

# The SCAnner

SCA NEWSLETTER  
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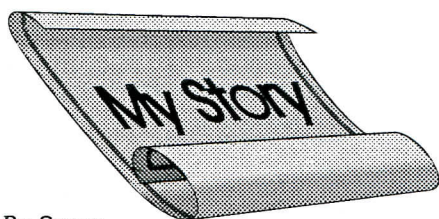


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## A REASON TO LIVE



By Susan  
Milwaukee-SCA

At one point I was sleeping with two men and dating two others (in non sexual relationships). To some, that would not seem an odd thing at all. But considering that I had vowed at an early age, that I would never have an affair (after my father had gravely hurt my mother with an affair), this was an odd thing for me. I got to the point of reacting with fear any time the phone rang, my heart in my throat for the first few moments, trying to identify the male caller. Mark? Dan? John? Brett? I was afraid of being caught. I was afraid of continuing my life as it was. I was living a life I hated, according to values I despised. Meanwhile, I would tell myself that I was not doing anything wrong because if I slept with one man one month, I would not sleep with the other man that same month (to ensure that if I did become pregnant I could identify the father). I was walking a line between sanity and insanity.

How insane was my life? The question really is, did I have a life? Outside of my addiction, no. Every

thought from waking through sleeping was about men and/or relationships. Which man should I choose? Where should I move? Every decision I made, affecting career, geographic location, and the course of my life, was based on the opportunity to start and/or pursue a relationship. A relationship was my reason for living, my only way of living.

As a therapist once observed, I was very efficient when it came to relationships. Once I had identified a prospective partner, I moved in quickly, speeding the relationship along to a crescendo which included compulsive phone calls, a total time dedication on my part, and eventually a crash landing, usually on cement. From the ages of 17 to 27, I was never without a relationship, always planning my

next target long before the previous relationship had ended. Even before the age of 17, I was engaging in addictive relationships. An actual person? I didn't need an actual person. I was 4 or 5 when I first

remember fantasizing about the man who would bring my salvation, who would save me, catch me as I faint, take me away. On the outside I may have looked normal, dressed in an attractive fashion, but on the inside I was like the crazed, mourning mother who wanders the cemetery, wailing after losing her child. I would date men, call them repeatedly, begging

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*How insane was my life? The question really is, did I have a life? Outside of my addiction, no.*

### EDITOR'S NOTE

Greetings, brothers and sisters in recovery! Spring has arrived! The first SCAnner of the year is a double issue to bring us up to date. To all you who wonder, why the latest issues of The SCAnner are 1995...it has taken us a while to catch up. And now that we are on path, I would like to remind everyone to renew your subscription for 1996 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.

In this issue we have coverage of the last New York and Los Angeles conventions, as well as the last ISO meeting in February in Milwaukee (next year's will be in Los Angeles). SCA's presence on the World Wide Web continues to be a big success, with the on-line meeting, and more literature being added to the website. John F., the coordinator of this effort, has given us an update, as well as information for SCA's Pen Pal program. There are My Stories, from Susan of Milwaukee, our first story by a woman (and long overdue!), as well as stories from Jim M. of St. Louis, ISO Chair, and Jim J. of NYC. David A-S, NYC, who continues to be of service to The SCAnner,

(Con'td on page 3)

### 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.





**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

#### 1996

Sept. 28-29 — Iowa Retreat  
Oct. 11-13 — St Louis-area gay retreat open to members of SCA and all 12-Step fellowships.  
Oct. 12 — Midwest conference (Chicago)  
Oct. 26 — Chicago social event  
Oct. 26 — New York social event  
Nov. 16-17 — San Diego conference  
Nov. 16-17 — Second International Forum (Chicago)  
Dec. 14 — New York holiday party  
Dec. 14 — Chicago holiday party  
Dec. 27-29 — Chicago Retreat  
Dec. 31 — Chicago "S" Retreat party

#### 1997

Jan 31-Feb 2 — New York Retreat.  
Feb 14-16 — West Coast Conference (Los Angeles)  
Feb 21-23 — SCA ISO meeting (Los Angeles)

### NEW MID-WEST MEETINGS

Two new SCA meetings have been formed. One now meets on Tuesday evenings at 7.00pm in Milwaukee at the Galano Club, 2408. This is Milwaukee's fourth SCA meeting.

Another begins on Sunday June 15, at 5:00 pm in Gurnee, Illinois. This is the half way point between Chicago and Milwaukee. Meeting temporarily located at 17170 W. Woodland Drive, Gurnee/Grayslake. Contact number (847) 816-0512.

### SPANISH LITERATURE

Carlos, of NY, and his three city team (New York, Milwaukee & Los Angeles) have been working assiduously to move forward the translation, editing and consensus process on Spanish literature. The four fold is complete and is being circulated for approval. In progress *Secret Shame, Q&A, The Blue Book*.

### 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](mailto: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.

### NEW YORK, NEW YORK

#### ARCHIVES

Sol has been preparing and photocopying meeting minutes for storage at Spectrum Storage. A complete record of all Intergroup minutes is aimed at.

#### MEETING LIST

The new SCA NY meeting list will list whether meeting are open or closed. As is stated on the list: "Open meetings: All those interested in attending are welcome. Closed Meetings (definition varies by meeting): Normally, attendance is limited to those who are, or think they might be, sexually compulsive."

#### CONTRIBUTIONS

The New York SCA mail box, not the treasurer's home address, will in the future be used for contributions to Intergroup. This is to avoid loss of contributions in the case of someone dropping

out of program.

#### HX ARTICLE

HX is a popular New York gay bar/entertainment guide. In response to HX's request for an article on SCA, NY Intergroup will suggest that they write an article about recovery, and not, as HX suggested, about how a couple may meet in SCA. Enclosed will be a copy of our closing statement from the Four Fold indicating that "sex between members should not be taken lightly."

#### CROSS TALK

Cross talk continues to be an issue occasionally at some meetings. Some people in SCA do not know what cross talk is. Suggestion that a statement about cross talk be included in the "Starting an SCA Meeting" package.

#### ISO REPORT

Plans for an SCA web site were put forward in a February Intergroup meeting. There were some questions raised about confidentiality, but a precedent for web site has already been established by AA. The web site was subsequently established in April and has been successful. The address is <http://www.sca-recovery.org/>. In June, an on-line meeting was established with members contributing from Paris and Saskatoon. The address is: <http://www.sca-recovery.org/private/meet.html>. The user ID is **SCA**, and the password is **HEAL**. In June, the national meeting list was also put on the Web site protected by password. The web site address is: <http://www.sca-recovery.org/private/meetings.txt>. Again, the user ID is **SCA**, and the password is **HEAL**.

#### CHANGES TO TRADITIONS?

Motion was made in February to convey to Milwaukee ISO Convention that the majority of New York SCA members were not in favor of changing the Traditions. There had been a questionnaire distributed previously on this issue.

#### NEWCOMERS

Newcomers' package in draft form included with Intergroup minutes for comments. It is to be submitted to ISO for final approval and printing.



**ELECTIONS**

In March, there were elections of new officers for NY Intergroup:

Chair-----Robert D.  
Secretary-----David W.  
Treasurer-----Frank C.

**NATIONAL MEETING LIST**

The National Meeting List is now in final draft form (featuring international listings) and will be available soon at the cost of \$.50.

**PEN PALS**

The SCA Pen Pal program is now in operation for lone and isolated members. If you are interested in participating please contact John F., at our P.O. box, or e-mail address, [info@sca-recovery.org](mailto:info@sca-recovery.org).

