

The SCAnner

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SPRING and SUMMER 1997

Dating Issue

DATING

by David A-S, NYC

Dating is one of the tools of the program, though I have always thought of it as some kind of masochistic torture chamber. My sponsor always tells me: "When you go on a date all you have to do is decide whether you want to go on another date." If I like someone all I want to do is have sex. If I don't like someone, then why bother even finishing that cup of coffee with him. This is why dating is one of the tools of the program: it helps me to break down my prejudices. Sometimes it's the fifth sentence, or the fifth minute or the fifth hour in a date that reveals the common link. The addict in me, of course, is never willing to wait that long. My addict always wants to leave five minutes before the miracle. I'm beginning to see dating as one of the miracles of program. I am always keen to hear other people's experiences with this tool. Because you can never know enough about how to decide whether or not you want to go on another date.

In the following articles, Steve G., Aaron L., and Joe F. (All from NYC: must be a dating mecca) share some of their dating insights with us.

(Cont'd on page 4)

EDITOR'S NOTE

Greetings, brothers and sisters in recovery! Summertime and the dating is easy... As was decided at the ISO meeting this year in Los Angeles, *The SCAnner* will now be published twice a year (instead of four times a year). The issues will be double issues, and published in January and June. The first *SCAnner* of the year is a special issue on dating. Once we stop acting out, we try to integrate healthy sexuality into our lives...and that means dating! The SCA Fourfold describes the tool of dating as a "a way of changing the instant gratification habit and getting to know more about ourselves and another person, before committing ourselves to any sexual decisions." In New York City, there is a SCA meeting called the Dating Workshop, which has certainly aided me in my dating adventures. I went from someone who felt he could never approach anyone he was attracted to, to a veritable dating machine (relatively speaking). In this issue, there are three different views on dating: Aaron L., Steve G., and me, Joe F., all of NYC. Aaron relates how "each date can be a learning experience, if nothing else." Steve shares with us the 12 things that he has found out about dating. And finally, in a humorous vein, I have written an article entitled "The Gay Dating Rules." Enjoy and happy dating.

In this issue, there is coverage of the ISO meeting in February in Los Angeles. We also have a *My Story*, from Bill E., of D.C. SCA-D.C. has

been struggling recently to establish an Intergroup and a presence in the fellowship at large, and Bill E. has been at the center of that struggle with his service. For Bill, a pornography addict, his road to recovery included coming out and battling his sexual anorexia. David A-S, NYC, continues his series on the twelve traditions of SCA with an article on Tradition Three. Paul M. checks in with another *Food For Thought* column ruminating on SCA's closing statement, "let there be no criticism of one another, but only love, understanding and companionship." Finally, on a different note, David A-S interviews Blaire M. of NYC in "The Gifts of Recovery" in which Blaire discusses sobriety and his path to gender transition.

I would like to remind everyone to renew your subscription for 1997 if you haven't done so already. It only costs \$2.00 and you'll be sure to receive *The SCAnner*. Please fill out the subscription form in this issue and send it to: SCA, 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 10113-0935

Yours in recovery,

Joe F., Editor, NYC

THE SERENITY PRAYER

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

BY
Joe F. & David A-S
NYC-SCA

Editor's Note: A reminder to Intergroup secretaries: I need your Intergroup meeting minutes if you want any information about your group to go in **The SCanner**. Please send them to me at: **The SCanner**, c/o S.C.A. New York, P.O. Box 1585 Old Chelsea Station, New York, NY 10113-0935.]

INTERGROUP MEETING TIMES

These are the usual scheduled times for intergroup meetings:

Atlanta—last Sunday
Chicago—first Sunday
Los Angeles—third Sunday (odd-number months)
New York—third Sunday
St. Louis—second Monday
San Diego—last Sunday

CALENDAR

The SCA calendar is also available on-line at:

<http://www.scarecovery.org/calendar.html>.

Items are from various Intergroups and the International Service Organization. Please call the local Intergroup to see if plans have changed.

You may submit items for the SCA Calendar by e-mail to

info@sca-recovery.org

or by regular mail to:

SCA
P.O. Box 1585,
Old Chelsea Station
New York, NY 10013-0935

1997

May 23-25—Los Angeles retreat.
May 30-June 1—New York conference
Aug. 8-10—New York retreat on steps 4-6.

Sept. 5-7—Commitment '97, a 12-Step gay/lesbian roundup with SCA participation. Write:
*Commitment, POB 92794,
Milwaukee WI 53202.*

LITERATURE

The Four-Fold and Secret Shame have been translated into Spanish, but still need work. In progress, the Blue Book. SCA literature distribution has now moved from L.A. to Milwaukee. Paul N, from Milwaukee, is taking over from Mark S. (LA). Thank you Mark for your service over the years! The new address for literature requests is:

*SCA/ISO Literature
P.O. Box 1089
Milwaukee, WI 53201-1089*

CALL FOR CORRESPONDENTS

ISO has established an e-mail conference-call system that includes members from many cities. If your city is not represented and you are willing to do service in "carrying the message" to people at meetings in your area, please e-mail to info@sca-recovery.org and let us know. Here are the cities currently represented: New York, Los Angeles, San Diego, St. Louis, Chicago, Milwaukee, Washington.

WEB NEWS

For those with Internet Relay Chat, you might be interested in this new meeting which grew out of our web-based meeting.

**Wednesday, 5pm (EDT),
irc server: us.undernet.org
channel: #scameeting.**

There are now two ongoing meetings on the Web site, a Topic meeting, and a Feed-Back meeting. The User name is

SCA, and the password is HEAL. San Diego is the first Intergroup on the Web! The address is: <http://www.sca-recovery.org/cities/sandiego/>

NEW MEETINGS

New SCA meetings have been established in Palm Springs, Erie (PA)...and Tremelo, Belgium.

SAN DIEGO

Rick A., Intergroup secretary reports: "The conference here in San Diego (Nov. 15-17, 1996) was a hit. We had lots of people from San Diego, San Francisco, Los Angeles and Sacramento. Everything went just great and we even had enough money left over to fund next year's conference - we're hoping to get a good head start, this time. Everybody from both SCA and SLAA really enjoyed the workshops - we all really enjoyed spending the time together and I think that both groups benefited quite a bit from the mixed crowd. One guy from Sacramento who had gotten information from ISO showed up and had a really good time - he even stayed for the beach meeting on Sunday."

"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, P.O. Box 1585 Old Chelsea Station New York, NY 10113-0935

NEW YORK, NEW YORK**SCA-ANON?**

In December NY Intergroup passed a motion to remove SCA-Anon from the NY meeting list because it was a transgression of Tradition Six. In February after further discussion the SCA-Anon meetings were re-instated on the NY meeting list.

SCA NY has now established a local phone line for inquiries from prospective members.

TRADITION 11

A workshop was held in March on Tradition 11 for the possibility of including gathered insights in the SCA Big Book.

ELECTIONS

Election of New Office bearers was conducted at the March Intergroup

Chairperson: Paul W

Treasurer: Frank C

Secretary: Joshua S

Special Events: Michael C, Orison A

12 Step Committee: Michael G., Lyssia H

Meeting List: Jay B

Phone Line: Alex G

Distribution: Rob S

Literature: David W

Retreat: David N., Brian H., John W

Archivist: Saul M

ISO positions were held over till it was cleared up which two of the three positions were to be re-newed for another year. NY Intergroup also agreed to extend the term of the Retreat Chairs to two years and to stagger the terms so that in any given year no more than two of the three shall be up for election.

WHAT IS INTERGROUP

David N. passed out a document called "What is Intergroup" drawn from archival Intergroup minutes. An ad hoc committee was formed to discuss and augment the description of Intergroup's and its officers' duties and functions and its role in relationship to the meetings.

CONFERENCE

New York is preparing for their 11th Annual conference on the weekend of May 30th. The theme this year is

"Opening Our Heart, Lifting Our Spirit". Vito A. and Armando will be co-chairingis once again chairing. Friday night will be the opening meeting, with late night entertainment provided by The SCA Cabaret. Saturday and Sunday will include workshops, a promises meeting, a gratitude meeting, with a dance on Saturday night (Michael C., dj), and SCA show and pot luck dinner on Sunday night. Hope you can make it.

