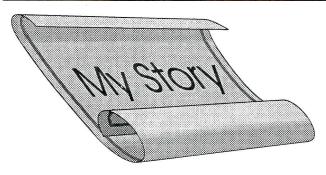
SCA NEWSLETTER © 1995 SCA International Service Organization

Volume 6, No.3

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3rd Quarter 1995

MY DRUG OF CHOICE WAS ALWAYS MORE



have been an active sex addict for the better part of three decades. Until quite recently I had simply assumed I was oversexed: I have too many male hormones; just a sign that I am exceptionally healthy; this will pass; I'll return to normal. I am now convinced that my sex addiction is a progressive illness and that left untreated, it only gets worse. I relate to a saying I once heard in the rooms: My drug of choice was always more. Now in SCA I add

As a boy I was always compared to my older brother. He was perfect; I was flawed. My reality developed around the fact that I couldn't be my older brother and that I fell short. I had the feeling I was licked before I ever got started. That only encouraged me to build a fantasy world which became steadily more elaborate. My

by Larry B. (NY-SCA) earliest addictions to people started as a boy. I romanticized every friendship I ever had. I obsessed constantly over friends: where they were, what they were doing, and when I might see them again; the pain and agony of worrying if they were true; the deep despair I felt because they could never give me enough. Somehow all of this got sexualized.

> My cruising career started slowly enough right after high school. During college, I endlessly cruised downtown Albany, yet almost never picked anybody up, perhaps having sex with a total of three or four men.

> After college I had some affairs—a few days, a few weeks. They were nothing serious to me. I knew I was going to get over them. They were just a phase.

My life led me back to New York City in 1973. I had several affairs/lovers in rapid succession. Both my love and sex addictions pro-

gressed during this period. Although I did not act out sexually during a relationship, I always did so right after a breakup. During relationships, my addiction simply changed form, hiding out as codependency. I met all my lovers while acting out: I met one cruising in a supermarket; one in a backroom; one on a train platform; one in the baths; one in a tearoom. All these relationships lasted a year or less. I always felt smothered and stifled while in a relationship yet being single left me lonely and desperate.

The 12th Step says: "Practice these principles in all our affairs." But it works both ways. As I look back, the detachment and isolation caused by my acting out spread to all areas of my life: work, family, friends, and all relationships. Gradually, I felt more and more cut off from my humanity. Everything suffered as I pursued my career of acting out. Between lovers, I threw myself into the bars and backrooms. I spent most of my time in back corners and dark areas, becoming steadily more isolated and lonely. Yet I never would have admitted it.

On the way down in my choice of lovers, there was Roberto.

Continued pg. 4

EDITOR'S NOTE

Greetings, brothers and sisters in recovery! In this issue, we address the fact that many people in SCA are also in other 12 step programs. These people are multi-addicted and often have issues that are not always addressed solely in an SCA meeting. Larry B.'s My Story ("My Drug of Choice Was Always More") is con-cerned with a sexual compulsive addicted to drugs, and tells how the two addictions go hand-in-hand. Often recovery from one compulsion can not be undertaken or maintained unless recovery from the other compulsion is addressed. I have often heard of dually-addicted SCA members who have had a sexual slip due to a chemical slip, or vice-versa. They may have been in a sexual situation where someone offered them poppers or a joint, and they thought what the hell. Larry's is a story of hope, and how, even though for some the path may be difficult, it is still possible to recover from multiple addictions. And especially through the tool of sponsorship which is illuminated in Richard K.'s "Food For Thought" column. Richard talks about the traditional and non-traditional methods of sponsorship. Finally, there is an ISO Update from the last ISO meeting held February 1995 in St. Louis. The next ISO meeting will be held this February 1996 in Milwaukee. And now for you cybernuts: SCA is on the Web!!! We can be reached at http://www.sca-recovery.org/. You can still subscribe to The SCAnner by the form found in this issue. Or write to: S.C.A., Pennsicola Place, P.O. Box 138455, Chicago, Illinois 60613. If you are interested in submitting articles or information for The SCAnner's use, we invite you to do so by sending them to: The SCAnner c/o SCA P.O. Box 1585 Old Chelsea Station, New York, New York 10013-0935.

