee, Wi	(414) 963-1189
St. Louise, Mo	(314) 921-6272

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

SLAA, PO Box 199, New Town Branch, Boston, Ma 02258;
Phone.....(617) 332-1845

SAA, PO Box 3038, Minneapolis, Mn 55403;
Phone.....(612) 339-0217

FEEDBACK & CORRESPONDENCE

CORRESPONDENCE

Mark Mc., St. Louis, Mo.

I want to thank Neil G. for his "My Story" which appeared in the fourth quarter issue, 1993. I enjoyed the motif of Odysseus on his ten year journey back to Ithaca. As you stated, you no longer try to escape shame but now confront it head on. By accepting responsibility, you have transformed your Furies into the Eumenides.

The St. Louis Intergroup welcomes Joe F. as the new editor of The Scanner. We wish you luck.

Jim M., St. Louis, Mo.

I want to express my sincere gratitude for the excellent Los Angeles Convention I was fortunate enough to attend. Coming from St. Louis with a fellow member here, we were really touched by the friendliness, hospitality, and commitment to recovery. It was great renewing old friendships and making new ones. I especially want to thank Jose, the chairman, the workshop facilitators, all the support people and the wonderful cast of Sweet Chastity. I have to admit that the recent L.A. earthquake did have me reevaluate my commitment to attend, but I honestly felt like it was meant for me to go and I'm so glad I did! It would be hard for me to put into words in one letter what I learned from all the interesting workshops and speakers, but overall I feel a deeper sense of recovery and commitment to growth. SCA has now been in St. Louis for two years and we're very excited about the progress we've

made here. We really appreciate the experience of those who have been able to change their lives through using the sexual recovery plan and incorporating spirituality into their lives through the 12-Steps.

One of the reasons I was so attracted to SCA initially was because of my need to be in recovery with gay men. To be able to heal, I needed to be able to tell my story to others who knew my experience and understood my pain. The theme, "Building Our Future: Spirituality-Intimacy-Sexual Recovery" was beautifully created by the careful selection of the hands-on workshops and the loving attitude expressed by members to each other.

What I am working on in my life at this time is integrating the different parts of my personality that have been split off through years and years of active sexual addiction. I'm learning to be with, understand, and accept myself, instead of hating or disowning those parts of me that are difficult. A major part of this struggle has been the lack of integration of my spirituality and sexuality. There was no marriage here, when one was present, the other one faded. The Conference provided a safe place to explore these two very powerful forces in my life and I believe their union is what intimacy ultimately is all about.

Thanks again SCA-LA, for your part in all of our recovery and being trailblazers for those of us who want what you have.

RECOVERY RUMINATIONS

Growing up in an alcoholic family, I never felt I belonged. In grade school, I was the butt of others' jokes, made fun of and called a sissy. For high school and college, I attended a Catholic seminary and never felt I belonged there either. When I joined SCA, I felt uncomfortable there too. Others had a right to speak, but not I. Their stories were more dramatic than mine, their suffering more poignant, their lives more traumatic. This past Friday's reading stated "We may look at our recovering brothers and sisters and compare our lives and recoveries to theirs. . . Such comparisons are pointless, however." (Answers in the Heart, December 10).

Today, December 13th, I read Richard K.'s column "Food for Thought" in The Scanner wherein he talks about "hitting bottom." Hitting bottom could be "something subtle like a tiny realization that this just wasn't the way we were intended to be." Wow!, I thought. Now I don't have to go out and do something crazy and stupid to prove I hit bottom. I have hit bottom and perhaps I do belong in SCA.

- Mark Mc.
St. Louis SCA

12 STEP OUTREACH: LA & ST. LOUIS

ST. LOUIS: A PROGRAM OF ATTRACTION

Los Angeles, recently St. Louis, as well as other SCA groups, have made significant outreach 12-Step efforts. As a public service, I have decided to reprint excerpts from a letter LA has sent to legal professionals, and a letter St. Louis (partly inspired by LA) has sent out to clergy.

