



The SCAnner

**The SCA NEWSLETTER**

© 1998 SCA International Service Organization

VOLUME 9, Number 1**\$1.00****Summer 1998**

Contents

MEETINGS

2**1998 ISO Conference**
Bill E (Washington DC)**4****My Story**
Bill L and Frank H
Co-Founders of SCA**7****A Survey of Meetings**
Greg O (Chicago), David D
(Milwaukee), Mike H (NY),
Dennis B (LA), Jim M (St Louis),
Bill E (Washington DC)**9****Food for Thought**
10**Suggested Guidelines for**
Meetings
David N (NY)**13****LA and NY Conferences 1998**
Jerry J (LA), George P and Mark F
(NY)**14****What is Intergroup?**
Interview with Paul W (NY)**15****The Great Nationwide Traditions**
Search
David A-S (NY)

Editor's Note

Hello, Fellow Travelers on the road to Recovery! Welcome to the new look SCAnner. In the last issue, Joe F announced that he had come to the end of his term as editor of the SCAnner, and indeed at this year's ISO Conference in February he passed on the awesome task of editing the SCAnner to me. We thank Joe F for all his hard work over the last few years and wonder if we will ever fit his shoes with our dainty, small feet.... The Editorship was not the only change made to the SCAnner at the ISO Conference. The Budget was slashed from \$1,500 to \$250 per issue, desktop publishing was eliminated and instead of producing the SCAnner in one city, printing it in another and distributing from yet another city, all these functions will now take place in the one city, making the operation much more cost and time efficient.

As you can see the SCAnner is now just 16 photocopied pages. It has been entirely produced in Microsoft Word on my laptop, and is available on the SCA web site at:

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

While we have centralized the production and distribution we hope to continue to expand the range and diversity of the contributions.

In this issue which is focused on meetings, we have a report from Bill E, in Washington DC on the 1998 ISO Conference, a 9hr business meeting! Bill L and Frank H, the co-founders of SCA share about the founding of SCA and the very first meetings in NY. In the spirit of Tradition 4, which allows local customs to be included in the format of our meetings, we hear about some of the variety that exists from meetings across the country. Reports from Chicago, Milwaukee, NY, LA, St Louis and Washington DC. In Food for Thought, Phideaux X tells us about some of the differences between meetings in LA and NY. David N shares some suggested guidelines for meetings culled from NY Intergroup Minutes. Jerry J in LA and George P and Mark F, respectively report on the LA and NY 1998 Conferences. In New York we interview Paul W, the outgoing Chair of NY Intergroup. Finally in New York, we launch the Great Traditions Search and declare June 1998, Traditions month! (Something all meetings can participate in).

David A-S, Editor.

The Serenity Prayer

God grant me the Serenity to accept the things I can not change, Courage to change the things I can, and Wisdom to know the difference

1998 ISO Conference

by Bill E Washington D.C.

The SCA International Service Organization held its annual business meeting at the Manhattan Plaza Health Club, New York City, February 21, 1998. Representatives from New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, St. Louis, Milwaukee and Washington, DC, were present to share recovery with each other, and to do the business of the fellowship.

Intergroup Reports

LA The February Conference was well received. Patrick Carnes was the keynote speaker and attendance was high. The international meeting list has been revamped. Updates to this list may be sent to the LA post office box. LA Intergroup still holds retreats in Santa Barbara on New Year's day, Memorial Day and Labor Day.

Milwaukee has gone from two to four meetings. Intergroup is setting up a hotline. It is working on a mailing to health professionals and lawyers, in cooperation with SLAA.

Chicago is going to host a fund-raiser in May and wants to make a donation to ISO. They continue to have monthly social events. They have released the PSA to WBBM radio and hope it will be aired on a program called "Private Lives." Their phone lines continue to take calls from potential members and from therapists looking for information. They are also doing a mailing to therapists.

New York Intergroup has been researching stations who might run the PSA. It is also developing a "guidelines for meetings" document from the historical Intergroup minutes. The NY Conference is April 17-19, and the theme is "From I to We: Into the Heart of Recovery." Intergroup has returned to contributing 30% to ISO from 10% in the last year.

Washington DC has three meetings. The meetings have voted to form an Intergroup, and the first project will be to invite ISO to meet in Washington in 1999.

St. Louis now has about 9 meetings. New meetings include a newcomers meeting and a step meeting. The step meeting has attracted more women and straight people than before. They are hoping to do a Midwest convention with Chicago and

Milwaukee. Intergroup has started a committee called "Twelfth Step Within," which sponsors events aimed at the fellowship.