**SCA BIG BOOK**

An SCA Big Book is now in process. Anyone wishing to contribute stories should send them to The SCanner or SCA-ISO, P.O. Box 1585, Old Chelsea Station, NY, NY 10011.

**PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT**

A radio public service announcement

has been completed and will be available for ordering in May. There are 30 and 60 second versions.

**NEW TREASURER**

In April, Stephen P. was elected new treasurer of NY Intergroup. He replaces Frank C.

**12 STEP COMMITTEE  
MINORITY OUTREACH**

The suggestion was made that 12 Step Committee consider reaching out to minority groups with information about SCA. Discussion tabled till next meeting.

**RETREAT**

David N. reported that retreat on August 2-4, on Steps 10, 11, 12 will be entitled "The Journey to Ourselves".

**NEW LITERATURE AVAILABLE**

In May, a new piece of SCA literature, *How to Start an SCA Meeting*, was available. Public Service Announcement was also now available.

**CHICAGO, CHICAGO****SUMMER RETREAT**

The "S" Summer Retreat will be at La Salle Manor July 5-7. A one day fellowship retreat will be organized by Todd in October.

**PRISONER OUTREACH**

It was suggested at May Intergroup meeting that 2 people pair up to contact prisoners via SCA mailbox (in order to protect our sobriety).

**INTERGROUP PURPOSE**

John will write Statement of Intergroup Purpose to clarify that funds are not for social activities which must be self supporting. The statement will be read at meetings when asking for Intergroup contributions.

**UPCOMING CONFERENCE**

Plans were made for the SCA Conference on Oct. 12, 1996, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Second Unitarian Church, \$6.50 per person.

**Editor's Note...**

(Cont' from page 1)

besides writing some of the reports, offers us his views on the twelve traditions of SCA. Richard K.'s Food For Thought column ruminates on spring rains and recovery, and how our recovery mirrors the seasons.

Finally, I would like to thank Doyle of LA, for his desktop efforts in helping us put out issue #3 of 1995. And of course, the usual mammoth efforts of Frank G. and Todd R. of Chicago to print and send out The SCanner. 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 Twelve Steps**

*When I admit I'm powerless, my power  
Returns through a power greater than  
Myself: I surrender to it fully.  
I take an inventory and realize  
Why my power had gone. I admit my  
Part in the power cut and am ready  
To have my defects removed. I ask  
Humbly for their removal while I list  
All whom I have harmed and begin to  
Restore to them what I had taken from  
Them. Each day I balance my actions and  
Pray to be guided to right action.  
As a result I wake up to my place  
And responsibilities in the world.*

David A-S., NYC



# ISO Update

## MILWAUKEE ISO CONVENTION 1996

by David A-S (NY).

The 1996 Annual Convention of SCA-ISO was held in Milwaukee Wisconsin, February 23 and 24. ISO 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. 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; telephone: 1-800-977-HEAL; e-mail: [info@sca-recovery.org](mailto:info@sca-recovery.org).

This year there were representatives from New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Louis. ISO is probably best known for developing and eventually publishing SCA "conference-approved" literature.

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. Some of the topics discussed and some of the decisions that were made are summarized below:

### 1996 SCA-ISO OFFICERS:

Chairperson.....	Jim M
Vice Chairperson.....	Dennis B
Secretary.....	Jim N
Treasurer.....	Frank T
SCAnner Editor.....	Joe F
National Coordinator.....	John F
800 Number Coordinator.....	Bill K
Spanish Literature Producer....	Frank H

### PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS

Public Service Announcements (PSA), in 30 and 60 second format, with male

and female voices are now available for dissemination to media across the country. The kits are listed in the new literature order form and are available for \$12 (first copy) and \$10 for each additional copy. This is an excellent tool for 12 Step work and should bring the fellowship to the attention of many more addicts suffering from the disease of sexual compulsion.

### NEW LITERATURE

A new piece of literature, *How to Start a Meeting*, was cited and discussed at the convention. The pamphlet was approved for production and distribution and is by now available on the new literature list. The new literature list was prepared by John F. and now includes a Starter Kit which retails for \$6 and contains the *SCA Blue Handbook*, the pamphlets *Q&A*, *Secret Shame*, *How to Start a Meeting* and the yellow SCA pamphlet (the "Four Fold"). There is also, shortly to be available, a *National Meeting List* (featuring international listings). Keep an eye out for it.

### LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

Frank H. and Sue F. will look into registering SCA literature with the Library of Congress. This means that the SCA literature will be available in the most public of forums for consultation by everyone.

### SPANISH LITERATURE

SCA literature is currently being translated into Spanish. The intention is to get it done as quickly as possible, because the need is great.

### SCA BIG BOOK

Work has begun on a SCA Big Book. At present there is a first draft on a section about the Characteristics. All members of SCA are encouraged to submit their stories for inclusion in this soon to become seminal text.

### SCANNER

ISO has approved allocation of funds to allow SCAnner to be desktop published.

Chicago will continue printing and distributing the SCAnner. The first year of subscription service, and Chicago's handling of the printing and distribution was a success. More timely distribution of the SCAnner was expected with the addition of a paid desktop person.

### SCA-ISO ARCHIVE

The Convention foresaw the need for archiving of SCA documents and papers. After discussing some options it was agreed that LA take on the responsibility of monitoring the archives of SCA-ISO in their membership.

### SCA TRADITIONS

After some discussion last year about the possibility of needing to change the traditions to reflect some perceived differences between the original AA traditions and the adapted SCA ones, the Convention voted unanimously to leave the SCA traditions unchanged.

### PRISONER PROJECT

Guidelines were presented and approved for correspondence with people in prisons. It was suggested that two SCA members work together to correspond with each prisoner. (This is to ensure that principles override any personality problems that may possibly arise). It was also suggested that prospective correspondents have one year in the program and six months on their plan. Anyone interested in participating in this worthwhile service should contact John F., SCA-ISO, Old Chelsea Station, PO Box 1585 New York NY 10113-0935, or by e-mail at [scaiso@sca-recovery.org](mailto:scaiso@sca-recovery.org).

### CYBER-RECOVERY: WORLD WIDE WEB

SCA-ISO approved the establishment of a SCA-ISO home page and that has now been set up. The address is: <http://www.sca-recovery.org/> There was also some interest expressed in creating a SCA-ISO online meeting or bulletin board and this is to be investigated.



## **SAFETY/ANONYMITY/LEGAL ISSUES AT MEETINGS**

Issues of safety in terms of disclosure at meetings as well as with sponsors was discussed. SCA members are not legally protected by what they disclose while clergy are. It was suggested that this might be discussed and highlighted in the proposed Big Book.

## **HOW TO DEAL WITH PERPETRATORS/INAPPROPRIATELY DRESSED/AND UNSTABLE PERSONS AT MEETINGS**

SCA-ISO would like to get feedback on these topics for discussion next year. So if you have any views on these topics either discuss them in your meetings or write to the SCanner to include your views in the discussion, or e-mail to ISO at [scaiso@sca-recovery.org](mailto:scaiso@sca-recovery.org).

## **SCA LOGO**

A new logo is sought for SCA by 1997. SCA-ISO representatives are asked to discuss the idea at meetings and bring suggestions to the 1997 ISO Convention in Los Angeles.