Los Angeles:

TO: Legal professionals handling cases involving sexual offenses

FROM: 12 Step Committee of SCA, LA

RE: Alternative sentencing for sexual offenders

We are writing you in order to make you aware of our program. SCA is a 12 step program based on the principles of AA. The research in addictive behavior over the last twenty years has indicated the sexual addiction or compulsion is a problem for many if not all sex offenders. But more importantly, because of the success of AA in treating alcoholics, similar programs have emerged for those individuals suffering from sexual addiction.

The court system already has a history of referring individuals convicted of DUI [drinking under the influence] offenses to AA meetings. Similarly, many judges, lawyers, probation officers, and mental

health professionals are familiar with our program, and have referred their clients to SCA. In the case of sentencing, many judges require individuals to attend SCA meetings, just like they require many DUI offenders to attend AA meetings as part of their sentencing. Many of our members first came to SCA as a result of a court sentence. We provide those individuals with a form with our meeting secretaries sign, verifying that individual's attendance at the meeting.

At meetings individuals hear the experience, strength, and hope of those who are in the process of recovering from their sexual compulsion. The self-

I ADMIT THAT I AM POWERLESS...

This addict, who resides in so many of us, is indeed cunning, baffling and powerful - and, I must add, sneaky. It picks on us when we least expect it.

I log onto a couple of BBSs (Computer Bulletin Board Services) in this area which have gay and/or adult sections on them. Within these sections are subsections which contain very sexually graphic material and sexual communication between members. "Out of curiosity," I found myself reading the stories and posts. Then I'd occasionally get into a dialogue with a couple of the "hotter" ones - "just for fun!" It couldn't possibly hurt my recovery! But the addict was getting its digs in, big time. It wasn't long before I seemed to be totally caught up in this thing. I was fantasizing and masturbating like mad; and getting into hotter and hotter dialogue on the BBS. I became totally obsessed with the situation. I was dancing around my recovery plan; even kicking at it now and then. I found myself, once again, powerless over my addiction, my fantasies, my masturbation, my obsessions.

And all this time - inside - something kept telling me that this just wasn't right for me. I really was aware of the danger, but for a long time I ignored those warning voices. But they started coming through more strongly and I knew I had to do something to protect my recovery - shaky as it is at times. For whatever reason - shame might be

one - I hesitated to share about this in my meeting. I actually isolated from the group and the process even though I attended meetings. Finally after a couple of abortive tries, I did talk about it to some extent; but something kept me from fessing up to everything about it.

Not long afterwards, I went to a distant city to attend a conference. There was an SCA meeting close by that evening and I went to it. I think I felt that these would be people who didn't know me all that well, and would make fessing up a lot easier. Well, also at that meeting were three SCA old-timers who'd I'd looked up to for years with regard to

fess up in front of them, for fear that they'd (and my home group, too) think much less of me. I was ASHAMED to fess up. My friend's reaction? "Shake hands with grandiosity, my friend!" My God! Yet another shortcoming!

Well since then I decided to, and did cut off the heated correspondence with two BBS members, explaining to each of them just why. Both were very supportive and understanding, and I still correspond with one of them on a non-sexual basis.

The point of all this is to add more evidence that our addict is, indeed, always looking for an opening in our activities in order to really grab us. And, one thing the Program does for us is to help us find that inner voice and maybe even to listen to it now and then. Will I get into

a little "warm" correspondence on the BBS again? Perhaps. After all, a guy "has got to have a little fun in life," doesn't he? But if it does happen again, I'm sure I'll be able to nip it in the bud far earlier and open myself up more honestly and completely to my group - and therefore to myself. They understand and won't think badly of me for bending my plan and I'll be much less likely to beat up on myself. That just seems to be the way it works.

— Anonymous Member

"...cunning, baffling and powerful..."

Program dedication and sobriety. Ooooooops! Not at all planned for. So I shared somewhat about it that evening, but not enough really. And I felt somewhat uneasy about the whole thing. I was still hiding the problem.

On the way home, I talked with a very close Program friend - one of the aforementioned three. I told him that I finally admitted to myself that the reasons I had such difficulty fessing up was that I had been pretty much letting members look up to me as a pillar of sobriety or some such thing - I probably even pushed that a little along the way. And I just couldn't bring myself to

BUILDING OUR FUTURE

THE LA CONVENTION: "Building our Future: Spirituality, Intimacy and Sexual Recovery" — February 18-20, 1994.