ISO Business

1. Spanish Literature. Translation of the fourfold has been completed and is now in use.

2. Archives. Mark S LA is storing the archival material. David N (NY) tentatively agreed to take the role of archivist. Jerry (LA) agreed to go through the archives and generate, by June 1, a summary of what is in the archive and send it to ISO and to David. David will also generate a description of the duties of an archivist, for action at next year's ISO meeting.

3. InterFellowship Forum. Jim M and Joe F attended the gathering of the four S-fellowships in Ann Arbor (sponsored by SAA). SLAA may sponsor the next forum in Boston. The Forum voted to encourage the different fellowships to share information about the other fellowships, especially in areas where one fellowship doesn't have meetings while other fellowships do.

4. SCA Book. Peter C (LA) is willing to take on the commitment of compiling an SCA Book. It was agreed to let Peter form a Task Force, under the direction of the Vice Chairperson, to consider the next appropriate steps. This Task Force may evolve into a fellowship-wide Literature Committee at the next ISO meeting. David A-S (NY) was given a mandate to lead a process to form a piece of literature on the Traditions. John F will also look at the masturbation piece and propose changes that might need to be made to make it consistent with other literature.

5. Copyright. Susan F (Milwaukee) has succeeded in obtaining a copyright for SCA literature.

6. Safety at meetings. ISO agreed to take no official stance on the topic of whether to encourage meetings to adopt a statement on disclosure of reportable sexual crimes. Intergroup representatives were encouraged to take the issue back to their individual areas for discussion.

7. PSA. (Public Service Announcement) Brian K reported that stations were often more interested in a script than in a recording, and he presented some completed ten and thirty second scripts for potential distribution.

Old Business

1. Self-identification statement. ISO agreed to the self-identification statement, which would be distributed to the public, other S-fellowships, and therapists. It is not a substitute for the statement of purpose in the fourfold.

2. SCA office. ISO agreed to ask the ISO chairperson to investigate the needs for and costs of establishing a permanent SCA/ISO office.

3. Bylaws. The proposed bylaws were adopted.

4. SCAnner. ISO decided to return to the 1995 version of producing the SCAnner, eliminating the professional desktop publishing, and to spend no more than \$500 on the SCAnner in the upcoming year.

New Business

1. Beginner's pamphlet. New York has drafted a beginner's pamphlet, and ISO adopted it as a piece of draft literature, with formal approval to come next year.

2. InterFellowship Forum. ISO agreed to link our Web site to those of all other S-programs. Despite resigning as chair, Jim M agreed to continue to represent SCA at the InterFellowship Forum.

3. Twenty questions. ISO voted to remove 'especially AIDS' from the 17th question in the fourfold. This change will occur the next time the fourfold is reprinted.

Election of Officers

Chairperson: Vice-chairperson Dennis (LA), succeeds Jim (St. Louis), who resigned mid-term. Dennis will serve a 1 year term. Vice-chairperson: Gary (LA) 1 year term. Scanner Editor: David A-S (NY) 1 year term.

ISO 1999 & 2000.

Washington was accepted as the site for the 1999 ISO Conference and Chicago for the year 2000.

ISO Income and Expenses

from February 1, 1997 to February 19, 1998

Income		Expenses	
7th Tradition		Bank Charges	\$ 30.50
LA	\$ 750.00	InterFellowship	\$ 494.05
Milwaukee	\$ 200.00	ISO	\$2,089.03
NY	\$ 174.00	Literature	\$2,726.00
St Louis	\$ 550.00	Nat. Co-ord	\$ 94.38
Total 7th Tradition	\$1,674.29	Phone	\$1,190.43
Donations	\$ 35.00	SCAnner	\$2,942.30
Literature Sales	\$3,633.18	Web Site	\$ 170.03
SCAnner Sales	\$ 239.00	Misc	\$ 125.91
ISO Meetings	\$2,089.03	Total Expenses	\$9,862.63
Total Income	\$5,581.47	Total	
		Income less Expenses	-\$4,281

SCAnner Subscriptions



The SCAnner, the Newsletter of Sexual Compulsives Anonymous.
Annual Subscriptions are now available for groups, individuals or concerned professionals.
Annual Subscription is only \$2.00 or \$1.00 per issue

Subscription Order Form

Name/Organization _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

_____ Winter 1998 _____ Copies @ \$1.00 \$ _____ Total

_____ Summer 1999 _____ Copies @ \$1.00 \$ _____ Total

TOTAL ENCLOSED \$ _____

Please make checks or money orders payable to SCA SCAnner Subscription. Send your check and subscription order form to **SCA Subscriptions c/o SCA NY, PO Box 1585 Old Chelsea Station, New York, NY, 10113-0935**

My Story

by Bill L and Frank H, Co-Founders of SCA

In this issue about meetings, My Story brings you the stories of the two founding members of SCA, Bill L and Frank H, sharing their experience on how the first SCA meeting came to be. Thanks to Saul M (NY) Bill L's story has been unearthed from the SCA NY Archives while Frank H's story is a reprint from an earlier issue of the SCanner, supplied by former SCanner Editor Richard K. Ed.