Yours in recovery, Joe F., Editor

THE SERENITY PRAYER

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

ISO UPDATE

n the eve of the International Service Organization (ISO) convention in Milwaukee in February 1996, I'd like to (finally) report the notes of the last ISO convention in St. Louis in February 1995. SCA members inevitably ask, "What is ISO?" ISO consists of representatives elected by intergroups or individual SCA meetings from all over the United States. This year there were representatives from New York, Los Angeles, Chicago and St. Louis. ISO is probably best known for developing and eventually publishing SCA "conference-approved" literature.

The meeting was a great success. Highlights of the meeting are here summarized by Jim N. of Milwaukee who was ISO secretary at the time:

PSA ANNOUNCEMENT

Brian K., of New York, has been working on this PSA (public service announcement) and submitted a radio script for ISO approval. Marshall (LA) questioned the target audience, expressing concern about referring heterosexuals to primarily gay SCA meetings. It was discussed that the purpose of this PSA is to help all sex addicts regardless of their sexual orientation. More money was allocated towards the production, and there was discussion to include a local SCA number in the message.

800 NUMBER

Funding for SCA's 800 number (1-800-977-HEAL) was approved at the convention. The existence of the number had been previously accepted by ISO. There was concern about payment for returning calls (currently collect calls are returned), as well as about issues of confidentiality and the ability to reach as many people as possible. ISO agreed to fund two attempts to return calls (which will be kept brief).

LITERATURE

Andrew C., NYC, was going to incorporate input from ISO members on Masturbation piece. The motion to approve and publish this literature piece was unanimously approved. . . . Richard K., San Luis Obispo, has written a piece on the Characteristics we all have in common. He would like feedback from the fellowship at large (and to that end, the piece will be published in the next SCAnner) and from ISO, to see if he is on the right track A

piece on sponsorship, initiated by Richard K., was handed over to Jim M. of St. Louis. This piece would cover issues such as how to be a sponsor, how to find a sponsor, how to be a sponsee, etc. . . . There is a "Stories" project, mostly being coordinated in Chicago where a number of people have written down their stories. ISO discussed using the Characteristics to structure the book. . . . George M. (San Diego) translated the SCA literature into Spanish, with Carlos (NY) making revisions. Frank H.(NY) will explore options for final editing such as using a professional translator.

ELECTIONS

Michael H. was nominated and unanimously approved as Chair of ISO. Frank T. was elected as Treasurer, and Jim N. was elected as Secretary. A new position of Literature and Marketing Coordinator was created. The Coordinator would market and promote SCA literature to bookstores, recovery facilities, and other potential outlets. Jim W. from St. Louis was nominated and unanimously elected. Since that time Michael H. resigned as Chair.

NATIONAL COORDINATOR

This was a position of New York Intergroup. Joe S., who was the Chair at the time, described the type of work he did: the NYC SCA phone number and the ISO NYC address get requests from therapists, clergy, and other helping professionals. We also get requests from sex addicts wanting information about SCA, and over half of those requests are from prisoners. The National Coordinator has also kept up the national meeting list and collected and distributed Intergroup meeting minutes. Marshall, moved that this position be an ISO Office and that the ISO incur expenses of that office, which would include returning phone calls, sending copies of SCA literature, and postage and handling. Since that time, Joe S. resigned as National Coordinator.

NATIONAL MEETING LIST

Marshall, introduced the international SCA meeting list. The list will be revised every six months and will be available for purchase at \$.50 a copy. As in AA, the meeting list should only be available to SCA members as defined by the Third Tradition. Any changes should be given to the National Coordinator.

THE SCANNER

It was decided that Chicago would be the central distribution point for The SCAnner, with a subscription fee of \$2.00 per year (or \$.50 per issue). Since The SCAnner was often distributed for free, it was agreed that charging \$.50 would encourage readership and also cover the cost of production. Intergroups are encouraged to purchase multiple subscriptions.