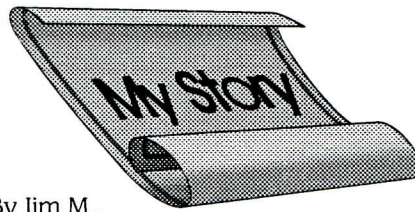
## **ELECTION SUCCESSION BY-LAW COMPOSITION**

The Convention discussed the difficulties that can arise when an office bearer suddenly or unexpected vacates an office before the end of the term (as happened in the previous year). It was suggested that each office should have a co-chair who can take over in the event of an office being vacated. In the event of the Chair vacating the position, the Vice Chair would take over till the next election. All other positions may be filled by appointment of the remaining office bearers. A motion was passed to amend the SCA-ISO by-laws in accordance to the above changes.

More detailed copies of notes of ISO conventions can be accessed on the internet at:

<http://www.sca-recovery.org/iso94.html>,  
<http://www.sca-recovery.org/iso95.html>,  
 and  
<http://www.sca-recovery.org/iso96.html>.

## **THE CHAIR SHARES**



By Jim M.,  
 St. Louis, 4/14/96

Dear Fellow SCA-er,

I would like to introduce myself as the new Chairman of the SCA International Service Organization as of the ISO meeting in Milwaukee in February 1996. For those of you not familiar with the ISO, it is made up of delegates representing SCA meetings and its purpose is to further the recovery of those who suffer from sexual compulsion. The ISO meetings are fun. It is a rewarding experience to touch base with fellow SCA-ers from around the country. The regional updates and various projects we get involved in to "carry the message" are very interesting. One of the side benefits of my role as ISO Chairman is to stay in touch with people who are dedicated to their recovery and who care about carrying the message of our program, which to me is that you can recover from sexual compulsion and we have a program that will help you to do it. One project the ISO is working on presently is writing an SCA Big Book, like most other 12-Step Fellowships have. I'm not much of a writer and it's awkward for me to put feelings down on paper, but collecting stories and articles representing our membership is needed and if I can do it, anybody can. Here goes.

Until the time I came into recovery when I was 28, my life had been permeated by sexual addiction. I have experienced sexual acting out since my earliest childhood memories. Obsession, paranoia, fear and sexual compulsion were part of my daily experience. Of course, some days were better than others, but the pattern of addiction and all its ramifications was deeply ingrained in my psyche. It was who I was, there was not escaping from who I was. I tried my best to act like a "normal" person, but on the inside I was ever on the prowl for my next "fix" and was always worried others knew what I had done. I lived under the delusion that somehow I was "special" and I would never get caught or suffer the consequences of my lifestyle. It was a life of unaccountability, never being

sure where I was going or with whom. How I managed to live as long as I did doing the self-destructive and dangerous behavior I was involved in is a mystery. All I can really say about that is that I'm grateful to have survived. There were consequences, however, and my delusional thinking that said I was special and would never get caught came to an abrupt end when I was arrested in 1984 for trying to pick up a police officer. My first thought was that my life was over, and in a way it was. Thank God! Through very unlikely and fortuitous circumstances, I came into contact with my first sexual recovery group and by the grace of God and the help of other sex addicts, I have been sexually sober since November 1995.

SCA first came to St. Louis in the spring of 1992. At that time I had been in sexual recovery for 7 years actively participating in the other "S" fellowships. My struggle was how to live a sexually sober life and develop a healthy gay identity. The other "S" programs provided a safe place for me to say I was a sex addict and I am truly grateful for the recovery that I found there, but I longed for an identity beyond being a sex addict who didn't act out anymore. SCA has helped me to find my own identity and be proud of myself as a recovering gay man.

What initially attracted me to SCA was finding other men who had what I wanted, which was an acceptance of themselves as gay men who also wanted sexual sobriety. I longed for a deeper acceptance and understanding of myself that would allow me to not have to turn off my spirituality when I wanted to be sexual. Sexuality and spirituality were not integrated in my life and I have found the SCA program to offer a place where these two very important aspects can be explored and transformed through recovery.

One thing I've discovered is that there are no shortcuts to recovery. This has been a very long process, but personal freedom and loving myself is worth doing the work.

I need to go regularly to SCA meetings because the honesty expressed at our meetings keeps me honest, the identification with other sex addicts leads me out of isolation, and hearing how other people use the tools of our program and the 12-Steps gives me hope. I am truly grateful for the opportunity to recovery from this disease.

Lovingly submitted,

*Jim M.*



# Interfellowship News

## NORTHEAST REGIONAL INTER "S" CONFERENCE

[The Northeast Regional Inter "S" Group (NRISG) held its annual Conference in Phoenicia NY on March 29-31, 1996.

The keynote speaker was Frank H. of New York, a founding member of SCA and former ISO chair. Here are some of Frank's thoughts in the aftermath of the conference:]

The NRISG conference is surely a new tool in the evolution of interfellowship, and I think one well worth helping in every way we can.

Most basically, how can SCA in the Northeast region contribute to the development of this regional conference?

1. Interfellowship workshop at SCA NY conference. [Editor's Note: such a workshop was held on Sunday, May 19.]

2. Invitation of each present and past attendee at the NRISG conference to the SCA NY Conference.

3. Organized promotion of next NRISG conference to NY SCA membership through personal presentations at each meeting, rather than just flyers, though flyers would be needed.

4. Organizing a group of SCA members to attend the next NRISG Conference, probably in Phoenicia.

5. Doing a workshop on SCA and/or interfellowship at the NRISG Conference.

6. Getting a representative from NRISG to attend the Interfellowship Forum in the fall (perhaps a rep distinct from reps from the individual programs).

7. Participate in the NRISG process to develop the specifics of the benefits of Interfellowship, its limits and problems arising in Interfellowship. The 8-point document from a few years ago in Chicago might be a starting point.

The NRISG conference may need greater focus which would need to be developed in order to distinguish it from other "S" conferences. The focus would answer the question: Why go to this conference rather than one closer to home? Knowledge of other "S" groups, and their members, may be too vague to attract the large group needed to support this clearly worthwhile endeavor. Also having a program agenda as part of the promotion would be a big help. If there are workshops and speakers people are interested in, this would furnish one motivation to attend.

### And here's a viewpoint from another attendee, Eric D., of SAA:

To all "S" fellowships through the region:  
Greetings!

We wish to let you know that we just had our 3rd Annual Inter "S" Group Conference/Retreat. This remarkable gathering occurred March 29-31, 1996 at the Pathwork Center in Phoenicia, NY. Our featured speaker was Frank H., co-founder of SCA. We were very pleased to have him with us. We had recovering people present from COSA, RCA, SAA, SCA, and SLAA to name a few. Our time together was both powerful and moving. As we shared, we realized that regardless of what "S" group we belong to, we all had a common goal: to have a healthy sexuality restored to us, free of compulsivity and addictiveness.

It was enormously helpful to each of us to see how different "S" fellowships approach the complex problem of sexual addiction and compulsion. In fellowship, we gained invaluable knowledge about ourselves which went well beyond what we could learn simply in the confines of our own specific "S" groups. Through this time spent in unity, we could see that the promises spoken of in AA's Big Book were coming true for each and every one of us.

What happened on that weekend was by no means an isolated incident. Across this land, many of us are recognizing the benefits of expanding fellowship and

consolidation among the "S" groups. Next year, this extraordinary gathering will again be assembled. On April 11-13, 1997, we shall be having our Fourth Annual Inter "S" Group Retreat. This event will be held again at the Phoenicia Pathwork Center. We invite you, the people of the "S" fellowships, to join us. You too will be touched and amazed by the community experience created by our next Inter "S" Retreat. As we had this year, we will have insightful workshops, encouraging meetings, and best of all, we will have another founder of one of the "S" groups, to share their experience, strength, and hope. Don't miss it!