RETREAT

August 8th-10th will the 18th semi-annual New York retreat held in Pawling, New York, a short distance upstate from New York City. The theme of the retreat will be "Knowing Ourselves: The Journey to Freedom (Working Steps Four, Five and Six)"

CHICAGOLAND**SOCIAL NEWS**

Eric H and Anthony P, social co-divas report that the Ice Skating Social was another fabulous success. The next social, an alternate Valentine's Party is scheduled as a pot luck for February 15 at Doug B's. On March 22, there will be a Whirly Ball/Bumper Cars event.

RETREAT

Chicagoland 'S' Retreat dates:

Summer retreat: August 8-10

Winter Retreat: December 26-28

INTERGROUP SCHEDULING

Intergroup meetings for the rest of the year are: April 6, May 4, June 1, August 3, September 7, October 5, November 2, December 7, January 4.

12-STEP WORK

Terry C presented 12 Step out reach letters from Chicagoland SCA modeled after LA SCA letter. One letter is to mental health professionals and the other is to the legal/law enforcement community. Each letter is designed to raise awareness about sexual recovery programs in Chicago area.

MEET ME IN ST. LOUIS

Jim M. reports, "In the spirit of the Interfellowship Forum, we started an

ongoing 12-Step Workshop on Wednesdays from 7:30 pm to 9:00 pm in St. Louis. We put out flyers to all the S-Recovery Fellowships and March 5th was our first meeting. 26 participants showed up representing all 4 Fellowships. What a blessing! Our plan is to work through The Gentle Path by Patrick Carnes by offering a variety of meeting formats, exercises and group processes. Although SCA-St. Louis is sponsoring this, it is truly an interfellowship workshop. Our plan is to give people the space, tools, support and education to work through the Steps. We want to stay focused on the solution to our problem. The idea came from Bill S., an SAA member from Indianapolis, who has been doing this with great success there for several years. They are currently working on formalizing their process to share their experiences. If anyone has any questions, let me know. Please keep us in your prayers. I'll keep you updated. My best to all, Jim M."

MILWAUKEE**MILWAUKEE AIDS PROJECT**

The Milwaukee Intergroup was contacted by the Milwaukee Aids Project (MAP) to talk about creating a referral system of their clients to SCA. Paul N. met with MAP to inform them about SCA so that the organization can create their own referral process. There will be no official affiliation between SCA and MAP.

SOCIAL NEWS

On April 19 the Milwaukee SCA hosted a potluck dinner at Scot H.'s house, followed by a trip to the Galano Club for a dance. Sixteen members attended the dinner with several more members meeting the group at the dance. Everyone soberly boogied the night away.

OPEN SCA MEETING

Susan F. will be the speaker at an open SCA meeting held at 4:00 pm on June 8 at the Galano Club in Milwaukee. Her story will be preceded by a cake and coins for all SCA members celebrating 12 step membership and sobriety.

(Cont'd on page 13)

♥ Dating ♥

by Aaron L. (NYC)

At a recent meeting, someone shared that it is often a good idea to have no expectations on a first date. I heard this at an appropriate time when I was dating a lot and getting discouraged. I would feel rejected if I didn't end the date by either entering immediately into a relationship with that person, or at least being physical on some level. But, unfortunately, it often takes me a long time to learn things. On rare occasions, I did form immediate contact with someone on a first date. Though this might have lead to a long-term situation, it was rarely a healthy one. Usually it would last only a few weeks. But my sexual addiction again and again wants me to believe otherwise. I forget that relationships don't happen quickly. It's like trying to use the same procedure for making a cake from a Betty Crocker box, while trying to make a cake from scratch. The latter takes a lot of care, preparation, and patience. This could explain why I'm not much of a cook.

Around the time that I heard this bit of advice, I had just gone on a blind date. We were both perhaps moving too quickly—but in opposite directions. We were having a very nice, chatty conversation when I realized that I was very attracted to him. I had plans later to meet up with a friend, but I was ready to cancel them at the last minute and spend the rest of the evening with this person. But an hour later, he informed me that though he had a nice time, he decided, to put it literally, that he didn't want a relationship with me. He didn't seem to want to waste even a second longer with me. So I wished him a good life and we parted ways. My first thought was mild devastation that he wasn't attracted to me. Then, I wondered why he didn't want to even spend time with someone who could

turn out to be a good friend. We did have a lot in common and had a great time talking. But I guess with him, it was all or nothing.

Then, I realized that we were both in the same place. He was ready to end things immediately, and I was ready to start things immediately. Maybe I gave off a vibe that let him know that I was really interested, and he wanted to let me know right off. Maybe he felt that he had enough friends. And here I was,

I don't feel that I can progress emotionally and spiritually unless I put myself out there, with the risk of getting hurt. But I develop a thicker skin over time. I can accept that if someone doesn't want to get involved with me, it doesn't mean that I'm an unattractive, uninteresting person. Not everyone is for everyone.

either ready to enter into a commitment, or at least hop into bed with him. I appreciated the fact that at least he was straightforward with me. So I knew where I stood and didn't have any expectations. Unfortunately, a lot of people would just dodge you and not return phone calls, for fear of confrontation—something I can certainly relate to.

Each date can be a learning experience, if nothing else. I met someone in my other program who I had seen around for years. I finally asked him out on a date to a Christmas party at my sponsor's house. After having dinner beforehand, and then walking over to my sponsor's apartment, he felt underdressed and freezing. I lent him my sweater. The evening didn't go in a direction that I had hoped, and when we parted ways at the subway, he ran off to get his train back to New Jersey before I had a chance to get my sweater back. I assumed that he was a con artist and that the whole purpose of the evening was a plan, on his part, to get something from me. Well, he called me on New

Year's Day to wish me a Happy New Year. He wanted to make plans to get together, in part, so he could return my sweater. So we went out dancing one night. Later over coffee, I started to get to know him better. He mentioned about taking things slowly so he could get to trust people. I guess I have a hard time trusting people, too, since I was so quick to assume that he was a thief because he had borrowed my sweater when he was freezing and had not wanted to become intimate right away.

I don't feel that I can progress emotionally and spiritually unless I put myself out there, with the risk of getting hurt. But I develop a thicker skin over time. I can accept that if someone doesn't want to get involved with me, it doesn't mean that I'm an unattractive, uninteresting person. Not everyone is for everyone. One of the disappointing facts in life is that often I'm attracted to someone who isn't attracted to me back, and vice-versa.

Also, some people, including myself at times, will hook up with anyone just because they have a need to be involved. Sometimes I'll flirt with someone that making them think that I am interested, just because they're available and are interested in me. I get turned on by the flattery and attention. Then, if I realize that I'm not really interested, I've given them the wrong impression and then have to explain myself in the hope of getting myself safely out of the situation. This leads to unfair resentments on my part because the other person is not someone who I am really interested in.

I was living with someone for three and a half years who was often verbally abusive and manipulative in various ways. I was so afraid of being alone, and of change, that I stayed with this person, even though the situation was unhealthy. I thought relationships were supposed to be abusive and that I wouldn't be able to get anyone else. Well, I was wrong. Being unattached is better, I discovered, than being in an unhappy relationship. There are appropriate people for me out there that I'm worthy of, when I'm ready for them.

Dating

by Steve G., NYC

1 When I'm dating someone I like, I cross about every line there is—being withdrawn and being effusive, talking too much and talking too little, being too vulnerable and being too unavailable. I try to remember it's all part of the learning process (about myself and the other guy). The bottom line is that if I do something "wrong" and the guy runs off - is that the kind of person I want to be with? If I can't make mistakes, what kind of straight jacket am I fitting myself for? Related to this, when the pressure is on - and this means another date with someone I genuinely like - I try to tell myself that all I have to do is show up and stay present. I don't have to be the best entertainment in town. I don't have to be knowledgeable about every topic he brings up. I don't have to spend the rest of my life with the guy. Sometimes I even manage to remember that I'm dating to find out about him too, to see if he's worth my investment, if he can show up for me.