LEGAL ISSUES

The issues of anonymity and confidentiality were discussed, particularly when a member shares at a meeting or individually about criminal activity such as having sex with a minor, rape, exposing a partner to HIV without disclosure, or even more serious crimes. What is the obligation of the group/individual/sponsor in reporting this behavior? In many states, therapists and other professional helpers are required by law, regardless of confidentiality, to report such behaviors or intended behaviors. In LA: An SCA member admitted to a murder in a fourth step share. His sponsor was subpoenaed to testify in court. In NY: A member who was molested as a child, shared at a meeting about experiences in which he was the perpetrator. He was asked to leave that meeting. In St. Louis: St. Louis has added a statement to their format particularly stressing anonymity, and will send a copy of this statement to ISO representatives so that they can consider adding it to their local meeting formats.

The conclusion of the discussion reiterated that ultimately each individual is responsible for the degree of disclosure at the meeting level and with individuals or sponsors. Although we often state that SCA is a "safe place" to share our experience, this safety is relative. Some things should be shared with a sponsor rather than at an open meeting, especially by newcomers who urgently need to unburden themselves. Meetings are not immune from the law, and therefore when there is legal concern, individuals should use discernment in the degree of trust.

SCA TRADITIONS

Frank H. (NY) discussed the background of the SCA 12 Traditions, which are based on AA's 12 Traditions. An area where our traditions are different from AA is endorsement of other groups. Continued pg. 5

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

SOMETHOUGHTS ON SPOSORSHIP

by Richard K., San Luis Obispo, CA, SCA

SPONSORSHIP!

That concept has a lot of different meanings for most of us. When I first got into the program, some 6 years ago, I felt it was vital to sign up with a sponsor. After all, I'm compulsive, and if the program says I should have a sponsor, then I should get one right away! Well, the one I approached was a true jewel, and really helped me over a lot of hurdles.

First off, I compulsively HAD to come up with a sexual recovery plan right away. I ran to show it to him. He took one look at it and said to ease off. I didn't need to try to recover in a couple of weeks! So I came back the next week with a more realistic plan. He said to try it out for awhile to see if it fits-and if it didn't, try another one. Wow! He didn't seem like a dictator at all. Somehow, I'd gotten the impression that sponsors ranted, raved, and gave instructions. Now I see that wouldn't have worked at all.

What was the lesson here? That I not be so compulsive that I do some damage to others, as well as my own self esteem.

A few months later I moved about 250 miles from my sponsor. At first I would call him occasionally on the phone and see him when I came back to visit. But it wasn't quite the same or as close as when I lived nearer to him. The obvious thing then was to find another sponsor where I lived. But I ran into a roadblock. There was only one other gay guy at our local meeting. For whatever reason, we really didn't connect and I didn't see him as my sponsor. Maybe there was some bullshitting going on there. And I didn't feel comfortable with any of the other members to be a prospective sponsor. I was in a real quandary.

After a year or so, a guy called me out of the blue from a town about 250 miles in the opposite direction. He'd gotten my name from another SCA member. We seemed to hit it off and soon agreed to "cross-sponsor" each other (the taste of my previous sponsees' demise still bitter in my mouth). It worked out fine. We've only met face to face one time. I didn't obsess about him as I

Sponsorship, thus, takes many, many forms. It doesn't necessarily have to follow any traditional form.

One of the functions of a sponsor is to keep us on a workable path to recovery. They help ease us into recovery (not to load ourselves down with so many stringent no-no's that we'd be bound to fail).

I always hesitated to call him on the phone. I knew he was really busy: he had a regular job; his lover was very ill; and, I didn't "want to bother him too much." Does that sound familiar? But there were times, being new to the program, I just had to have someone to talk to. I just didn't feel comfortable talking to anyone else. One of our most meaningful, supportive times was when my partner found out just why I joined the program, that I'd been arrested in a tearoom! I just don't know what I would have done, if my sponsor hadn't been available on the phone.

A sponsor is supportive. Not always in such a dramatic fashion as my example here, nor as a crutch, but in many small ways. Most importantly, the sponsor tries to be as non-judgmental as possible with us. And that can be a real chore at times.