## INTERFELLOWSHIP WORKSHOP AT SCA NYC MAY 96 CONFERENCE

There was an Interfellowship workshop held at the May 1996 NYC SCA conference. This workshop looked at the potential for helping still suffering and recovering sexual compulsives through cooperation among SCA, SLAA, SAA.

### Topics for discussion included:

- Shared meeting information and referral of newcomers;
- Benefits of literature developed by other sex addicts;
- Resources for organizational problem solving such as prison outreach;
- The anonymity of shares about criminal activity at meetings;
- Common outreach to professionals such as therapists and judges;
- The Internet as a tool of outreach and recovery including an Inter "S" web page;
- The limits of cooperation;
- The benefits of separate program identities;
- The 6th tradition and the 12th step;
- What kinds of interactions to provide interactive workshop activities.

Cont'd on page 10



# Food for Thought

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

## RECOVERY IS A LOT LIKE NATURE

Spring time is a joyous burst of exuberance on the part of nature: flowers and green hills and the landscape freshened up by the winter rains and snows. Gorgeous!

Here in California, we don't get the severe winters that the folks in the mid west and east do. But we have our gray, dark, cold days just the same. It's mostly "inside" weather, and communing with nature can get pretty wet and chilly. Still, there's a quality to our surroundings that inspires awe and gratitude. And we always know that spring will be here one day. Our expectations and hopes are based on that renewing of spirit time of the year.

When spring does arrive, and the poppies and lupines make their golden and azure statements against the emerald green of the hills; when the dormant trees burst out with new leaves; when the tulips and irises and hyacinths and daffodils and rock roses and ceanothus and redbud and dogwood come out in their full glory--well, it sets the heart to realizing just how close we are to God and nature! What better church could there possibly be than being out in the hills or the forest or along the beach breathing in the clean, sweet air, and taking in the great decorations that nature spreads out before us. Even the breezes and winds can have an organ like musical quality... if you take the time to pause and listen.

Then summer comes along, and the

California hills turn golden and brown. The riotous blooms are replaced by tiny flowers almost hidden in the grass and bushes. It seems, though, that no matter how hot and dry and unfriendly it might be, there are always flowers blooming somewhere tiny and difficult to see though they may be.

All too soon autumn comes. Things slow down in expectation of winter. The skies soften, as do the vistas across the hills and plains and valleys. Yet, there are still flowers here and there, not only in our gardens, but out in the countryside.

Our recovery is a lot like the seasons, the flowers, and the general atmosphere of nature. Initially, there's the sullen darkness and hopelessness that we might associate with winter. Cold and dreary, lonely in our addiction, shame, remorse, and empty lives. Acting out, all out of control. Helpless. Powerless.

Then, just like spring, the time comes when recovery seems to grow in leaps and bounds. Our old behaviors seem foreign and remote to many of us; something we can hardly believe we were ever caught up in. We're enthusiastic about our meetings and service and recovery and all that the Program is about.

Many of us experience that burst of energy especially in our early weeks in the Program.

Then things seem to slow down, maybe even regress a bit. Our enthusiasm wanes. The pain, of realizing all that our addiction has robbed us of, really sets in. Lots of pain! We may even revert to some of our acting-out behaviors, out of the fear that this recovery business is never going to take hold.

*Recovery, to really stick, is a slow and deliberate process and a lot of work. There's no hurry, a concept that's hard to accept for compulsive folks like us...It's our recovery, and we make the most of it in our own time.*



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

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

or

Call the NY Info Line .....(212) 439-1123  
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](mailto: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) 963-1189  
St. Louis, MO.....(314) 589-7702  
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 931181,  
LA, CA 90093-1181

Cont'd on page 8



**Food foe Thought***(Cont'd from page 7)*

Yet, like the tiny flowers of summer, there is still growth there hard to realize, but it's there. Our recovery seems so insignificant at times that we might even trample it, like those tiny little flowers. But somehow, it always bounces back.

Then, as in autumn, things ease off and mellow out and soften. We realize that while recovery is not all roses and honey, it is worthwhile. In fact, it is vital to our survival! We can accept this reality without getting depressed and frustrated. Recovery, to really stick, is a slow and deliberate process and a lot of work. There's no hurry, a concept that's hard to accept for compulsive folks like us. So we tend to beat ourselves up less for "not measuring up" to our, or others', expectations. It's our recovery, and we make the most of it in our own time.

There will be other winters in our recovery. But there will always be another glorious spring following close after. That's just the way it works. So check out the flowers all around us. They are nature's gift to us all; just as recovery is our own gift to ourselves.

### **"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

# SCA On the Internet

By John F.,

National Coordinator

SCA has a new home or a new home page anyway. It's on the World Wide Web, a computer network accessible by modem to anyone with an Internet account. While SCA does not offer Internet accounts, these are available from a variety of sources.

Our WWW address is:

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

Some Intergroups have begun noting this address on their meeting lists. And that's especially appropriate, as there is now a special "online" meeting that began in July 1996. This meeting follows the basic format of any SCA meeting: there is the Opening Statement; a topic; sharing; the Closing Statement; even a Treasurer's Break! It differs from most other meetings, though, in that it lasts for one month. The topic for August, for example, was "How have we used the Tools That Help Us Get Better to deal with fantasies?"

Another part of the web site has a current version of the International Meeting List, especially useful for SCA members traveling to other cities.

These two areas require a special "User name" and "Password," to prevent nonmembers from gaining access to sensitive material. If you would like to visit, try:

User name: SCA

Password: HEAL

Here are some of the other items on our Web site:

- The complete text of the *Four Fold*
- How to Start an SCA Meeting*
- A listing of which states (or area

codes) have meetings for SCA, SAA or SLAA

- A calendar of Intergroup and ISO events
- Highlights from The SCAnner
- Parts of the *Blue Book*, including *14 Ways to Avoid a Slip*
- A literature order form
- Pointers to other sexual recovery resources

As you might guess, this has proved to be a tremendous resource for the sexual compulsive still suffering. We have been averaging about 40 visits a day, and people have arrived from dozens of countries. Many of these are the curious they call up the initial page, look it over, and move on. Others explore the site further.

And many write to us, asking for help. We recently got a letter from Budapest, for example, asking for literature. Someone in Austria wanted to set up a meeting, as did someone in Saskatchewan. A member from Paris found out about meetings while planning a trip to North America. It truly is a World Wide Web. We have had visitors from Saudi Arabia to Singapore and from India to Ireland.

Most recently, various Intergroups have asked about posting their own pages. Under our Seventh Tradition, I have asked Intergroups to make voluntary contributions of any amount to ISO for this service, with a suggested contribution of \$5 a month. This service currently costs ISO about \$20 a month, although we expect this to rise to perhaps \$35 a month in time. San Diego is the first to take advantage of this service.



## Susan's Story

(Cont'd from page 1)

for time, love, and attention. The men would run scared, not call, move away. Now, in my sanity, I can see that. At the time I just thought the man didn't love me. So I yelled louder. And the man ran farther away. My greatest loss from this was my dignity. I would ask myself, "Why are you calling him again? He hasn't called you back. You've called more than once today. Stop." I couldn't stop, no matter how hard I tried. I promised myself gifts if I stopped. A lovely pair of earrings. Topaz in gold. Expensive for my budget. Just two weeks. Stop calling for two weeks.