2 Dating unearths aspects of myself which I can't usually access on my own during the everyday casual contacts of my life. It's great to get in touch with these new sides of myself, to have new feelings, to learn more of what makes me tick. It's also scary when I discover that a new side is awfully similar to Glenn Close's character in *Fatal Attraction*. Not to worry, just don't act on it and refer to #1 above.

3 I've come to believe that the confidence and maturity and openness that are part of being ready for a relationship happen on their own time, in their own, often inscrutable, way. (It's maddening not being in control!) So in the meantime, date. It prepares me for other parts of the process of getting to know someone and letting myself be known.

4 Dating exposes me to being rejected and rejecting others. This helps me lighten up in terms of the whole process. When someone tells me he doesn't want to continue to see me, I try not to take it so personally. I much prefer directness and honesty over the fade-out technique of ending a dating situation. I practice saying things like, "I've enjoyed getting to know you, but I don't want to pursue this in a romantic direction." I feel a lot better when I'm direct like this, instead of spending weeks dreading the call and feeling duplicitous. In the long run,

I feel better when I've been dealt with directly, rather than being left to wonder, wonder, wonder.

5 What happened when I decided to work the tool of dating? Why, I turned into - surprise - a compulsive dater! I found this out after meeting a guy that I really liked, and then calling up the other three guys I was going out with and telling them that I couldn't date them anymore. All of a sudden I had a whole lot of time on my hands. I didn't have much motivation to go anywhere, do anything social, because I didn't really want to meet someone else. And so once again, I had to face that hole in myself. Instead of having the search fill up my time and mental energy, I have tried to sit with myself. And this continues to be, sometimes more, sometimes less of a challenge.

6 Dating is practice. Case in point: Last fall, I met this guy. I thought we had some possibilities. After a couple of dates, he left the country for ten days. I couldn't contact him, I couldn't do anything about the situation - time and distance were totally out of my control. I didn't know how I was going to get through the next ten minutes, much less ten whole days! Well, I did get through it somehow, and we dated for another four weeks. But eventually he came to the realization that he wasn't available (oh, that again!) More recently, a guy I dated and I decided to take it slowly. So I often had a week between dates. Since I had survived that earlier experience of no contact, I was able to weather the slow pace a lot more easily.

7 I've spent a lot of time talking myself out of believing early warning signs. I try to remember something I once heard in the rooms: take a look at the guy you're with right now, early on, and tell yourself that this is how he's going to be five years from now. Not to expect him to smell differently, listen better, stimulate you more, anything much differently than he does now. (One friend says you should expect the things that bug you to get worse.) Now, would you still want to date him?

8 On the other hand, there are times when its best not to jump to conclusions. With the guy I'm currently dating, some rough interactions early on scared me in terms of our compatibility. But I had decided to stick with it a bit longer, and with

good results. How to tell when its a #7 or when its a #8? For me, #8 was about trusting my gut feeling, #7 was about distrusting my gut feelings.

9 I know the way to my heart is supposed to be through my stomach (a good meal doesn't hurt), but the real pathway to my heart is through my ears, and vice versa. Its amazing how consistently it happens, and I'm not sure how it works, but I find that communication is the best way to get closer to someone. And the harder a topic is to address, the closer we're going to be once it comes out in the open and we start to address it.

10 Another dichotomy! Early dating relationships can't necessarily handle "letting it all hang out" in the name of absolute honesty. It's like the two of you are creating a choreographed piece. A dancer in a duet doesn't go on stage and let his body do everything it could or might want to do. Instead, his performance is in service to the whole piece. I think dating is like that as well. After all, you are building something together. And anything which builds trust and safety is about being mindful of what's going to serve the duet, not just one's own needs.

11 My therapist once said that a relationship is about finding someone with whom you can feel happy, beautiful, strong, funny, and loved; and sad, bored, frustrated, ugly, weak, ambivalent, and distant, as well. That helps me. Because the moment I feel I'm not living the Hollywood fantasy, I think something must be grievously wrong with me, him, or us. In fact, the ability to have those difficult feelings with someone else is a lot more intimate and positive, in terms of the relationship, than thinking that a relationship is about sailing along on the good feelings only.

12 Most often, I pat myself on the back for being in the game. I just try to put aside my insecurities (I keep a forklift handy for just such occasions) and put myself out there. What else is there really to do? I like to think that there's a next step in front of me to take. It's there now, and it will be there later, but there's no way to avoid or skip getting to the other steps further down the line. So I set aside my fears and take that next step—as soon as I know what it is.

The Gifts of Recovery

Interview with Blaire M. (NYC)

Conducted by David A-S (NYC)

Recovery affects us all differently. Sometimes it gives us things we've never had before sometimes it takes away things we thought we would have forever. The important thing about recovery is that it gives us the strength and resources to be able to deal with change in a dignified and mature way. It is this which makes us able to recover. This is not possible when we walk the quicksand route of acting out. By acting out, Blaire M. lost dignity and status, that which allows us to build our lives. Since being in recovery, Blaire (formerly Steve M.) has been able to tread the path to gender transition. I interviewed him recently at the Gay and Lesbian Center in New York.

DAVID A-S: What events brought you into recovery?

BLAIRE M: I was in seminary at the time. It had been hell in seminary. I was the only openly gay person (at the time) there. We had our own gay circle and most of them had left so I was there by myself when I came back the first day, I had my boxes and called, and said I needed to be picked up. We had 2 feet of snow and they said that I would have to get a taxi. And I was like okay fine. So I was really realizing that I was repeating past situations with other men, that what I was doing in seminary was staying in an abusive relationship. I knew something was wrong so I started to go to Al-Anon. Within six months of Al-Anon, I knew I was acting out, so I went to my first SCA meeting in March after a friend suggested it. It was a very big meeting. It was the beginners meeting and I wasn't prepared for it. I was hearing a lot of stories and saying this is not me at all, I got to get out of here. I said it just loud enough for the person next to me to hear. He told me to just identify

with the feelings and not the facts. If it hadn't been for that person, I probably would never have gone back.

DAVID: Have you found recovery to be difficult or easy?

BLAIRE: Bittersweet. Both. Recovery has got me into the National Honor Society. It has opened doors for me at school. It has opened a relationship which has lasted nine months and it has got me to get into my feelings to experience the idea and identity of being a transgendered person. Without recovery I probably would not have gotten that far.

DAVID: How has recovery taken you on the road to gender transition?

BLAIRE: Well, I started dealing with feelings and uncovered a lot of them—about child sexual abuse and incest. As I got further along in recovery, I would feel that whether I was having sex with men in an intimate situation, or in an acting out place, that there was something that wasn't quite right. I had to ask myself what's not quite right. Someone suggested I should go to the Gender Identity Project and talk about my feelings of not quite feeling male. So I did and as I got further into it, I've started to identify myself as transgendered and no longer gay and that has been really powerful. It's also brought a lot of hardship into my relationship.

DAVID: Do you feel comfortable with this decision or are you still having second thoughts and doubts?

BLAIRE: I still don't feel comfortable with it. I don't know how far I want to go with it, or what my Higher Power has in store for me with this transition. But I'm taking it one day at a time and I'm watching feelings, making sure that I try to stay

present. For me, my transition is my goal and that's what's keeping me sober.

DAVID: Do you feel supported in your decision to change your gender?

BLAIRE: I do. I haven't told my family, and that's because I'm afraid of physical violence. But I have got a lot of support from the recovery program. They have all been unanimously supportive. My boyfriend and I are going through a hard transition with it now but, we've come this far, and we want to try to see it through.

DAVID: What kind of issues and difficulties have you had to face as a result of your gender transition?

BLAIRE: Well, first of all there are no laws to protect me whereas there are laws to protect gay men. I could be thrown out of a job at a moment's notice. It's technically legal to do that.

DAVID: Because you're transgendered?

BLAIRE: Yes.

DAVID: But you're still a human being.

BLAIRE: Right but it doesn't apply to transgendered persons. We have to litigate a lot to make sure that everyone is treated as a human being, and equally.