After I'd been in the program a few months, I felt my sponsor and I agreed that I was ripe to be a sponsor myself. Well, the first two or three guys who asked me to sponsor them promptly picked up and left the program! Hmm . . . I guess that I just wasn't ready yet. had done with a couple of my other sponsees. We really were a big help to each other. Whatever works, works.

I was talking on the phone to an SCA member in the mid-West recently. I recounted my sponsorship problems. As far as he was concerned, my Food For Thought columns were a very important form of sponsorship for those who read them in The SCAnner. They really hit the nail on the head for him more than once and were an invaluable help. I have heard that from others over the years, yet I never thought of that as sponsorship. Perhaps if I follow my own thoughts more closely, I could end up sponsoring myself. Not!

Sponsorship, thus, takes many, many forms. It doesn't necessarily have to follow any traditional form. I've recounted a few instances from my own experience. I'm sure my readers can do the same. The important thing is to keep an open mind towards utilizing anything or anyone in or out of the program which can be of help to our recovery. If whatever happens works for you and helps you to rid yourself of this dis-ease of ours, then go for it! And, spread the word to others, who might be bogged down too.

It works, if you work it!

For information on SCA meetings, or list ing 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

National.....(800) 977-HEAL In New York or International call(212) 606-3778

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(Recorded message and call-back):

(
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New York (Spanish) (212) 388-9124
Los Angeles(310) 859-5585
Los Angeles (Spanish) (213) 368-4814
Chicago(312) 589-5856
Orange County, CA(714) 664-5105
San Diego, CA(619) 685-8540
Odessa, TX(915) 560-5240
Milwaukee, Wl(414) 963-1189
St. Louis, MO(314) 569-7702
London, England44-81-914-7599
For information on SLAA and SAA mee

ings in the USA and oversees, 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

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 those of the people who gave 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

My Story

Continued from page 1

I was really desperate. Roberto was sharp, charming, intelligent—but a drunk. I was so desperate I begged him to move in right away. It made no difference that he was living with his lover (this wasn't the only time I moved in to break up lovers.) Within a week or so, I was moving his things into my house. He would break down and cry every night at first. Something small and still inside said this wasn't going to work out at all. I never should have ignored that inner voice. Things weren't all that bad in the beginning. However, the mutual devotion and caring transformed soon enough into their negative aspects: jealousy on Roberto's part, isolation and emotional shutdown on my mine. I started obsessively thinking of fleeing the house to escape and act out. We were miserable.

I remember once I wanted to go out for a walk, to get away from him. He said, "No. I will get dressed and go with you." Another time we had an argument and I jumped into a cab to get away. He jumped in the other side, refusing to allow me

Shortly after that however, someone else tried to get me to take it. This time I did. I hated it. But after the second or third try I was hooked. No drug I had ever done before—acid, pot, poppers, alcohol—had ever put its ugly tentacles around me like crack. There is no describing the ecstatic promise of the drug. The negative aspects are also far beyond description. Hypnotically the drug called to me, striving to lure me to my death. I still experience euphoric recall.

Once during my stay in a rehab, we had a lecture on sexual compulsion. I remember sitting bolt upright at a certain point during the lecture. The lecturer said, "I'm going to speak now to those of you whose drug was cocaine or crack: abusing these drugs causes a dramatic spike in sexual acting out." God, had she hit that right on the head! With crack, my sex addiction progressed rapidly. For so long I had ignored my sex addiction, but when crack came along, I started picking anyone up for drugs and sex, even if they were homeless. Crack had picked me up and hurled me toward a bottom and it finally forced me to see I had a sex problem.

Early on with crack, I made a decision that I would go only so far with it; I would

The 12th Step says: "Practice these principles in all our affairs."
But it works both ways. As I look back, the detachment and isolation caused by my acting out spread to all areas of my life: work, family, friends, and all relationships.

space. He was also a mean drunk. We had many physically violent tussles. Once, only slightly inebriated, he reached out and scratched me and gave me a three-inch scar that I still have.

Things got even worse after Roberto. I often went to Greenwich Village, cruising bars mostly, an activity that went on for many years. I was searching for Mr. Right, but found only that I had become a hard-core sex addict. The more men I chased and had sex with, the more I seemed to want. I was also getting less and less picky about whom I went to bed with.