I made it three days, and then I called again and again and again. If only he didn't have a roommate. The roommate knows how often I've called. I felt a silent sense of humiliation. The only thing that stopped me, allowing me to complete those two weeks, was a comment from that roommate. "Yeah, I'll tell him you called again, just liked you called this morning." I stopped out of humiliation, shame, embarrassment. Two weeks without placing another call. I bought myself those earrings, knowing that I didn't earn them through my own strength of will, but through a will built from shame. I began calling again after completing the two weeks. I was powerless.

The treatment I received in a relationship didn't seem to matter. What mattered was the relationship, the time I was given, the attention I was paid. The man was often insane, perhaps in a form different from mine. But the more insane he was, the more addicted I seemed to be. Fights lasting all day. Physical altercations. Sexual abuse. Being ordered out of a car in a verbally abusive way. I would step out of the car, grabbing little pieces of pride, vowing never to return. Then his voice on my answering machine. I will not call him back. I will not call him back. Like a mantra in my head. Then the phone in my hand, almost disembodied from my mind, fingers dialing. "A movie? Sure." Just friends. That voice in my head, "I will not call him back"? The sane voice, I call it. A very small voice. Powerless

again. Back in his arms. But still, there was that small voice.

"I wish I was a drug addict," I'd say in my Codependents Anonymous meeting. "At least then if I had money I could score. I wouldn't have to get the person's permission." I was the heroin addict on the bathroom floor, looking for one last spot on a tracked vein. There was nothing left to do to stop the addiction from rolling over me. I'd tried everything. Stop dating. Start dating. No sex. Sex. None of it worked. Numb with pain and life, I needed one last hit to be alive. Just one more hit.

I hit the wall in August of 1992. I had moved back to Wisconsin to be with one of the four men referred to earlier; in an attempt to fix my desperation I'd discontinued all but one relationship. To make that move I had quit my job,

*Why are you calling him again? He hasn't called you back. You've called more than once today. Stop.*

left all my friends and apartment, and moved to a city where I knew only one person, my lover. I was fleeing from my addiction and the pain it had created in my life, most significantly the loss of a child in one addictive relationship. With nothing left to lean on, and an addiction that seemed to be working less and less to dull a pain that had reached a scream, I became suicidal. Thoughts of hurting myself and others filling my mind in the same way my addiction had filled it before. What my will power could not do, the threat of death could. For the first time in my life I made a decision that was not based on a relationship but instead based solely on me. I was desperate to save my own life. I entered a 12 Step treatment facility in August, staying for 28 days which took me through early withdrawal from my addiction.

I can say that the first year of my recovery from addiction to romance and relationships was one of the hardest times of my life. I attended 90 meetings in 90 days after leaving treatment, sometimes imagining myself crashing the car off the pavement of the country

roads leading to my meetings. Little by little, I learned how to crawl from the compulsion, crying into the phone with friends, the obsession somehow miraculously lifting once I'd talked about the real emotion driving it from beneath. One minute at a time, one day at a time, I lived a life based on my dreams, my wishes, my desires. That was my bottom line, living my own life, not a life based on a man or a relationship. Upon recommendation, I chose not to date for a year, expelling the thought of potentials and rain checks. To stay sober I did not listen to romantic songs, turning the station whenever a song of undying love began. I also avoided other triggers such as romantic movies and books. I was willing to do anything to stay sober, including switch jobs, move geographically, and even discontinue destructive friendships.

I attended SCA meetings because the time was convenient, but also because the men were gay, and, therefore, unavailable to me. My addiction didn't even have a chance to obsess under these conditions, although this did not stop my eyes from pulsing into the newcomer, chanting, "Bi? Gay? Bi? Gay?" Once the newcomer identified his orientation as gay, I was always disappointed, but also released. Thank you, Higher Power. I could create a friendship without strings, sexual promise or potential. Since I am bisexual, I also clearly stated boundaries with women who might be of sexual interest.

My life before and after recovery was like night and day. Night: obsession, selfharm, abusive relationships, compulsive pursuit. Day: hope unbound, dreams for my future, release from the monster grip of addiction. With careful nurturing over the last 3 1/2 years, I've continued on my path of sobriety, occasionally slipping. The 12 Steps and SCA continue to save my life. I can't imagine life without my home group and the beauty of powerlessness. By the time my addiction was through with me I had lost my career, my dignity, a child, and almost myself. Now I am rebuilding my life one brick at a time, grabbing

(Cont'd on page 10)



**Susan's Story***(Cont'd from page 9)*

hold of my pride, selfworth, and a reason to be alive in the morning.

This is my life now: I plant gardens in the spring; furnish my home for the life I live now (I just recently purchased a bed after years of waiting until "I get married"); plan a career for my future; look to creating and nurturing children. All of this may or may not include a partner, but most importantly it includes me as the star, center of attention, the focus for the future. When I'm at my best, my awareness of my powerlessness is so complete that I know that someday, even if I do have a partner, there will be a point where there is only me and my Higher Power. Everyone dies and everyone must face her/his Higher Power alone. That is how ingrained my addiction was. I believed a lover could save me even from God, comfort me in the frightening journey of afterlife.

Lately I've begun a new and scary adventure: dating. This is one of the greatest challenges to my sobriety since entering recovery from romance and relationship addiction. Every date, every phone call, every thought of a potential date throws me up against my addiction. It is somewhat akin to a compulsive overeater attending an all-you-can-eat buffet. Under this challenge, everyday is a push for me to call for support, ask for reality checks, and give up my life to a power greater than myself. No matter what happens, it is key for me to become and stay willing to do anything to stay sober, and that includes being willing to give up dating. Now. Not tomorrow, but the minute it becomes obvious that I am losing my sobriety. And it is important that I remember the night I came from; the obsession, the loss of life, the desperation, the fear. Because forgetting will mean I will return to my addiction. I am always keenly aware that I do enjoy using my drug of choice. But most importantly, I must never forget, because now I am my own reason to live, and because I am a link in a chain of sobriety. We keep each other sober. We are sober at a meeting. We are sober on the other end of the line. We are sober in a world filled with addiction. I want to stay a sober addict. I want to live my life into day.

## 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 email 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

**Interfellowship News***Cont'd from page 6*

## CHICAGO: INTERFELLOWSHIP FORUM

**NOV. 16-17, 1996**

*Dear Friends in Recovery,*

*The purpose of this letter is to invite you and/or other representatives from your sexual recovery fellowship to participate in an interfellowship Forum involving all the twelve step sexual recovery programs. Previous interaction between several of the fellowships has proven beneficial to each fellowship. We recognize there is much to gain from our shared experience, strength and hope as it is expressed in the recovery in each fellowship.*

*Please join us in Chicago on November 16 and 17, 1996 at the Blackstone Hotel. In the spirit of open dialogue, each fellowship is invited to bring topics of interest or concern to be discussed at the Forum. Some topics that have already been suggested are:*

- *The sharing of meetings lists;*
- *Exchanging and reviewing literature;*
- *Making sexual recovery available to minors;*
- *Continued dialogue between the fellowships.*

**WHO?** *Representatives from each sexual recovery twelve step program.*

**DATE?** *November 16-17, 1996.*

**PLACE?** *The Blackstone,  
636 S. Michigan,  
Chicago, Illinois,  
(312) 427-4300.*

**TIME?** *10:00 am.*

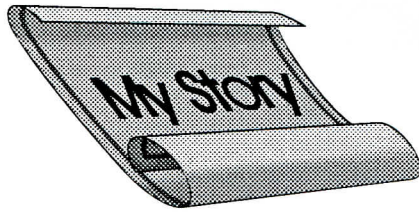
**COST?** *\$89.00 double, \$79.00 single.*

*In the spirit of recovery,*

*Jim M.  
Mark N*



## JIM'S STORY



By Jim J. (NYC)

I've been in SCA for over a year. I'm counting days again after having a slip at seven months on my plan. Like many of us I grew up in a severely dysfunctional home with a lot of emotional pain, melodrama, anger, some physical violence and a great deal of neglect. My earliest memories are of feeling a very heavy sense of despair and isolation. That's not to say that there was no love or affection or happy times; but the pain and fear greatly outweighed any joy or confidence or inherent sense that life was okay. Somehow my child's mind turned it all into shame and a completely unrealistic sense of responsibility.