Bill L's Story

Looking back to September of 1977 when I went to my first AA meeting, little did I know that I was putting down one drug just to pick up another: compulsive sex. Actually most of my adult life from the age of nineteen had been devoted to the pursuit of sex, searching for sex, having sex, feeling ashamed afterwards but starting the whole cycle over and over again. I would also romanticize these events in the hope that one of them would develop into a relationship. Of course it never did. However, the pain, despair and shame did lead me to start to search for help. As soon as I started to go to AA meetings I stopped drinking and I remember how frightened I felt. 'Who are these people, can I trust them?' I thought. I found some sort of escape and solace in the darkness of the bathhouses. It makes me sad now to think that the darkness was what I felt I deserved. In all honesty I have to admit at first it was a way of discovering my sexuality and a big boost to my ego to discover that so many other men were interested in me. That didn't last long and soon I started to live with a lot of despair. Talking about this area of my life in AA was uncomfortable even though I did it anyway. I even remember talking to Frank H about what was going on. Little did I know that a few years later Frank H would reappear in my life, in such a profound way.

During this time I started a number of things. It seemed that even though I talked about my acting out to my sponsor and just about anyone else who would listen, I just couldn't stop acting out. I felt so out of control. Sometime during 1977, I started going to conscious raising groups at this time. No one had heard about Aids and the sexual revolution was in full bloom. For the next two years I was in three of these groups and they did help. I was able to start to feel better about myself and to accept myself as a gay male. Two other things happened at this time which I did not then realize how significant they would be in my recovery. I started to

use my creativity again and stopped using amyl nitrate. Getting completely sober and honest with myself really woke me up. At that time I stopped bringing strangers home and/or going to their apartment. At first I managed to stop this behavior only for several weeks but then the periods grew longer. This was a difficult time because I was trying to control the disease.

In 1981, I went to my first AA DA meeting. Even though I thought I was making progress, I continued to act out and even started to go back to bathhouses on a regular basis. I remember one incident very vividly. I was lying on a bed in one of the little rooms and as I glanced at my outstretched arm I realized that there was no difference between me and a heroine addict waiting for his next hit. I closed the door, got down on my knees and prayed for help. I certainly didn't have much hope but the next evening I went to a DA meeting. I shared about my frustration, despair and helplessness about my not being able to stop acting out sexually. A few months earlier I had brought the idea of starting a program of self help for sex addicts to my therapist. He told me that a program for sexual sobriety would never work because everyone needs sex. Fortunately, I stopped seeing him a week later.

John the founder of DA approached me after I had shared and just held me. He shared with me that it sounded to him like I was in a place like the one he was in when he started DA. My first thought was how could I start a program? But when Collin, Jim J, Thomas T, Nochem, and a few others said that they would support me. I did just that.

On a Sunday evening in 1981, the first meeting focusing on acting out sexually met in my apartment. I felt so scared and also so excited. What would this actually be about? Who would come? For the next few months the group met every Sunday at my apartment. In the beginning the people were mainly from DA: Collin, Saul M, Jim S, Thomas T and a few others, including women. We didn't have any structure and certainly we had no literature. At that time I had not read anything about sexual addiction. After a few months I received a letter from someone who had been in one of those consciousness raising groups I had attended a few years earlier. He enclosed the names of three programs: SLAA in Boston, SA in Simi Valley, and another whose name I can't remember now. I wrote to all three

and received information from SLAA and SA and presented the information to the group at the next meeting.

I was beginning to get some recovery and didn't act out nearly as much. Also I was beginning to have hope again. We liked what we read in the SA literature, even though we didn't like the tone of what was said about homosexuality. Some of the other people in the group felt the same. When the founder of SA, Roy K met with us we brought this to his attention and he said "No problem" and that it could be taken care of. We took a vote and became SA New York. I felt so good. I felt I was walking on air for I had hope again.