During the late 80s and early 90s, my increasing desperation caused a shift in the kind of person I picked up. I wasn't getting any younger, I reasoned, and I felt driven to settle, to lower my standards in the quality of men I would pick up. Once a trick I invited over said he had some crack—would I like some, or mind if he did it? Truthfully, the answers were no and yes, respectively. However, I let him light up. The smell was terrible.

know when I really couldn't go on. I had no idea of the power of the drug or how low it would force me to go. Sexually the drug caused complete impotence. Emotionally and mentally I was dragged further and further down. I consciously decided to stop going to the Village. Why bother going all the way to the Village? Why not, I reasoned, go directly to a crowded transportation center to pick up sex partners. I would go there at 4 a.m. after the bars closed. After all, I lived much closer to these depressing places. So what if I was picking up homeless crackheads regardless of their sexual orientation? Looking back, I realize they also did not care who they slept with. They were just doing it for the drugs or beer or whatever small handout I might provide. But at the time I couldn't see that.

Then I had to face a serious consequence of my sex addiction. Driven by desperation and need, I went to a tearoom in a crowded transportation complex in New York City and was arrested. The police led me away

The saw herself, in the distant years, still in the attitude of a woman who had her life to live, and these intimations contradicted the spirit of the present hour. It might be desirable to get quite away, really away, further away than little greygreen England, but this privilege was evidently to be denied her. Deep in her soul-deeper than any appetite for renunciation-was the sense that life would be her business for a long time to come. And at moments there was something inspiring, almost enlivening, in the conviction. It was a proof of strength-it was a proof she should some day be happy again. It couldn't be she was to live only to suffer; she was still young, after all, and a great many things might happen to her yet. To live only to suffer-only to feel the injury of life repeated and enlarged-it seemed to her she was too valuable, too capable, for that. Then she wondered if it were vain and stupid to think so well of herself. When had it ever been a guarantee to be valuable? Wasn't all history full of the destruction of previous things? Wasn't it much more probable that if one were fine one would suffer? It involved then perhaps an admission that one had a certain grossness; but Isabel recognized, as it passed before her eyes, the quick value shadow of a long future. She should never escape; she should last to the end. Then the middle years wrapped her about again and the grey curtain of her indifference closed her in.

THE PORTRAIT OF A LADY, Henry James, p. 466

in handcuffs and escorted me the entire length of the facility through rush-hour crowds. I was mortified. The police brought me all the way downtown, where I was paraded though a busy downtown building. The same building where, coincidentally, my employer recently had its personnel department.

When I started using \$300 worth of crack each weekend, I saw that I had totally lost control of the situation and that I needed help. I called Cocaine Anonymous and got a wonderful sponsor Melissa. She introduced me to some beautiful people in CA, some of whom have become true friends. However, I kept slipping back to anonymous sex and crack every few days, so I decided to go back to a rehab. After

that, feeling that I was not ready to go back to work, I arranged to go to a halfway house in Arizona. I managed to put together nine months off drugs, but unfortunately anonymous sex was a different matter. Anonymous sex was harder to find in Arizona but that didn't stop me. I finally found some-

The time came for me to drive my brother's car back to Chicago and return home to New York City. I enjoyed the drive, but quickly forgot about going to any meetings ("I'll go

one as desperate as I was. We

went to his job location at night.

It was awful.

primary addiction and crack my secondary one. I decided if I wanted to get better I would just have to sit in the rooms of SCA until I got it. Nothing else had worked. Something just clicked in my gut. I had surrendered.

For so long I had tried without success to curb my acting out. Because my sex addiction had progressed so much, I believed it would take years before I would experience any relief at all. However, once I had surrendered to the program the compulsion quickly began to lift, and I was finally able to put some days together on my plan. Now as I watch others grow and

With crack, my sex addiction progressed rapidly. For so long I had ignored my sex addiction, but when crack came along, I started picking anyone up for drugs and sex, even if they were homeless. Crack had picked me up and hurled me toward a bottom and it finally forced me to see I had a sex problem.

to meetings when I get back!"). I cruised lots of rest areas and other acting out places in cities all along the way. I was stoking that fire.