SCA Los Angeles, still reeling from the earthquake, held its annual convention on the weekend of February 18-20 at the Los Angeles Airport Hilton. The most immediate impact of the earthquake on the convention was the fact that the site chosen for the convention, a hotel at Universal City, was condemned! (And you think you have problems!) Phil H., convention Secretary, worked fast and found a new spot at the airport Hilton, which, though maybe less glamorous, turned out to be convenient and more than adequate. The conference was a rousing success with more than 150 people registered. There were participants hailing from St. Louis, Texas & Northern California.

Patrick C. gave the keynote address on Friday night. He used the Serenity Prayer as his theme, breaking it down and sharing on each part (serenity,

courage & wisdom) and how it applied to his life and experience as an addict.

Each workshop was facilitated by two SCA members and included such topics as Dating & Intimacy, Newcomers, Dealing with Emotions, HIV and all the steps. Steps 1-3 were dealt with in an especially creative fashion, by handing out cans, crayons & construction paper in order to construct a "God box." There was some pre-convention controversy, that the workshop leaders should not be listed by name in the program, the point being to emphasize principles above personality.

The show was a fabulous success. Entitled "Broadway Anonymous" and written by Neil B., it told the story of the night before an SCA conference show. A newcomer is working with the director, and three — count 'em — three drag queens, give him their opinions on what sobriety means to them. There were lots of Broadway show tunes with new SCA inspired lyrics by Michael R. Before the show

there was a general cabaret. All of LA's glamour & talent (all those who were not busy at the Golden Globes that is) were involved and a good time was had by all.

On Sunday, there was a spirituality and a meditation meeting. Closing with George M. of San Diego as speaker. After George, there was a business meeting to elect the officers for the next year's convention. Dennis B. was elected as Co-chair. Those who helped out during this year's convention include Jose O., chairman, Michael K., co-chair, Orestes, Treasurer, Phil H., secretary, Doug C., co-secretary. Dennis B., location & registration, Rob W., workshops, John S, entertainment & Dan B. Registration.

Work will soon be starting up again for next year's convention with a fundraising yard sale planned for before Memorial Day as well as scouting a location for the convention. Good work!

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disclosure, honesty, and personal support enable individuals to finally break through their denial, and begin to change their behavior and ultimately their lives. . .

The 12 Step programs are not a substitute for counseling or therapy. Rather we are an adjunct to any therapeutic intervention. Our members are recovering from the whole range of sexually compulsive and addictive behavior. Many of our members have not been arrested or convicted of any crime. Through these programs are available for people who have had sexual offenses. Locally SCA is primarily comprised of gays and lesbians, yet our fellowship is open to people of all sexual orientations. . . There are no dues or fees for membership.

We do believe that there is hope for these individuals who have been convicted of sexual misconduct. We encourage your referral to SCA or one of the other sexual addiction programs because of the tremendous help these

programs provide for individuals needing recovery.

We recommend that the court system designate a probation officer of another helping professional who will become familiar with each sexual addiction recovery program and thereby be able to make the most appropriate referral. . .

Sincerely

,Members of Twelve Step Committee of SCA (LA)

St. Louis:

Dear member of the Clergy,
May we have a few minutes of your time to acquaint you with a valuable service which is free of charge? In your daily and difficult task of helping people to finding peace of soul, you have, without doubt found it very helpful to refer certain people to such organizations as Alcoholics Anonymous, Gamblers Anonymous, Overeater Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, etc.

This letter deals with a group that perhaps you have not hear of: **SCA**. . . Our Fellowship is not here to suppress

our God given sexuality , but to express it in ways that will not put unreasonable demands on our physical, mental or spiritual health. SCA has no dues or fees and is not allied with any sect, denomination, political group, organization or institution.

In the St. Louis area there are four 12 step programs that address sexual addiction. They are all based on the Twelve Steps of AA. The reason that there are four different programs are many. They were all started in different places, have different literature, and the issues discussed and demographic composition of the meetings vary. We do not want to characterize the other groups, but rather suggest that you contact them for further information.

Currently, SCA of St. Louis is primarily comprised of gay men, yet our fellowship is open to people of both sexes and all sexual orientations. Many of our members have not been arrested or convicted of any crime, though our program is available for people who have had sexual offenses. . .