We continued to meet and in a few months new literature arrived. It directly put down homosexuality and personally I felt I had been betrayed. The more I learnt about the principles and the underlying beliefs of SA, the more I began to feel that SA came from a place of feeling guilt about one's sexuality. With all the work I had done on myself I was determined not to feel guilty about having sex. SA was based on the idea that you couldn't have sex unless you were in a committed relationship. It was based in the fundamentalist religion I had been taught as a child. I decided that this was not for me and that it would not be being true to myself. I said that I couldn't be part of SA and suggested that the meeting find another meeting place. They found a place at St Jean's on Lexington Avenue. The meetings had at this point been taking place in my pottery-filled apartment for six months. With no meetings to attend, needless to say, in a short time I was back to my old acting out behavior.

When the phone rang in May of 1982 I was surprised hear Tom L at the other end. Even though I knew him from AA he had never called me before. He told me that he was interested in attending one of the meetings he heard were meeting in my apartment. I explained all that had happened and added that I was desperate for a meeting myself. I arranged to meet Tom at an SA meeting. Somehow I had got the information wrong and when Tom and I arrived we found no SA meeting. I must say that I was relieved and at the same time felt that I needed a meeting. It was such a beautiful spring day that Tom L. and I decided to walk to Central Park and there talked for a few hours. I felt so uplifted. Later Tom L. came back to my apartment and I gave him the SA literature

that I had. We decided that we would try to find a meeting place, since I wasn't comfortable using my apartment at that time.

A few weeks passed and on the morning after one of my binges I got down on my knees and prayed to God for help. That afternoon I was walking up Seventh Avenue and I heard a voice call to me from across the street. It was Tom L. I was overjoyed to see him and embraced him. He told me that Richard from AA was allowing a sexual recovery meeting to take place in his apartment. It had just started and the second meeting would take place next Monday. He asked me if I would speak. Would I ever!

I couldn't wait for Monday evening to arrive. Little did I know that I would see Frank H there. I remembered our talks a few years before in AA. It made me feel good inside. Saul was there and a few other people from OA. We met in Richard's apartment for six months before we started to meet in other people's apartments. We used the SA literature with parts I didn't like crossed out. I put everything I had, all my energies, into not acting out. While some of my behavior seemed to have stopped, I just couldn't seem to stop going to bathhouses. With just one meeting a week I started to call people up on the phone for help and support.

There were times when I felt I would die if I didn't have sex. What really helped was being able to go to my studio and work with clay. It was a very painful time for me, but having my creativity was a spiritual and healing outlet. A few of us kept showing up week after week to meetings. We began to get stronger. I don't know if at the time any one of us knew what was going on. In time we became Sexual Compulsives Anonymous. Frank H found a meeting place at Washington Square Community Church. *[This meeting is still running. Ed.]* For the first time I started to try different approaches to deal with my sexual compulsion. I stopped cruising on the streets and soaking in those seductive images. I tried dating without the goal of ending up in bed. SCA helped me to stop viewing people (as well as myself) as sexual objects. I started to be not so seductive. My friendships with people changed for the better.

SA asked us not to use its name on our literature. Soon afterwards the first SCA Literature Committee was formed. The Literature Committee meetings were very unstructured but we continued to meet. Richard, Bruce, Saul, Nochem, Bob M and I, (I hope I haven't left anyone out), started writing out the Characteristics. Bob took notes on our discussions and formalized the

first piece of SCA literature: The Characteristics. Even after sixteen years, when I read them I am still amazed at how true they are. I now know that God was guiding us during these Literature Committee meetings, as well as in starting Sexual Compulsives Anonymous.

Frank H's Story

After I'd been sober in Alcoholics Anonymous for a few years I began to be able to see the addictive nature of my sexual activity. I wanted to stop but I couldn't. I tried all combinations of sexual activities in the hope that one or another combination would "work" and that I'd be freed of the compulsion.

I talked to a couple of other AA members who shared my problem. One of these friends was Tom. We shared with one another our successes and failures. Once Tom suggested that I pray while going to and being in acting out places. This seemed to help me to accept myself as someone who couldn't stop running from one sexual episode to another. There was a part of me that was good and virginal and another part that felt like a turd. Praying helped to let these two parts of myself to come together a little bit.

About a year after the first meeting of our program, I had a sort of spiritual awakening in a bathhouse in Amsterdam. I wasn't getting what I wanted in the orgy room. But instead of going on to look for sex elsewhere I was able somehow to go back to my hotel.

On returning to New York, with the support of Tom, AA and my therapist, I was able to stay on what we now call a sexual recovery plan. At this point I thought it would be great if we could have 12 step meetings to support recovery from the craving for sex. I tried to find a meeting place in churches, a meeting house and other institutions, but I had no success. I finally became discouraged and stopped looking.