DAVID: And other difficulties you've encountered?

BLAIRE: Clothes shopping as well as relationships and identifying where I want to go. To feel where I want to go with the transition, because there are a lot of days when I want the transition to be over. I want to push it and I want to push it fast, and just like recovery it's everything taken slowly and taken in small doses.

DAVID: When you say you don't know how far you want to go what exactly do you mean by that?

BLAIRE: There are some transgendered people who will have the operation and become anatomical women and I'm not sure where I am in the process. I know I'm somewhere in the gender transition spectrum but I'm not sure where yet. I actually started on gender transition before recovery. I had a boyfriend for six years and we were living in a small isolated town in southern New Jersey. He said that it would attract too much attention, and that he really didn't want me female. He wanted a man and a masculine man, so if I wanted to do that I could leave. So I kind of put it on hold and thought that maybe it was just a phase I was going through.

DAVID: But in recovery you found the strength to pick it up again and pursue it?

BLAIRE: Yes.

DAVID: What things in recovery have given you the strength to pursue this further?

BLAIRE: The literature. The literature definitely helps. I read Secret Shame and The Twelve Steps and I do a lot of daily meditations on the twelve steps with recovery literature. I also do a gay and lesbian meditation book on gay and lesbian pride. That helps.

DAVID: I'm intrigued. I've read the same literature you've mentioned but I haven't felt like doing gender transition. So I'm just wondering what specific things in the literature helped you to make that decision.

BLAIRE: It talks a lot about getting angry, and not wanting to deal with situations and running away from ourselves. That acting out is all about denying our feelings, or putting them on hold or stuffing them. I've stuffed my feelings for far too long. It's time to acknowledge me as the person I am and put myself first.

DAVID: Have you had any kind of shocking experience, people who've turned away from you and haven't wanted to have anything to do with you as a result of your decision?

BLAIRE: I have noticed some people change towards me but that is their own stuff. But very few. Most have been embrace-ful and have honestly thanked me for having the courage to be who I am in recovery and not bottling it up.

DAVID: Can you tell me a little about yourself before recovery so we can get a full picture.

BLAIRE: I'm the oldest of three boys. I

As I got into High School I was beaten up a lot for being gay, for being effeminate. Relationships were always about not letting people in to see the whole of me, only letting them see parts of me. On the outside I looked like I had the perfect life. I was in many groups in high school. I had a decent average. I was planning to go to college. I had decent jobs, but there was always something missing. And I was always trying to fill it up with men. At this point in my life I had never really acted out until the end of my six year relationship. I was about 22 or 23 at the time, and I was in so much pain. My ex and I used to go to bookstores, and go and pick up magazines. I would see the booths and stuff and wonder what was

back there. After we broke up, I found out what was back there and that became my life. I always maintained a perfect image on the outside but whenever I felt any kind of change in my life or, anything upsetting, those kinds of places would be my comfort.

"[SCA literature] talks a lot about getting angry, and not wanting to deal with situations and running away from ourselves. That acting out is all about denying our feelings, or putting them on hold or stuffing them. I've stuffed my feelings for far too long. It's time to acknowledge me as the person I am and put myself first."

was born in St Louis. I was brought up in Mid-Western and Polish values. A lot of men not showing feelings and a lot of abuse and abandonment from my father. I never really developed well as a child. I was a loner for the most part growing up. Had very few friends and when I had friends I clung onto them, really tight, so eventually it forced them to let go. I didn't have a relationship with a man until I was eighteen, but I knew quite early, around 8 years old that there was something different about me and I had always assumed that it was about being gay because my father had said that I was. I had a really warm relationship with my mother and grandmother, but at family events I would isolate and I would not play with my cousins. Even growing up I lived in a neighborhood where mostly old people lived, so there wasn't a lot of childhood peer group interaction.

And then this year in March, I came into SCA and really started to deal with things. My sobriety has been ups and downs. When I started transition I was able to stay sober for 60 days. As I went further in program the slips became more frequent, and when I started identifying as a transgender person and really started dealing with feelings of that, slips became more frequent. And now the slips aren't so bad. I do have a period of sobriety. And I'm thankful for that, and I try to remember each day that the thing that keeps me sane is working on a relationship with my Higher Power. Sometimes the feelings that come up are very uncomfortable but I can make a call or write them down and remember that this is all part of the transition and recovery. If I block these feelings I'm going to keep myself in a complacent spot and that may prevent me from going where my Higher Power wants me to go.

Food For Thought

by Paul M., NYC

"Talk to each other, reason things out with someone else, let there be no criticism of one another, but only love, understanding and companionship..." except with a vicious pack of addicts in a coffee shop after a meeting!

Forgive me dear, kind, gentle readers. I realize I should not tamper with our hallowed, often quoted (yet seldom heeded) Closing Statement. Being of a delicate emotional nature, after a recent 4th Step meeting, during which I tried to visualize myself as Joan of Arc about to bravely face the terrible armies of rigorous self examination. The thought of a program wide Group Conscience simply proved too strenuous.

Unfortunately, I hated the way I looked in Joan's dowdy little boy page boy outfit. The metaphor was shattered and I have taken to my bed. I fear I am isolating. My pc is wrinkling my "Martha Stewart for K-Mart" duvet and the Jalapeno Cheeto with sour cream dip crumbs are making me itch. But enough about me.

The SCA Closing Statement is a clear and succinct guide on how to best exist in program. The statement calls for confidentiality, sexual propriety and most importantly compassion among members. Simple and logical. You would think that we would take his little treatise to heart as words to live by. Well, wouldn't you?

At any given meeting, it is easy to sympathize with that well-built all-American boy with the twinkling blue eyes ("Isn't he dreamy?"), or have compassion for that shapely young lady in the mini-skirt and tube-top ("She's a nice girl, but who dressed her?"). Don't get all bent out of shape—we all do it. Just as easily, it is not a problem to empathize with the person

sitting next to you, who in the troughs of some searing personal pain, has shared something that has touched you in a manner that has changed your life. That is one of the greatest gifts of program.

Now ask yourself, my little recovery commandos, what is your reaction to the person sitting on your other side who twitches like a dead chicken, speaking in tongues and drooling all over your new Gucci shoes? Granted that it is an extreme example....who can afford Gucci?

There are all sorts of people in program: intelligent and stupid, beautiful and ugly, angry and docile, controlling and codependant, each person a spiritual being on a human path to their own special brand of pathology. It is necessary to

direct result of that shared pain, especially when we have not taken a deep enough look at our own inventories.

There are indeed people in program that may be dangerous to us, for a variety of reasons. We may need to avoid them or to set some very specific boundaries. That is a healthy thing. We need to make conscious, informed decisions as to whom we let into our lives and who we need to keep at a distance. This ability to determine the appropriateness of new relationships is a skill, honed in program, that will become essential in our lives outside program.

As suggested in the Closing Statement, talking things out is a powerful tool to facilitate understanding others. It is so very easy to be offended, or put off by,

someone else and then to walk away and do some serious dissing over our double cheese burger, large fries and diet Coke. It is quite another matter to be present enough to express, without rancor, to the offending person why you are so offended. As terrifying as that may seem, it is highly probable that this person may be receptive

"It is so very easy to be offended...by someone else and then to walk away and do some serious dissing over our double cheese burger, large fries and diet Coke. It is quite another matter to be present enough to express, without rancor, to the offending person why you are so offended."

drag these pathologies from their festering hiding places and to place them into a peer group, where with some kindness, compassion and honest feedback, one can hope perhaps to heal.

It is not realistic to think that we will bind with absolutely every person in SCA, with each of us assimilating into some sort of program Borg collective. That didn't even work on Star Trek. What we can do is look past the outward quirks and try to see the recovering being underneath.

We share a commonality of pain and suffering that has left us scared and wounded. The struggle to overcome this pain is what brings us together in this fellowship. It is tragic that we disparage our fellows for personality traits that are the

to the input and thank you for pointing out some heretofore unknown quirk. Think of the possibilities that this kind of proactive communication has to offer. Think of the misunderstandings that could turn into real understanding and the depth of honesty gained.