My two sisters were older and out of the house as I grew up, so our household was me, my mother and my father. A typical scene would include: my parents arguing for hours; me, being forced to watch and listen; some light violence; my father going to bed; and then, me, the ten year old being left to baby-sit my mother, who would threaten to leave or commit suicide. She would do things like open the car door as we drove along, saying that she was going to jump. All of this left me with a dangerous knowledge that I had to dig in and somehow get everyone through these episodes; and worse that no matter how awful things got I could handle it by sheer will and inner strength and determination. I grew up believing that ultimately no one would ever be there for me. I was on my own.

I developed a great confidence in my ability to endure any situation. This idea has not been a great help to my recovery. I am gay. This caused me a lot of shame and heartache as an adolescent. When I discovered masturbation,

I was compulsive about it. Even then, sex was out of control. I felt that I shouldn't be masturbating, but of course I couldn't stop. I internalized all the worry and shame behind it, thinking I was a pervert or queer. Because I was so screwed up, I would have no chance for a fulfilling life. I didn't begin having sex with other people until college. For a few years after college, sex and relationships were fairly normal for me. I was monogamous in relationships. I used sex, however, as a barometer of how the relationship was going. If my partner didn't want a great deal of sex, I felt unloved and unwanted.

After one of these relationships ended, I found out about a couple of cruising places in parks and at my gym. My compulsive behavior took off. Soon I was having sex most days. I was troubled by my inability to stop when I wanted to. I found out about two outdoor acting-out places and began to go there almost every night. I

*I am so grateful to everyone  
in SCA for giving me the  
second chance I so  
desperately needed. I will keep  
coming back because I  
know it works.*

would go to a bar and if I couldn't find anyone there I would go to these parks. That led me to using sex phonelines and meeting people that way. Already I knew that something was wrong. I was looking for sex when I didn't want to and I was out of control. I remember once while shopping with my sisters in a mall, I kept finding excuses to slip away to cruise the restrooms.

Then I moved from Minnesota to New York to move in with a lover. When we subsequently broke up, my addiction really accelerated.

On a daily basis, I was cruising and having compulsive sex at the gym, in parks, and tea-rooms. I was unable to stop for more than a few days. I found myself stuck in acting-out places, unable to leave without having sex which sometimes took hours. I was

depressed. My life wasn't working. I felt as if my life was at a dead-end. I had been in therapy for some time and it helped, but it wasn't until I was able to admit my sex life was out of control and go to an SCA meeting that things began to get better. At my first meeting I knew SCA was right for me and I've been here ever since.

Shortly after arriving in SCA, I had a slip in which I found myself running, in a blind panic, along a busy expressway because the police has discovered me acting-out. I really experienced "unmanageability" that night! After I knew I had gotten away from the police, I immediately felt calm and was ready to continue acting out. When I think about it now, it astounds me that one minute I could be in blind panic, feeling as if my life was falling apart completely, and moments later wanted to act even more in the same place! After that, I was able to get some time together on my sexual recovery plan. I

had a relapse recently but I'm back on my plan again. The slip helped me to see that I lose my peace of mind when I act out.

Recovery has been a great gift. Slowly sobriety is giving me the gift of participating in life again. It's a huge blessing not to be as isolated as I was. The courage that I hear and see in the rooms has given me the

strength to ask for help and allow people into my life. And even more miraculous, I am beginning to really feel what it is to be loved and cared for. I have a sponsor who has shown me more compassion and grace than I've ever known. My relationship with him and others in the program is healing those old wounds that in the past have kept me paralysed in hopelessness. Today I can say that most of the time I feel a security and foundation I can trust in.

I feel a sense of lightness and the presence of my life-force now. Being in the program has shown me that if I can be willing to choose a spiritual path for my life I'll be free to live my life and really experience it as my higher power intends me to. I am still fright

(Cont'd on page 12)



**Jim's Story** (Cont'd from page 11)

ened when I face the fact that I really am an addict and it's hard to keep stepping up to the plate with willingness and rigorous honesty. But it's an infinitely richer life than I had in my active addiction.

My apartment is turning into a home rather than being just a roof over my head. I just bought my first sofa which was a big step. I have always had a fear of settling in, but now I can give myself the gift of a sanctuary. After fifteen years I've been able to quit smoking, which is a huge grace. Cigarettes drained me of energy and so many other things for so long. The greatest gift has been a new relationship with my Higher Power. The knowledge and awareness of the creator's presence in my life has meant everything. For the first time I truly believe that I can be restored to the life God wants for me. Life can be fulfilling and joyful and rich. I am so grateful to everyone in SCA for giving me the second chance I so desperately needed. I will keep coming back because I know it works.

## SCA RADIO PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

SCA Radio PSA Kits are not 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

## SCAnner Subscriptions

### The SCAnner

#### The Newsletter of Sexual Compulsives Anonymous

##### SUBSCRIPTIONS

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Total Amount Enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_

I would like my request mailed to:

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City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

Please enclose a check or money order made payable to S.C.A. Your subscription will be sent to you in a sealed envelope for anonymity purposes. Send your request to: **S.C.A., Pennsicola Place, P.O. Box 138455, Chicago, IL 60613**



## LA Convention: Into the Light Feb.16-18, 1996

by David A-S, NY-SCA

This year's annual LA SCA Conference took place at the Hilton Hotel in lovely Burbank California, over the President's Day Weekend February 16-18, 1996. Participants came from around the country and from around the globe (there was one member from Hong Kong). 162 people registered for the Conference, but it certainly felt like there were more people present (in spirit at least). The theme of the Conference was the movement involved in achieving a spiritual awakening, the movement from a dark place to a place of light, whereby the title of the Conference "....Into the Light....."

Many people contributed to the smooth and effortless running of this Conference, however a few people deserve special mention:

Chair.....	Jimmy G.
Co-Chair.....	Craig W.
Treasurer.....	John M.
Secretary.....	John Mc.
Co-Secretary.....	Rob R.

### Sub-Committees

Entertainment Chair.....	Neil B.
Workshop Chair.....	Jim S.
Hospitality Chair.....	Louis V.
Registration Chair.....	Chris P.
Fund Raising Chair.....	Keith H.

### Next Year's Committee will include:

Chair.....	Charles Q.
Co-Chair.....	Steve K.
Treasurer.....	Clay C.
Secretary.....	Sharon
Co-Secretary.....	Jim S.