In June of 1982, my friend Tom called to say that Richard, another AA friend of ours was interested in a sexual recovery meeting and that he was willing to donate his apartment for the meeting, at least for a start. On June 22, we had our first meeting. Tom, who was scheduled to speak, didn't appear at first. So I became the first speaker.

I don't remember what I said, but I suppose I must have talked about my long history of going to tea rooms, bathhouses, trucks and other acting out places. Then I must have

said a little about my year of uncertainty and shaky sobriety. Tom showed up somewhere during the qualification. There couldn't have been more than four or five people at the meeting.

At the third or fourth meeting, Bill L spoke. We'd known Bill since he first came into AA. I think it was at this meeting that I learnt that Bill L had started the first Sexaholics Anonymous group in New York, based on the principles established by Roy, the founder of SA on the West Coast. After meeting at Bill's apartment for several months, the group had moved to St Jean's Church. Bill felt the SA literature was overtly anti-gay and decided he didn't want to participate any more.

At that time, we also called ourselves Sexaholics Anonymous, not because we considered ourselves a part of that program, but simply from a lack of imagination. We had already clearly differentiated ourselves from SA in our determination that each member would define his/her own recovery plan for him/her self. It was my feeling that each person came to the program with something that they wanted to change about their sexual behavior and they would start their sexual recovery plan with that. In addition, the membership for at least the first six to eight months was exclusively gay men. The literature we had from the original SA seemed very homophobic to us. We were out to create a program which would support the self-esteem of gay people, not put it in question.

Almost from the beginning, we had members from Al-Anon and from OA. Some of the early members included George, Saul and Bob McC. Not too long thereafter Bob R, Robert N, Nochem and Barbara McC began to appear. Most of these members are still with us, though some no longer attend meetings.

In the Fall of '82, there was to be an eclipse of the moon. A friend told me I shouldn't watch it on my roof because it would be too dangerous. I concluded that I would have to watch from the park where I'd acted out most consistently before I got sexually sober. The night of the eclipse was the beginning of a two month slip for me. I just couldn't stop. I visited temples in Bangkok and prayed for sobriety, for the lifting of my compulsion. Then I went, powerless, directly to the octagonal tearoom right outside the temple.

When I returned to meetings in New York (still only one a week at that time), I feared they'd throw me out. Here I was, a founding member back "out there" again. But no.

They said: 'Keep coming back'. They understood. It still makes my eyes teary to remember that I was wanted; I belonged. With great difficulty, I got sober again. It was like swimming against the current, but the fellowship sustained me.

About this time, we started talking about getting a meeting place in a public space. We had stopped meeting in Richard's and the meeting moved from place to place, making it difficult for new members to find us. We met for a while at Bill L's and for a while at the Gay Jewish Synagogue. I finally agreed to look for a space again. Bob O'C suggested that another program met at the Washington Square Community Church in Greenwich Village, and that they might be willing to give us space too. I called. I talked as best I could about who we were and what we were trying to do. None of us had a lot of sobriety at this point and I found it hard to talk about sexual compulsion. It felt very much like I, as a sex maniac, was asking for a place in church. I didn't see how I, or we, could be accepted. But we got the place and began to meet in a long, narrow room looking out onto West 3rd Street. I still feel so grateful to that church where we still meet on Monday nights.

It was also at the Washington Square Community Church that our first literature committee was formed, and put together the Characteristics, which have become a keynote for us.

We were approached by SA in California and asked to change our name, since we were infringing on their copyright by calling ourselves SA and being a different program. We had a long business meeting at which I wanted to continue to call myself a sexaholic and to have the group called Sexaholics Anonymous. I liked the name and felt defiant. But group conscience ruled after much debate that we would be called Sexual Compulsives Anonymous.

SCA ISO is currently working toward creating its own SCA Book that will include sharing from members about their struggles with addiction and their successes with recovery. If you would like to submit your story and help others by sharing your strength, hope and recovery of the program, please send your story to:

**The SCanner
c/o SCA NY
PO Box 1585
Old Chelsea Station
New York NY 10113-0935**

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 a 60-second radio spot about sexual compulsion and how to get in touch with SCA. A step by step instruction sheet on getting the spots aired by local stations included with each kit.

This sheet also explains how to alert the 800 number volunteers of any additional information you might want to have passed on to people seeking help in your area.