Now, discretion will dictate that you not approach that rageaholic who is foaming at the mouth and beating a folding chair against the wall, about the string of words he used in the middle of his share. Nor do I suggest that you go around pointing out every transgression or foible that you deem irritating in order to save your program fellows the inconvenience of figuring it out for themselves. Codependence is never pretty. There are times when it is

best to let well enough alone just leave someone to their free self expression. You do not have to be friends with everyone. And if you can not find any common ground or redeemable features with someone, try just acknowledging them as another person on the path who is simply at a different point in his recovery to you. You don't have to trash them.. Everybody has something worthwhile to add to the program. Those members who make us uncomfortable, often are the ones we learn the most from.

Gossiping is truly a pointless, understandably enjoyable pastime. It only serves to isolate us and highlights our

pathologies. All of us, at one time or another, have said something that upset those around us or displayed some tendency that was grist for the gossip mill. We all have our human weaknesses. Unfortunately, gossiping and criticizing are entrenched behaviors. Yet it would truly be a shame to let our high-minded Closing Statement deteriorate into a cynical sophism. Consider, the next time you savage somebody, if your inventory as all it should be. have you been nominated for an SCA poster child? Before you trash the next victim remember this: let ye who is without pathology cast the first Big Book.

THOUGHTS FROM MILWAUKEE

by Susan F. (Milwaukee)

The other night I went to an open AA meeting. At the meeting seven people celebrated sobriety dates complete with seven separate cakes and seven separate singings of Happy Birthday. I've never seen such care and attention given to an anniversary before. I swear to God, I started crying (not a loud, wailing sort of thing, but a quiet private, sad thing). I was touched by the whole experience, and I felt sad because this has never been done for me. It's not so much about me though. It's the sense of family, care and inclusion that came with the ceremony. I've always joked that I wished I was an alcoholic. Alcoholics seem to care a lot about each other.

They'll stop by another alcoholic's house to pick her or him up for a meeting. They'll let complete strangers sleep on the floor. They'll do almost anything to keep each other and themselves sober. They're like real family. I felt sad that I'd never seen the cake ceremony or any other celebration like it at an "S" meeting. I felt sad about all of the sober time I'd never recognized with that same sort of fervor, awe and excitement. I felt sad about the lack

of fervor, awe and excitement around me. Things are much more inspired in the Milwaukee meetings now (there's a strong group of people in the meetings who are very motivated and gung ho). But still, there are no cakes in our meetings and I myself would love to receive one.

When I got home that night I talked to an SCA program friend about the affect this celebration had on me. The next day I went to AA central office and bought my friend a one-year anniversary coin (he didn't announce this anniversary in the meeting that I remember, but he told me). When I gave him the coin at our Sunday night SCA meeting, I thanked him for coming to the meeting one day at a time, letting him know that his presence helped me to stay sober. I hope that one coin will start an avalanche of Birthday Cakes in the Milwaukee SCA meetings, both literally and figuratively. Each day of sobriety deserves a little bit of singing and a cake, along with a lot of awe and fervor. Sometimes I have a hard time remembering that. Frankly, I think we all deserve a moment of awe and fervor. Don't you?

PEN PAL PROGRAM EXPANDS

By John F., National Coordinator

With the entry of SCA onto the Internet, our "pen pal" program has gone there, too. If you would be interested in this service, we ask you to make a commitment to send one letter a month. Here's how it works:

1) We pair you up with another member of SCA. We ask that both SCA members have at least one year in the fellowship and six months on a recovery plan.

2) The two SCA members are paired with one "loner," someone who lives too far from an SCA meeting to attend.

3) The SCA members decide for themselves how to divide up the work. Sometimes one will do the writing while the other will read over the letters to be on guard against inadvertent provocation, intriguing, etc. Sometimes the two will alternate months. You decide.

4) To maintain anonymity, we do not send out identifying information, including home addresses or identifiable e-mail names. (Anonymous e-mail is O.K.)

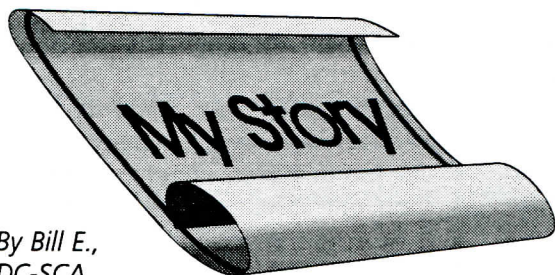
If you are interested in the e-mail version of the "pen pal" program, write to: info@sca-recovery.org.

If you want to join the regular mail version of the program, write:

SCA Pen Pal

P.O. Box 1585,
Old Chelsea Station
New York, NY 10113-0935

Bill's Story



By Bill E.,
DC-SCA

I grew up in an Ozzie and Harriet household, but my family was, in reality, more like Ordinary People. My parents were very negative about sex. When it came time for me to learn about the "birds and the bees," I was given a book to read, and then asked later if I had read it and whether I had any questions. Of course I didn't, and that was the end of any discussion on the subject. In fact, I was shocked to learn how children were made, because I couldn't imagine my parents doing that the four times it would have taken for my siblings and I to be born. Like many television families of the 50s and early 60s, they had separate beds; as soon as it was feasible they had separate bedrooms.

When I was 11 my father developed heart disease. The doctor told him to stop smoking, eat a low fat diet, exercise daily, and move to a warmer climate. My father complied. My mother began to treat him as an invalid, and she began to treat me, her eldest, as the man of the house. I went from being a somewhat bratty, attention-grabbing little kid to being a compliant, fairly serious, adolescent.

In my early teenage years, we moved a couple of times in my early teenage years. Each time, I felt as though I was not accepted by the other kids. I

became a "joiner," getting involved with church and school groups. These got me out of the house, but I still felt like an outsider. I didn't date, and my mother said I would date "when I was ready." In the meantime, she made negative comments about any girl I was interested in. I was a theater buff, but my parents were not very supportive. They thought that I would be involved with the wrong kind of people.

When I went to college, I thought I had escaped, but my life immediately went into chaos. I pledged a fraternity because doing so was important to my parents. Here, I really felt like an outsider. I was afraid to socialize with the women that the fraternity would invite to parties. So I would tend bar, get drunk, and eventually pass out. Ultimately, the fraternity kicked me out,

"I've found that opening myself up to other people has been the most difficult part of recovery for me...Sex with another person is a scary proposition."

because they said I didn't fit in. My grades suffered, I flunked out of school and had to move back into my parents' home. I worked hard to pull up my grades and move back to college; eventually I graduated with my class. I tried to date, but I was always nervous. I never had more than one date with any woman I asked out. My best friend in college was an openly gay man. I felt like so liberal! Eventually, my best friend made a pass, and we had sex. It was my first time, and I was very nervous, but I

quickly "fell in love" with him. Soon thereafter, we took a trip together and stopped at his parents' house for the night. They had only a sofa bed in the living room, so the two of us slept there. I started to fool around with my new love, and he whispered, "Not here." I took this as a rejection. The next day, after we left, I told him that I had given my sexuality some thought and had decided that I wasn't gay and didn't want to have sex with him anymore.

I left college and soon thereafter discovered pornography. At first, it was reading the letters in *Penthouse*; the pictures of naked women didn't interest me unless there was a man in the picture as well. Later, I started sneaking into adult bookstores in parts of the city where I would otherwise never go. There, I bought mostly gay and bisexual pornography, because it seemed more forbidden and would provide an extra thrill. Looking back, I realize that pornography began as an element of healthy sexuality for me, because it let me know that sex was healthy and that

people actually enjoyed having sex. But, it also had its addictive elements, and I was definitely addicted. I needed to masturbate to pornography every night in order to sleep. On Saturday nights, if I had no plans, I often would travel to the bookstores to get my fix, return home, and spend the entire evening lost in a reverie of sexual partners who were beautiful and who would never reject me. During this time, I almost never had sex with another person. I counted only six

sexual experiences total before getting into recovery. I would try to date women, but inevitably I would be unsuccessful. So, I threw myself into my work. I became very good at my job. In fact, my career was my life.