Jimmy G. who chaired the conference, was amazed at the amount of work that went into putting the Conference together before hand and was thrilled to see it all unfold so effortlessly and easily during the Conference. The fellowship, comradery and love from the participants was immensely satisfying to see. Members from San Diego sent a huge card of gratitude to the LA Intergroup to show their appreciation for the work and success of the Conference. There were a lot of inspir-

ing speakers but of particular note was Vito A. (from NY) who gave the closing address and was a living embodiment of the theme of the Conference, simply and convincingly demonstrating how his life had changed from darkness to enlightenment.

Some of the workshops held at the Conference included: "Self Esteem 101 - using the Steps to deal with feelings"; "Court of Miracles - review of progress"; "Dating and Relationships - from isolation to intimacy"; "Safe sex and the sex plan - from danger to safety"; "Take what you like and leave the rest - from fear and isolation to freedom".

Jimmy G. said that the best thing about the Conference was meeting so many people from all over the country. It made him feel that he could go anywhere and always be sure that he could attend a meeting. Thank you LA for hosting a great Conference and thank you to all who attended and made it such a success.

## NYC Conference 10th Anniversary: Continuing The Journey May 17-19, 1996

by David A-S, NY-SCA

The Tenth Annual NY SCA Conference held at the Lesbian and Gay Community Center in May almost didn't happen. In the initial planning stages there were not many people willing to facilitate the Conference by offering their service. Finally however, a small number of valiant and enterprising members of the fellowship banded together and made it possible for the NY SCA Conference to celebrate a decade with all the due pomp and acclamation. I write this report as a paean to those trusted servants listed below and everyone else

who participated in bringing the Conference to fruition.

The Conference theme was "Continuing the Journey" and began on Friday night in the Network Room at the Center. Nearly 200 participants registered for the weekend of meetings, workshops, fellowship, dance and final show. The Conference was opened by Bob H. who admitted that doing service for the conference helped him to stay on his plan by interacting with so many people in a healthy and constructive way. The treasurer Michael G. sighed in relief when the opening meeting began. Finally it had hit home that he had been

involved in the setting up and that the hard work had all come together. The three keynote speakers, sharing their experience, strength, and hope, opened the door for a whole weekend of growth.

Behind the scenes trusted servants labored away even on opening night. It was discovered that housing had not been provided for a member who had come a long way. Almost immediately, however someone did step forward to house the weary traveller. Jim J. (Registration Chair) was heartened by the spontaneous and immediate gen-

(Cont'd on page 14)



**NYC Conference** (Cont'd on page 14)

erosity of the fellowship. He was also able to accept some of this generosity by not condemning himself harshly over this incident which was clearly beyond his control.

Saturday and Sunday were filled with workshops aimed at "Continuing the Journey" and included topics such as: Intimacy, Bi-sexuality, Conscious Relationships, Turning Points, Dating, Spiritual Awakenings, Healthy Sexuality in Relationships, Body Image, Multiple Addictions. Some of the workshop leaders revealed to me how they are continuing their journeys in sobriety (the final frontier!). Vito A. (Dating Workshop) who's working on the SCA 800 number and letter-writing to lone members, is also keen to do some "recovery" drag at the next show! Dennis C. (Intimacy Workshop) discovered an underlying sense of compassion and acceptance at the Conference which allowed members to step out into new capacities that challenge their "I'm not enough" tapes. Paul B. (Multiple Addiction Workshop) found that presenting a workshop helped him to combat isolation and shyness. It made him more willing to take up the challenges that present themselves on his journey. Jerome M. (Body Image Workshop) was able to let the conference not become overwhelming and watched in awe other people's process while recognizing a power greater than himself overseeing the whole Conference.

The dance on Saturday evening was moved at the last moment from the Center to a school gymnasium on the lower West side and this proved to be a bit of a stumbling block for some people. John J. (Programming Co-Chair and Decorations Chair, food distribution and seller of T-shirts etc.), headed a team of people who carried the themes of the conference into the decorations, ambience and music at the dance. They brought class, standards and style to the entire proceedings. John found himself able to "take the focus off himself" by doing service and found that inhibitions slipped away and were replaced by bonding instead. David F. (Graphic Design Chair) sought to bring as high a standard to the visuals as has always been associated with the workshops and

the entertainment for the Conference. Not only did he lift the standard of the graphics but he also lifted the timbre and quality of his sobriety through his active service participation in the conference.

The gratitude meeting on Sunday afternoon provided everyone with an opportunity to express their gratitude for what they had received and experienced over the weekend. No one, perhaps was more grateful than Joseph P. and Luis R. (Food Committee Co-chairs), when the food that had been promised for the post gratitude meeting arrived all at once just moments, it seemed, before it was needed.

The end of Conference show on Sunday night took a serious road (featured no drag...gasp!) and proved to be a very hard hitting and demanding piece of entertainment and confrontation, perfectly in line with the theme of the Conference. Yadira B. (Entertainment Chair) managed to maintain her grade point average while juggling rehearsals and exams and participating in the show as a writer, and performer. Service has a way of holding things together, Yadira tells me.

The Conference took people to many unexpected journeys over the course of the weekend and inspired them to recommit themselves to continuing their journeys. Yadira B. for example said that next year "she'll wear the dress!" (you had to be there!); Jerome M. wants "to be more open to the next level of what he's capable of doing and being" and Jim J. wants to be further empowered by the "condensed large scale expose of other people's recovery," because it allows him to be really in the present and to experience the bonding that comes from not acting out.

Bon Voyage to everyone at the Conference and to all "Continuing the Journey."

**Conference Planning Committee**

Chair.....	Bob H.
Treasurer.....	Michael G.
Program.....	Joseph P and John J.
Registration.....	Jim
Food.....	Joseph P and Luis R.
Entertainment.....	Yadira B.
Graphic Design.....	David F.
Decorations.....	John J.

**The French Look at SCA**

How do "civilians" see SCA? Here's some excerpts from an article written for a French magazine, *Le Nouvel Observateur*, by Jean-Gabriel Freder.

"They call themselves, George, Dennis, Nolan, Matt, Scott...their last name? I would never know. Like AAA [sic] (Alcoholics Anonymous...) from whom they are directly inspired, Sexual Compulsives Anonymous (SCA) and its members, those who are obsessed by anonymous sex, never reveal their identity. It is the golden rule of the group...which offers, in twelve meetings, to detox them, to heal them of their sexual addiction and to reteach them the virtues of fidelity. It was a very hot day, that Tuesday in July in New York. In the little building in New York where the meeting is held, shorts and bermudas are "de rigueur." Seated silently around a big table, the nine participants, from 25 to 35 years old, listen religiously to the group leader. "I'm Scott, I am a sex addict." Is Scott further along the path of recovery, or slipping seriously? All smile, he admits to having rejoined SCA...four years ago. In a serious voice, he recites the principles of the meeting. "We are here to share our strength, hope and experience..." Out of curiosity or in homage to the Gay & Lesbian Center in which we are guests, Scott asks those who are homosexual to declare themselves. Three hands raise. SCA is open to men and women. But the participants are practically all men. The plague of AIDS, which strikes mostly men, has added still more to their numbers. The fact that the meetings take place in gay locations in company with the defenders of gay rights, does not signify that SCA shares their views... The theme of this fourth meeting where I have discretely infiltrated... is the fourth step towards redemption, "I am George, I am a sex addict," each one presents himself and reads aloud a text describing the ravages exercised in this addiction and the supposed benefits of the found again recovery...Charlatanism? The meetings of SCA are free and their slogan "Progress not perfection" gives them a touch of humanity. The call to meditation and prayer does not escape all the trappings of group therapy, the modern incarnation of confession... The consolation of skeptics...SCA states that sexuality is too mysterious, too changeable, too complex to be reduced to some brutal affirmations or simple statements about fidelity."