The kits cost \$12 for the first and \$10 for each additional kits. Order a kit for each station you hope to have air the spots. Make checks payable to:

**SCA/ISO Literature
PO Box 931181, Los Angeles
CA 90093-1181**

The SCanner is YOUR Newsletter.

The SCanner is published twice a year, (in the summer and in the winter), by ISO, the International Service Organization of SCA. It is meant to serve as a forum for SCA members, who want to share their experience strength and hope with other members, particularly those who may be isolated and can not reach a meeting easily or regularly. Your contributions and comments are greatly encouraged and always sincerely invited. Please send your contributions to:

**The SCanner
C/o SCA NY
PO Box 1585
Old Chelsea Station
New York NY 10113-0935**

The opinions expressed in the SCanner are those of the individuals who gave them and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of SCA as a whole.

SCA Information Lines

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

**SCA International Service Organizations
PO Box 1585
Old Chelsea Station
New York NY 10113-0935**

**National Hot Line (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
Midlands/Odessa TX	(915) 560-5240
Milwaukee MI	(414) 299-0755
St Louis	(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 of these fellowships in cities and countries that have no SCA meetings. Contact ISO for this information at least 2 weeks in advance. The following information is provided in the spirit of fellowship. For Information on SLAA and SAA meetings in the USA and over seas write to:

**SLAA PO Box 650010 West Newton
MA 02165-0010 (617) 332-1845
SAA PO Box 70949 Houston
TX 77270 (713) 869-4902**

**SCanner Subscriptions
PO Box 1585
Old Chelsea Station
New York NY 10113-0935**

**For all other SCA Literature
SCA/ISO
PO Box 1089
Milwaukee WI 53201-1089**

A survey of meetings around the country

With reports from LA, NY, St. Louis, Milwaukee, Chicago, Washington DC.

Tradition Four tells us that each meeting is autonomous except in matters that may affect the entire fellowship and maybe dilute the message of recovery. In this sometimes quirky report from across the country, members from LA, NY, St. Louis, Milwaukee, Chicago and Washington DC report on some of the local differences that make their meetings peculiar to their region even though they are still true to the SCA message and uphold Tradition Four.

Chicago Meetings

by Greg O

Chicago has about 6 weekly meetings, one for each day of the week, except Wednesday. Most meet at the Newtown Alano Club in Lakeview near "Boystown", the gay area, but one meeting is on the South Side of Chicago (might be kind of analogous to Queens or Brooklyn as compared to Manhattan).

The Sunday meeting is especially popular, and it meets at a church also in Lakeview.

Meetings are 90 minutes in length, and all are closed. None have specific topics (like dating, anger). All follow basically the same format. The meetings start with the serenity prayer, followed by intergroup report, treasurer's report, and other business. Some meetings have alternating 'leads' (our term for 'qualification') and readings from *Hope and Recovery*. Others alternate leads and a topic chosen from a bag of scrap papers on which members have written topics (like dating, sponsorship, recovery plan, etc.). Most meetings have untimed shares after a break.

The Sunday evening meeting has timed shares; timing is determined by the number of people present. Most meetings close with the serenity prayer, but Sunday has a special prayer of its own. We say, "Keep coming back, it works if you work it sober" instead of "... if you work it, so work it you're worth it".

LA Meetings

by Dennis B

Sunday: 10am Hollywood. A very popular meeting in a recovery center. We sit in their living room area and have a speaker/12-step share and round robin sharing. Almost every meeting in LA is in this format with a few

exceptions. Some meetings call on speakers to share.

Sunday: 5pm Silverlake. This is an 11th step meditation meeting at the home of one of our members. It is a small group, but they love it!!

Wednesday: 6:15pm Hollywood. This is our Dating/Relationship meeting, and it is one of our few CLOSED meetings.

Tuesday: 10am Hollywood. This is one of our 2 morning meetings

Tuesday: 6pm Long Beach. This is a feelings/topics discussion group. They have a step study first Tuesday of the month

Wednesday: 8pm Hollywood. A sharing meeting. Round robin, no clapping, except at the end.

Thursday: 8pm Hollywood. This is our Recovery Plan meeting, where the focus is on writing a sex plan. This is a good meeting for the newcomer.

Saturday: 8pm Hollywood. Meditation and check-in for sobriety. It is candlelit and very nice, yet small.

Milwaukee Meetings

by David D

There are currently four SCA meetings in Milwaukee. Three of these meetings alternate weekly between the 12 Steps and a lead or a topic. The remaining meeting does a topic or lead each week. Attendance at the meetings ranges from four or five members upward to fifteen or even twenty. Meetings begin with readings from program material such as How it Works, The Twelve Steps, The Characteristics, etc. Then there's a reading or a lead, and then the floor is open for shares. We rarely time shares, but ask that everyone be responsibly brief. Meetings generally last an hour and a half.