I stayed in Chicago three weeks. For a time I was all right, but then hell broke loose. I found a guy to act out with who was in a long-term committed relationship and had been drinking when I met him.

Finally, I hit my bottom. My parents met me at the airport on a hot humid day in August 1994. God! I couldn't wait to get away from them. I went to my first meeting in more than a month, and went directly from there to several acting out places. Around six a.m., I went to a public restroom in the same transportation complex I had been arrested in. I met a guy cruising there and brought him home. The sex was so hot and before I knew what was happening I asked if we could score some crack. He agreed. Unknowingly, I had picked up a drug addict.

I told my CA sponsor Melissa what had happened. We agreed this slip showed that sex is my

heal in SCA, I can also see my own growth and healing thanks to the program. There is definitely a light at the end of my tunnel. I have already attained important changes in my attitudes about life. My life is more manageable than ever before because of my willingness to get honest about my own issues.

As I look back on my relatively short time in program, I have seen the compulsion starting to lift. I have also noticed I am beginning to deal better with my romantic obsessions. They are getting briefer and less intense. The healing has begun, both inside of me and in my relationships. I have a growing sense of serenity that I never had before. I feel better about my life. All of this is due to my working the program. More and more, I have a feeling that I can do. As the Program teaches me, I am indeed exactly where I need to be in my recovery today.

(Note: As of July 1995: in Program 9 months; 3+ months on my Plan.)

READY TO WRITE?

would like to correspond with sex addicts who do not live near meetings, or cannot attend them.

For theses isolated "loners", this may be their only regular contact with recovering sex addicts. For thoses of us in SCA who correspond with them, this Twelfth Step work can help strengthen our recovery.

The New York Twelfth Step Committee is Coordinating this effort in the Eastern United States, pursuant to the ISO initiative approved in February. We will provide some guidelines for letter writers.

We plan to ask pairs of SCA members to do this work, rather than "going it alone." If you want a letter-writing partner, we will pair you with one. As Hope and Recovery says: "We make a point of not going on Twelve Step calls alone because we don't want to place ourselves in situations that might set us up to act out again.

If you are interested in this work, please write to:

SCA 12-Step Committee Box 1585, Old Chelsea Station New York, NY 10113-0935

"Each indecision brings its own delay and days are lost lamenting over lost days . . . What you can do or think you can, begin it. For boldness has Magic, Power, and Genius in it."

—Goethe

ISO UPDATE

Continued from page 2

The relationship between SLAA, SAA, SA, etc. is different from the AA Sixth Tradition. Also our notion of "attraction, not promotion" may be different than AA. Joe S. (NY) suggested that a committee should be formed for developing SCA Traditions.

INTERFELLOWSHIP

Frank H. discussed the history of this process. The last time the various sexual recovery fellowships met (at that point) was in 1993. Representatives attending the Interfellowship Forum included SLAA and SAA. Some recommendations generated included: common meeting lists; self descriptive statements; sharing literature; coordinating conventions and program meetings; opening conferences to members of other fellowships; continuing dialogue.

UPCOMING ISO MEETING

The next ISO meeting will be held in Milwaukee on the weekend of Feb. 23, 1996. Items on the agenda will include: guidelines (dispersal of information); World Wide Web page; interfellowship; anonymity guide (St. Louis); literature approval; elections and succession issues; SCAnner; SCA Big Book (stories & characteristics); PSA update.

SCANNER SUBSCRIPTIONS

The following is a letter from ISO to the fellowship at large:

Dear SCA member/group and friend of the program:

The SCAnner is a quarterly newsletter publication compiled by members of our fellowship to carry our message of recovery from sexually compulsive behavior. Beginning with the Spring issue of 1995, annual subscriptions will be available. You may receive your annual subscription by completing the subscription form below. Your SCAnner will be mailed to the address indicated, in a sealed evelope, to insure anonymity. Please indicate the number of copies of each issue you would like to receive, and verify your total payment amount. Payments may be received in check or money order made payable to:S.C.A. And mail your subscription to:S.C.A. Pennsicola Place, P.O. Box 138455, Chicago, Illinois 60613

ISO-International Service Organization of SCA

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