I hit bottom in other 12-step fellowships long before getting into sexual recovery. In fact, dealing with my sex addiction was the last house on the block, the one that I really didn't want to face. But, I tried abstaining on my own, and it didn't work. So, I got myself a

sponsor and started the program in earnest.

My sponsor was a wise man. He asked me to write out what behaviors I wanted to abstain from. Having been around meetings for a while, I wrote down a laundry list of everything I'd heard people talk about, including a desire to abstain from having sex with men. When I read my list to my sponsor, he asked me if I had ever done most of these things. I said, no, but I was afraid I'd start doing them if I abstained from pornography. My sponsor replied, "Then put them on your list only after they actually become compulsive for you." He also challenged me about including sex with other men. He said, "Are you sure you're not gay?" I had to admit that I wasn't sure. He then strongly suggested that I leave myself open to having sex with men.

Abstaining from pornography was one of the most difficult things I've ever done. The first several months were very painful, and I wanted to give up and go back to it constantly. I went to meetings at least four times a week, and I went out for fellowship after each meeting so I could talk with others and identify with what they had to say. My sponsor and I talked regularly and had periodic meetings to talk through and work on the Steps together. After about six months the desire to use pornography lessened, and after nine months it was gone. About that same time I started being open to dating men. I went to a bisexual support group for a while, and one of the women and I had sex. It was not satisfying to me at all. I decided that I needed to put my energies into dating men exclusively.

I've found that opening myself up to other people has been the most difficult part of recovery for me. At first, I only met men on computer bulletin boards. Then, in consultation with my sponsor, I decided to back off from those so I would be forced to meet men in person. I did some volunteer work for gay organizations and started going to SCA (I

had begun the program in SAA). I began to feel more comfortable around gay men. *Sex with another person was (and to some extent still is) a scary proposition.* I forced myself to have sexual encounters to help remove some of the mystery. The right side of my SCA recovery plan allows me to have any kind of sex with another person, and though I prefer to have sex as a result of dating that hasn't always been the case. In fact, I've probably ended up doing most of the things I originally wanted to abstain from. I have made some mistakes along the way, but I have also learned a lot. My sponsor says that he

doesn't think I'm sexually anorexic anymore, but I still have some vestiges of that condition. It is difficult for me not to feel as though I will be rejected if I act interested in someone else sexually. I am also afraid of men I'm attracted to. I have been known to date men I'm not attracted to, because they're safer. I have lots of friends and

acquaintances in the gay community. I am relatively comfortable being out, but I still have not been in a relationship. The longest dating period I had was four months, with a person I met at an SCA conference. Therapy helps a lot. So do meetings. But I get frustrated thinking, *"When am I finally going to stop working on me and get to start working on us?"* So far that one hasn't been answered.

My greatest fear is that I will be alone and unloved as I grow old. Recently, I learned that I had inherited my father's heart disease. I had major surgery. My sister came to be with me while I was in the hospital. I thanked her for coming, saying, "I couldn't have done it without you." She replied, "Yes you could have. All the friends you have in your life would have found a way to support you through this." She is right. It humbles me to know that while I may never find that special "someone," I have a lot of "someones" who care about me and who will care for me, if I will only let them.

"When am I finally going to stop working on me and get to start working on us?"



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

SCA International Service Organizations
P.O. Box 1585,
Old Chelsea Station, NY, NY 10113-0935

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

Web: <http://www.sca-recovery.org/>
E-mail: info@sca-recovery.org

SCA INFORMATION LINES
(recorded message and call-back)

New York.....(212) 439-1123
Los Angeles.....(310) 895-8659
Chicago.....(312) 935-3573
Orange County, CA.....(714) 664-5105
San Diego, CA.....(619) 685-8540
Midland/Odessa, TX.....(915) 560-5240
Milwaukee, WI.....(414) 299-0755
St. Louis, MO.....(314) 253-4085
Phoenix, AZ.....(602) 340-3081

SPANISH:

Los Angeles.....(213)-368-4814
New York.....(212) 388-9124

SCA is not affiliated with SLAA or SAA, but maintains a list of meetings in cities and countries without SCA meetings. Contact ISO for this information at least 2 weeks in advance. The following is provided in the spirit of interfellowship.

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

SLAA, PO Box 650010, West Newton, MA
02165-0010(617) 332-1845

SAA, PO Box 70949, Houston, TX 77270
.....(713) 869-4902

For SCanner subscriptions:

SCA SCanner, P.O. Box 138455,
Pennscola Place, Chicago, IL 60613-8455

For other SCA literature:

SCA/ISO Literature,
P.O. Box 1089,
Milwaukee, WI 53201-1089

ISO Update

LOS ANGELES ISO CONVENTION 1997

by David A-S (NYC), Joe F. (NYC).

The 1997 Annual Convention of the SCA International Service Organization was held the weekend of February 21-22 at the Sunset Hyatt Hotel in West Hollywood in Los Angeles. Dennis B. and Jim S. of Los Angeles coordinated efforts to make the meeting a productive and fun endeavor for all.

The International Service Organization ("ISO") of SCA is made up of representatives elected from intergroups or individual groups from across the country. SCA members inevitably ask, "What is ISO?" ISO consists of representatives elected by intergroups or individual meetings from all over the United States. ISO is probably best known for developing and eventually publishing SCA "conference-approved" literature. There are three ways to contact ISO: regular mail, e-mail, or telephone. The addresses are as follows: write: SCA International Service Organization, P.O. Box 1585, Old Chelsea Station, New York, N.Y. 10113-0935; Tel.: 1-800-977-HEAL; e-mail: info@sca-recovery.org.

Delegates from New York, Los Angeles, St Louis, Milwaukee, Chicago, San Luis Obispo, Washington D.C. attended. A total of 105 meetings were represented (in 1996, 90 meetings were represented). A great deal of work was done to ensure that the SCA fellowship as a whole continues to remain true to its charter and maintains its integrity within and outside the fellowship. The Annual Convention began early on Saturday morning with the Serenity Prayer. Regional reports were presented and then followed by Convention agenda items. Some of the topics discussed and decisions made, are summarized below:

TREASURER'S REPORT

The ISO Treasurer's report shows that contributions to ISO are low. It was agreed that each ISO representative ought to encourage members and intergroups to contribute to ISO on a regular basis. It was also agreed that the Treasurer should prepare a budget for 1998, and beyond, as a way of indicating ISO running costs to the Fellowship at large.

LITERATURE

Milwaukee Intergroup has volunteered to take over the task of literature distribution (beginning in 1998). This will be a four year commitment. This was partly due to the fact that the relatively new Milwaukee Intergroup wished to make a contribution to the fellowship at large, and partly due to efforts to encourage other intergroups outside of the New York-Chicago-Los Angeles triangle to do service. The new address for literature will be:

**SCA/ISO Literature
PO Box 1089
Milwaukee, WI 532011089**

The *Four Fold* and *Secret Shame* have been translated into Spanish but still need work. The *Blue Book* will be next. Bill M. (LA) has volunteered to replace Frank H. (NYC) as the Spanish Language Producer.

THE SCANNER

The SCanner is running at a loss financially. There was some discussion about the need for a newsletter, now that SCA has a web site. It was agreed that *The SCanner* be published twice a year as a 16 page issue, and that its viability and cost be reevaluated at the 1998 convention.

Also, Joe F., current editor, has expressed a willingness to pass on the job of editor should a member be interested. This would be a two year commitment. Those interested should contact Joe F. at *The SCanner*, or their ISO officer.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

Susan F. (Milwaukee) has sent several pieces of SCA literature to the Copyright Office in Washington D.C. in June 1996. The items sent were SCA: *What About Masturbation?*; *Sexual Compulsives Anonymous: A Program of Recovery*; *How to Start an SCA Meeting*; SCA: *Sexual Compulsives Anonymous*; *Questions and Answers: A Guide for Newcomers to Sexual Compulsives Anonymous*; *Secret Shame: Sexual Compulsion in the Lives of Gay Men and Lesbians*. After minor corrections are made to the literature, it looks like the application will be approved. Susan thanked LA, NYC & Chicago for their assistance in this matter. Since the

ISO meeting, the *What About Masturbation?* and *Secret Shame* pamphlets have both received their copyright.