A year or so ago some SCA members found that the First Step Meeting seemed overwhelming for newcomers, and that they weren't getting the information they needed right away. So we created a Newcomer's Meeting with a reading that explained clearly and simply how the program works and what tools we use. The readings we use include The Twenty Questions and The

Characteristics, if they aren't read at the beginning of the meeting. The Newcomer's Meeting has been very successful.

New York Meetings

by Mike H

Saturday 12:00pm Bisexual Issues for All. Round robin format. Some attendees are bisexual and talk about those issues as it relates to their recovery. I found it to be an open forum to discuss any issues that pertain to sexual addiction.

Saturday 2:00pm Committed Relationships. An opportunity for addicts to talk about their addiction issues while being in a committed relationship with someone and/or themselves. Open to all.

Saturday 5:00pm Incest and Childhood Sexual Abuse. Follows the usual format of qualification and sharing. The last few minutes of the meeting are reserved for everyone to say an affirmation about themselves or their life that they would like to make real for themselves.

Saturday 7:45pm Characteristics Meeting. The qualification is based on one of the fourteen characteristics of SCA.

Sunday 1:00pm Intimacy: The intention of the meeting is to provide a space where people can discuss their struggles with obtaining and sustaining intimacy with another person and themselves. Meeting begins with a qualification (a 15-20 minute share, where the speaker shares his/her experience, strength and hope of the program).

Sunday 3:15pm 9th and 10th Characteristics. This meeting allows explicit language.

Sunday 5:00pm Higher Power Workshop. A meeting that includes two ten-minute periods of silence, one at the beginning and one at the end. Open shares with no qualification. Very meditative.

Sunday 5:00pm Dating Workshop. The qualification focuses on the challenges of dating while being in recovery. One need not be dating to attend.

Monday 6:15pm AA Big Book. This meeting reads a page at a time from the AA

Big Book. Sharing then focuses on the page read.

Wednesday 5:45pm Romantic Obsession. For anyone who has either harbored and suffered from romantic obsessions and/or has been the object of someone else's romantic obsession. Begins with a qualification.

Wednesday 7:30pm Creativity. This meeting uses the book *The Artist's Way* as a basis. The ten principles of creativity from the book are read out loud, among other things at the beginning of the meeting. Sharing focuses on how creativity and acting out can compliment one another.

Tuesday 6:00pm Beginner's Tools. Each week different pertinent 12-step tools are discussed (usually about three a week), including what sponsorship means, understanding and usefulness of slogans, the value of reading literature to stay sober, and practicing prayer and meditation on a regular basis. Other tools discussed include meetings, the use of the telephone, the 12 Steps, the sexual recovery plan, abstinence, socializing, dating, and service.

Thursday 8:00pm 4th Step Recovery Workshop. At the beginning of the meeting general directions of the 4th step inventory are read. Then twenty minutes is devoted to writing answers to 4th Step questions pertaining to one's childhood, adolescence, and adulthood. (There are pre-prepared questions given to participants.) After the writing period, participants may read what they have written. Sharing is optional.

Friday 6:15pm Integrating Healthy Sexuality. This meeting uses Patrick Carnes' book, *Don't Call It Love* as a basis for seeking healthy sexuality. The 15 Characteristics of Healthy Sexuality are read out at the beginning of the meeting, and there is a one-minute check-in on one of the Characteristics.

Friday 7:30pm Anger. A very useful meeting, particularly for the 'anger anorexic' that gives addicts an opportunity to talk about their anger. Along with the 12 steps, a list of characteristics specific to people who tend to avoid dealing with their anger is read. People learn the importance of expressing anger, as well as sexuality, in a healthy way.

St Louis Meetings

by Jim M

St Louis has 9 weekly meetings. Monday evening we have a Newcomers meeting

where there are speakers and presentations on Steps 1,2 and 3.

Wednesday we have a Step Study meeting. This uses a variety of formats. Generally we use *A Gentle Path through the 12 Steps* by Patrick Carnes as a basis, but we've used a wide variety of formats including having speakers, meditation meetings, music therapy, recovery tapes, etc. We always include a general check-in and a 3-5 minute meditation as part of the format. Generally there is time for individual writing, and small group work as well.

Friday night is a very well-attended topic meeting with general sharing.

Sunday night is a speaker meeting, where we rotate the topic from a Step, Sexual Recovery Plan, My Story and Speaker's Choice.