# The Traditions

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

by David A-S, NY-SCA

### Tradition One

#### Preamble

The Traditions form the backbone of our fellowship. Our fellowship, and others like it, would have degenerated into petty power struggles, if it were not for the Traditions. Yet we so rarely hear the Traditions discussed. If they are mentioned at all it is generally by some old-timer who can quote them verbatim and issue them as a proclamation to justify why a certain thing can or can not be done. Are the Traditions really only for the initiated, or can they be of real and practical use for every member of the fellowship?

It's true that the Traditions do embody principles by which our group can function in a healthy and productive way. However, everyone ought to get involved in the practical details of the group's functioning. Traditions tell us not only that this should be encouraged, but also are the best way to go about doing this so that everyone is empowered by the experience.

What's even more interesting is that because two or more people can make a group, any group interaction can work much more effectively through application of the Traditions. Therefore taken to its obvious conclusion, any interaction I have with just one other person is a group activity. Why then have I not used the Traditions more often to help me with my relationships with others? The Steps help me to deal with my thoughts and feelings. The Traditions show me a path that I might take to share these feeling and thoughts with others.

Ultimately the Traditions describe a

possible path to intimacy. This is often achieved through service where and when the Traditions are most often used. However, I have found that the Traditions can also be applied individually in all my dealings with other people. They describe a set of rules that has the interests of all concerned always at heart.

Most of us know what isolation is but haven't a clue what intimacy is. I always thought that having sex was intimacy so I could never understand why sex left me feeling so unfulfilled

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and even more isolated, the very things I was trying to overcome by having sex. I realized that intimacy was a process not an event (like sex had become for me). Seeing a film with one person, taking a walk with another, taking a walk on my own, laughing with a group of friends were all part of an overall experience of intimacy. Only sometimes did these experiences lead to sex. Even if they didn't, they were still experiences of intimacy. I came to see intimacy as a series of concentric circles where the outer most circle represented the initial contact with another person and the inner most circle represented that contact with another person (place or thing) that seemed to transcend all boundaries but which was not necessarily sexual.

Any interaction I had with another person could be plotted on this map of

concentric circles and help me to define or chart the development of my relationships. My compulsive behavior would always want to take me straight to the innermost circle, but this was not always the most desirable or appropriate behavior. It was simply a way of avoiding the emotions, embarrassment, negotiations and exchanges of traveling from the outer to the inner circle over a period of time. This, I discovered, was no longer a desirable modus operandi. The Traditions showed me a healthy, sane and incremental way to get to know people so that reaching the central circle did not become my focus but simply part of the entire journey.

Intimacy is something I have to work at slowly and consistently. It does not happen in a moment of passion. The Traditions provide the means by which I can gradually share and unmask myself so that intimacy ("into-me-see") can develop.

### Tradition One

*Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon SCA unity.*

The first three words of Tradition One refer to "our common welfare". What is our common welfare? During meetings we often told to focus on the emotional similarities not the factual differences. Our common welfare then is represented by the common things that unite us. What are some of the things we have in common?

For example, our sense of belonging, our feelings, our shared strengths, our cultures, our families, our sense of powerlessness in the face of the disease of

(Cont'd on page 16)



**The Traditions** (Cont'd) from page 15)

sexual compulsion. Putting these things first enables us not to focus on those things that are different about each of us and have perhaps kept us separate in the past. For most of my life I have put a lot of energy into pursuing and fuelling my "uncommon valor", those things that made me stand out and ultimately kept me very alone. In any situation, I always found myself looking for the thing that I could do or say which would bring attention to me, as the most unusual and extraordinary person under the sun, with the effect that no one ever felt that they could relate to me. The first part of the first Tradition has taught me to look rather for the things I have in common with others as the first step towards cooperation, community and intimacy. This does not deny my individuality but rather gives me a safe context where I can express my individuality to a useful end. (No matter how hard I try I can not repress my individuality. I can however give myself a better chance of having some effect by expressing it within a context where I first acknowledge my similarities rather than using my individuality as a tool to separate myself from others). Our common welfare then supports me being who I am, and gives me a place and a reason to be so.

Progress really does depend upon all of us continually working together. Would the pyramids have been built if only one person had been prepared to do the work? Would we have been able to walk on the moon if only one person had tried to build a space ship? Would we have recovery worldwide if Bill W., the founder of AA, had just kept his recovery to himself? Whenever anyone of us makes any progress it benefits all of us collectively. We contribute to the improvement of conditions for each individual in our fellowship or culture. Any action I take or anything I say or even think, must therefore take into account the best intentions of all concerned as well as all the many parts of

my life, which also makes up their own whole system. I can no longer expect to be able to do just any old thing and get away with it. I need to consider the consequences of my actions. I need to consider how they affect my life as a whole, my culture, my gender, my country, the whole planet. Only in this way can I contribute to the common welfare and the recovery of myself and others. Ultimately it comes down to me standing on the street deciding whether to drop the chocolate wrapper where I am standing or whether to carry it three blocks to the nearest garbage bin. Everything I do contributes to the world and the fellowship. So I need to ask myself "Am I contributing to the pile of

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negative actions in the world or am I contributing to the pile of positive actions in the world?" And as to my compulsive acting-out behavior, I need to ask myself how is this contributing to the positive development of myself, my culture and the world. If my acting out behavior no longer serves me then perhaps I need to find another action that can have a more positive effect on me and my world.

When my life was being run by my addiction. I did not care about anyone else and had no interest in the consequences of any of my actions. All I cared about was that my needs should be met straight away, no matter what the cost to my life or to others. Tradition One helped me to slow down my life. Now I can look at my life in a larger context and make more sensible, long range decisions.

Step One made me see that my life was unmanageable because I was actively and pointlessly fighting my

addiction ("yes I will....no I won't...oh what the heck, who cares anyway?"). Only by admitting my powerlessness and not entering into the inner battle did I learn that I am not my emotions. I am more and bigger than my emotions, and learning this taught me also how to manage my emotions.

In a similar way Tradition One points out that while I am acting solely on my own behalf, I can expect to get nowhere. Only when I can admit that I am like others do I become willing to undergo the same rigors as everyone else. Oddly enough when I am willing to admit that I am like everyone else I begin to discover what it feels like to be myself because I feel myself to be part of everyone else because I define myself in relation to others not just myself. Together we learn to be ourselves and to work together to create a new group identity as well.

The First Tradition makes it clear that we can not do it on our own. We have to do it together. How many of us have tried for so long to give up our compulsive behaviors without success? How many on the other hand have succeeded within the fellowship? Clearly Tradition One tells us that it's all for one and one for all. Clearly this applies to all areas of our life too. I can't just pretend to join in. Others will soon see that I am not participating.

When I first realized how far-ranging the repercussions of the First Tradition were, I was thrown into a period of compulsive acting out. It all seemed just too difficult. Then I began to look at my acting out behavior very sharply, and realized that I was basically engaging in mutual prostitution with someone who was just as much a victim as me. I could not achieve intimacy in my life in this way. I began to talk to the people I was acting out with, as well as "talking" to the neglected parts of my life. This was the first action towards acknowledging our common welfare and the beginning of lifting myself out of instant gratification to long-term genuine connections to the neglected parts of my life and to others just like me.