SCA BIG BOOK

Dennis B. (L.A.) reported that there was a small motivated group pursuing this idea, but that the motivation has waned and the group subsequently disbanded. The consensus of ISO was to publish several smaller works which can later be put together as an SCA Big Book (such as "My Story" from *The SCanner*).

WEB SITE

Since the 1996 ISO Convention, the SCA web site has been published and supported (thanks to John F. (NYC), who has developed and maintains the site). There are two SCA meetings on line (a topic meeting and a feedback meeting) along with a fellowship area. Any members willing to help support the web site should contact John F. at the New York P.O. Box. The web site address is <http://www.sca-recovery.org/>.

SAFETY AT MEETINGS

Discussion of this matter began at the 1996 Convention and the matter has been referred back to individual meetings for their own group conscience discussions and decisions. ISO agreed, that though they can not tell meetings what to do, they hope that it be recognized that in some jurisdictions, there is a legal requirement to report illegal activities (by members attending meetings).

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

Brian K. (NYC) reported that 15 kits have been sold so far to radio stations, and that we have had 3 airings. There was consideration of a Spanish language PSA, but this was tabled until the 1998 Convention.

INTERFELLOWSHIP FORUM

The Interfellowship Forum (an annual forum held among the "S" fellowships to promote a better understanding of each other) came to some tentative agreements that each fellowship would discuss and confirm. ISO agreed to:

1. Allow other "S" fellowships to link to our site. And, if they are willing, allow us to link to their sites.
2. Have the ISO Secretary mail our

International Meeting List to each fellowship.

3. Acknowledgment of other "S" fellowships. Give information about SCA where it is present, but give information about other "S" meetings where SCA is not present.

4. Develop a Selfidentification Statement that we can share with other fellowships and which most accurately describes SCA.

5. Continue participating in Inter-fellowship Forums, sending SCA Chairperson and National Coordinator.

6. Share information with other "S" fellowships about SCA literature. ISO Secretary will send copy of literature order form to each fellowship.

SELF IDENTIFICATION STATEMENT

There was some discussion about a Self Identification Statement for SCA. Though SCA was founded by gay men, there are a large number of non gay members and some meetings are predominantly nongay. Our self identification ought not to exclude these members. ISO agreed to the self identification statement below and asked that, over the year, meetings and intergroups continue discussion and that the statement be reconsidered at the 1998 Convention.

SCA Self Identification Statement:

"SCA is a 12 Step fellowship inclusive of all sexual orientations, open to anyone with a desire to recover from sexual compulsion. We are not group therapy, but a spiritual program that provides a safe environment for working on problems of sexual addiction and sexual sobriety.

We believe we are not meant to repress our God given sexuality, but to learn how to express it in ways that will not make unreasonable demands on our time and energy, place us in legal jeopardy, or endanger our mental, physical or spiritual health. Members are encouraged to develop a sexual recovery plan, defining sexual sobriety for themselves.

There are no requirements for admission to our meetings. Anyone having difficulties with sexual compulsion is welcome."

PUBLICATIONS

There have been some objections raised about the masturbation piece, *What About Masturbation?*. ISO encourages

meetings and intergroups to discuss this further and give feedback for the 1998 Convention.

1997 SCA-ISO OFFICERS:

Chairperson..... Jim M (St. Louis)

Vice Chairperson..... Dennis B (LA)

Secretary..... Jim N (Milwaukee)

Treasurer..... Frank T (Chicago)

SCanner Editor..... Joe F (NYC)

National Coordinator..... John F (NYC)

800 Number Coordinator..... Vito A (NYC)

Spanish Literature Producer..... Bill M (LA)

Literature Coordinator..... Paul M (Milwaukee)

1998 HOST CITY

New York volunteered to be the host city for the 1998 SCA ISO Convention. This was unanimously accepted.

BITS & PIECES cont'd from page 2)

ISO NEWS

Paul N. is adjusting nicely to his new position as International Literature Coordinator for SCA ISO. Milwaukee SCA stocks literature at the Galano Club, a gay and lesbian recovery club....Milwaukee Intergroup elected Dave D. as their new ISO representative on June 1. Dave is looking forward to the next ISO Convention in New York.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

D.C. is in the process of forming an Intergroup. Bill E. has drafted an Intergroup concept paper that addresses what the new Intergroup would be and its functions. This is a work in progress.

LOS ANGELES

ELECTIONS

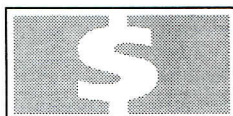
Election of Officers for LA Intergroup:

Chairman: Mark B.; Secretary: Peter N.; Treasurer: Gary S.; 12 Step Committee: Bill D.; Literature: Michel S.; ISO: Jim S & Dennis B.

SANTA BARBARA RETREAT

Dennis B. reports: "It was great!! We had people from LA, San Diego & San Francisco..our workshop format was "Acceptance" & we took the Acceptance prayer, broke it in 5 parts, and had workshops on each section. It turned out great. The weather was cloudy & cold, but we had a fire going in the fireplace, so it was very cozy."

SUMMARY REPORT:



ISO INCOME & EXPENSES

2/1/95-1/31/97

The following chart indicates the income and expenses of the SCA International Service Organization (ISO) as presented by Frank T. of Chicago, ISO Treasurer at the ISO convention in Los Angeles February 1997.

INCOME EXPENSE

INCOME

7th Tradition:	
Atlanta	\$ 199.06
Chicago	200.00
Los Angeles	482.00
Milwaukee	30.00
New York	1,226.11
Rochester, NY	25.00
Southern California	835.00
St. Louis	225.00
Total 7th Tradition	\$ 3,822.17

Donations	314.00
Literature-Sale	8,790.05
The SCANNER-Sales	1,247.00
Income - Other	7,745.22

TOTAL INCOME \$21,918.44

EXPENSES

Ads:	\$ 700.00
Convention:	1,129.08
Interfellowship:	1,628.99
Bank Charges:	34.50
Nat. Coordinator:	435.96
ISO meeting:	2,885.37
Office:	211.00
Literature:	2,567.43
Phone:	1,361.94
The SCANNER:	3,280.81
Web Site:	183.41
Expenses-other	345.47

TOTAL EXPENSES \$14,763.96

TOTAL INCOME/EXPENSE \$7,154.48

The Traditions

Learning to Live and Work with Others, A Path to Intimacy (Part III)

by David A-S, NY-SCA

Tradition Three

The only requirement for SCA membership is a desire to stop having compulsive sex.

Tradition One gives us a sense of belonging and a sense of purpose in the world. Tradition Two gives us the encouragement and power to negotiate our place in the world. Tradition Three pulls out all the stops and asks us to surrender to everything totally. It says in practice that anyone, not just the people we like, not just the cute ones, not just the funny ones, and not just the ones interested in doing the steps 'perfectly' can be a member of SCA. When I first read this I thought it was madness. Can you imagine allowing all those crazy, unscrupulous, untrustworthy, undependable, selfish and self-centered sex addicts into our fellowship? Well they have to go through a screening and a briefing process, I thought to myself, they all have to be personally approved by me or a committee hand picked by me.

Before I came into program if you wanted to belong to my club you had to jump hurdles, leap through hoops of fire, be measured and judged and inspected and tested and questioned. And even if you passed every test there was no guarantee that even after all this you would be allowed to join my club. In fact I used to belong to that very exclusive Club: The Club that I would never belong to if it would have me as a member! Tradition Three tells me that membership has nothing to with my expectations or requirements but rather your desire. Now that is a fairly mind boggling idea. It means that I have to accept you

on your terms not on mine. Trying to understand this certainly brought up a lot of my selfish and self centered addict's thinking. Not only does this tradition advise me to accept others on their terms but it also tells me that I must embrace and welcome everything and everyone that comes into my life. It means total surrender, nothing less is acceptable if I am to understand, apply and integrate the traditions into my life.

This tradition brings me face to face with the idea that nothing and no-one is a mistake, that everything is perfect as it is and will be, and leading me to where I need to go. Being this open sounds like

"...can you imagine allowing all those crazy, unscrupulous, untrustworthy, undependable, selfish and self-centered sex addicts into our fellowship..."

a lack of boundaries, something we all work so hard to establish in recovery. Yet in effect it makes my boundaries stronger because I don't resist anything. I become porous to everything and simply an ingredient in the whole rather than the main dish. As a result get to know myself much more fully by allowing myself to interact with everything. I've found it useful in practicing this tradition to always approach anyone I find even mildly irritating and talking to them. Immediately I discover that they have some quality that I don't like in myself and by talking to them I start to like that quality in myself and so they don't irritate me anymore.

If I am able to understand this tradition and all its ramifications I am able to see that I don't need to go to acting out places in order to get intimacy

because intimacy is everywhere in my life, in every single interaction. There is richness and fullness in every one of my interactions. Understanding this in experiential fullness opened up a whole new world for me. I was able to talk to the grocer about the fruit and the weather without slyly cruising him in silence as I pretended to be feeling the fruit and vegetables. By being honest and direct in my interactions I found that even talking about the weather could be a rich and intimate experience that would some days alleviate the need to act out. Human contact, (the desire to stop acting out) was enough to make me a member of an intimate interaction with another human being.

When I was fully in my obsessive addict I found that I would want 'A' with absolute passion but would inevitably get, much to my annoyance, 'B'. As a result of understanding Tradition Three, I discovered that if I embraced 'B' fully and let it go, it would inevitably through bizarre circumstances and synchronicity bring 'A' to me. This is ultimately the message of the Third Tradition. If I am willing and able to accept another on his/her own terms they will bring to me exactly what I thought I wanted but in ways I never expected.

Tradition Three is one of the most powerful tools for disarming the addict because it makes everyone and everything equally important. And you know how the addict just loves to indulge in unique, once-in-a-lifetime fantasies that are constantly being updated and re-assessed. There is nothing worse for the addict than a world where everything is paradisiacal.

"Our worst fear is not that we are inadequate, our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness that most frightens us. We ask ourselves, who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented and fabulous? Actually, who are you not to be? You are a child of God; your playing small doesn't serve the world. There is nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure around you. We were born to make manifest the glory of God within us. It is not just in some of us, it is in everyone and as we let our own light shine we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we are liberated from our own fear our presence automatically liberates others."

—Nelson Mandela

SCA RADIO PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

SCA Radio PSA Kits are now available. The kit contains a pre-recorded audio tape and script for a 30 second and 60 second radio spot about sexual compulsion and how to get in touch with SCA via our 800 number for help. A step-by-step instruction sheet on getting the spots aired by local stations is included with each kit. This sheet also explains how to alert the 800 number volunteers who pick up and return calls, of any special instructions, phone numbers and meetings you'll want passed along to people seeking help in your area.

This project grew out of a desire

to provide assistance to small, fledgling meetings and intergroups who were contracting ISO for ideas on how to let their communities know of their existence...initially to increase their membership just to stay alive. Larger intergroups then become enthusiastic as they saw the PSAs as a 12 Step tool that could reach those who might not otherwise hear about the program.

The kits cost \$12 for the first and \$10 each for additional kits. Order a kit for each station you hope to have air the spots. Make checks payable and mail to: SCA/ISO LITERATURE, P.O. Box 931181, Los Angeles, CA 90093-1181

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THE GAY DATING RULES

by Joe F. (NYC)

Recently, while browsing in Barnes & Noble, I picked up a copy of *The Rules*. It's about how women should deal with men while dating. Always be the first one to hang up in a conversation. Don't call him. Let him approach you first. But as a gay man, I wonder, how do these rules apply to me? Who's the woman? Who's the man? Am I the woman or the man? Am I the woman and the man? Should I be preparing the tuna casserole, or eating it? It's so confusing.

Here are my own rules for dating:

Don't be too vague in making a date: Guys find it hard to make a commitment. They want to be spontaneous! They also want to see if anything better will come along between now and your date. The authors of *The Rules* think you should never make a date for the weekend after Wednesday. I agree. I hate when you speak to a guy on a Thursday and he can't make a commitment for spending time on the weekend. You would think that you were asking him to sit on a bed of nails with you on Saturday night! Or even better, he will say, "Let's talk over the weekend"...which means, please keep your weekend open for me, because I'm not willing to make a commitment yet. As a guy, they expect you to understand. You, too, supposedly would drop them at the last minute for a movie with your ex-lover, a special free theater invite, *The Simpsons*, or a quickee with that cute busboy.

When you say you'll call, CALL!: According to an article I read recently in *New York Newsday*, men seem to have a different concept of time than women. Men say they'll call, when they just want to end a conversation. They may call back anytime between 3 days to 3 weeks. Women, when they hear a man say he'll call, expect him to call...tomorrow. Or at the most, the day after tomorrow. And when a gay man says,

"I'll call you back," it can mean anytime between after Melrose Place to after Labor Day! And when he doesn't call for a few days, I start thinking: "He hates me, he hates my cat, he doesn't like Abba, I talked too much about my root canal, my fly was open." And then of course he'll call. It's guaranteed that when you want him to call, he never does. And when you finally forget about it, he calls. Maybe in a previous life you pissed off an operator.

The "DATE KARMA" Rule: I was telling a fellow student, Bill, that I was dating somebody new who I wasn't that crazy about. Bill said, "You always have to be nice to whomever you're dating. It's date karma. If you dis your date, it will come back to you. The next person you date will be your worst nightmare." Or even worse, I added, you'll be stalked by Richard Simmons. This is a frightening thought. Date Karma. I once had a roommate who used to always say to me, what goes around, comes around. So I guess I'd better be nice to the next blind date, even if he is 20 years older than he said. Even if he has combed-over hair. Even if he hasn't showered. Because if I'm not, I may not get another date for 20 years and I'll be the one with combed-over hair.

The "DUMP KARMA" Rule: The rule is: the one who dumps is guaranteed to have a horrible next relationship. Whereas the one who is dumped is guaranteed to have a great next relationship. No longer the untroubled, gay, young blade, the dumper now has to be careful and cautious, because he's been so heartless. Your friends scorn you, your co-workers avoid you, your neighbors walk on the other side of the street, children throw stones at you, even your mother stops calling. But certain of his injustice, courageous in his martyrdom, almost saint-like, no longer chained to a loser, the dumpee can take full advantage of his situation, crying into his beer (usually bought by

sympathetic friends). Co-workers call to console him, nuns pray for him, old ladies offer him their seats on the bus, the dumpee is carefree, capable of anything--because, what the hell!, he's been dumped.

Don't talk about your ex on a first date: This rule is imperative: DO NOT TALK ABOUT YOUR EX. It's ok to mention that you had one and you don't have one now. But for Pete's sake (as Erma Bombeck might say), don't tell your date how your ex used your toothbrush to apply shoe polish, or dribbled into his soup. Or how he liked cat-o-nine tails, and you were more Laura Ashley. OH PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE, DO NOT TALK ABOUT YOUR EX. The new date will only think: What a loser! No wonder his ex dumped him.

Things not to do on a first date: Getting a tattoo; saving the environment; going to a porno movie; trying on swimsuits; meeting your parents (or his); primal therapy; cleaning out the septic tank; dissecting a frog; going to your high school reunion; attending a wedding (or a divorce); performing an autopsy; drag racing (unless RuPaul's invited).

"Pick up" lines NOT to use: (These are verbatim):

"Are those your real teeth? My...they're shiny."; "Would you mind talking to me for a sec? I'm trying to lose this creep."; "Do you believe in love at first sight or should I walk by again?"; "I bet you look great in the daylight."; "Don't I know you? Of course you're the guy with the beautiful smile!"; "Are you wearing contacts? I can't imagine anyone's eyes are actually that blue."; "I know milk does a body good, but jeez--how much have you been drinking?"; "Didn't you used to have a drug problem?"; "You could save a lot on grocery bills this month if you'd have dinner with me"; "I'd like to be Sandra Dee to your Troy Donahue!"