Washington Meetings

by Bill E

Monday: Steps 1-3. The meeting alternates between reading *Hope and Recovery* on the step (spending two weeks on Step 1, because it is so long) and having a member qualify on the step, followed by sharing. After Step 3 they cycle back to Step 1.

Thursday: Topics in recovery. The meeting leader comes prepared with a topic each week, and people share for the entire meeting on that topic. Sometimes the leader will share on the topic to open the meeting, and sometimes the leader will pass around a section of the literature that's on the topic to be read before sharing begins. But, other times the topic will be announced, and the leader will wait for someone to raise their hand to do the first share. Members are encouraged to share on the topic, but a share on anything people need to talk about to stay sober is fine.

Sunday: Round-robin. The room is arranged in two rows that go along three walls of the room. The leader sits in front, along the fourth wall. After initial readers, a person sitting in the inner row volunteers to share first, and the turn passes around the inner circle, then goes to the outer circle. When there are 15 minutes left, the leader begins to call on people by a raising of hands. Since this is an end-of-weekend meeting, the shares tend to focus on getting current about the events of the weekend and how the members are feeling.

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 are interested in this service, we ask that you make a commitment to send one letter a month. Here's how it works:

- 1) First of all each volunteer will be paired with another member of SCA. Both SCA members ought to have a least one year in Fellowship and six months on a recovery plan.
- 2) The two SCA members are assigned with one "loner", (someone who lives too far from an SCA meeting to be able to attend it).
- 3) The work of reading and writing the letters is left to the SCA members. They can decide for themselves how to divide up the work. Sometimes one might do the writing while the other might read the letters to be on guard against inadvertent provocation and intriguing etc. Sometimes the two might alternate months. They can decide what suits them best.
- 4) To maintain anonymity, we do not send out identifying information, including home addresses or identifiable e-mail names. (Anonymous e-mail is acceptable).

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 to:

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

Food for thought

In an effort to continue to expand the appeal and the contribution base of the SCAnner, we begin this in issue a new column still called Food for Thought. This column will include contributions from you, the reader, from around the country and maybe around the world. It will offer you an opportunity to share those special thoughts about program that sometimes seem too wonderful not to be shared with everyone, everywhere, and will allow me to ask people to write about topics that may not otherwise be put forward. Our first contribution is a point in fact.

Continuing the theme of meetings, I asked Phideaux X, a New Yorker, who has been living in LA for the last 18 months, to write about the differences between meetings in NY and LA. Phideaux wrote his piece in the form of a letter.

Greetings from Los Angeles to my comrades in New York. Though I don't know all of you, I love you in a very special way and I miss you. I've been in LA now for these past 18 months and though I had a little relapse, I'm now coming up on a year on my plan, (my first time!). However, don't worry about me, because LA has lots of lovely meetings and a terrific group of SCA brothers and sisters – the deepest, most generous, inspiring and bravest folks I've ever met (excepting, of course, all of you).

You may be wondering about our customs here in Los Angeles. First, the notorious reports of "clapping" are true. It is a tradition in Southern California to clap after each individual person shares! It's been explained to me that this is to encourage and support the newcomer as well as the addict who still suffers. I had mistakenly thought it was due to some theatrical element – you know, Hollywood, the Oscars (although New York does have the Friday night so-called "Academy Awards" beginners meeting where clapping for day counts and surrender chips can be rather fervent).

One difference I've noticed in Los Angeles is that there are fewer SCA meetings (average 2–3 per day vs. 5–8 for NY). However, there is a plus side to this: I always know I will see many of the same people at each meeting and that makes me feel like I am part of a close-knit fellowship.

Of course, people ask me if I don't miss the more relaxed New York meeting formats and I must confess the answer is "yes".

Happily LA has a New York style meeting every Monday. I suggest you check out the sample meeting formats in the blue book to note the differences. (I frequently tease my California colleagues that the reason there's so much reading and script here because of LA's many frustrated writers and actors.)

Perhaps the hardest adjustment to Los Angeles for me to make was in the celebration of 'anniversaries'. Here, we present cakes with candles and serenade the members on their anniversary. However, this day is referred to as their "birthday" and you even have to be careful in meetings to stipulate 'natal birthday' if you are referring to that other day – you know, the one when you were born. I did not think I could ever let go of my negative judgement of this custom. I preferred the rituals of New York, where we give chips and friends brought you flowers. But, now that I've let go of all judgments, I eagerly sing and I'm even looking forward to celebrating my own anniversary – I mean, birthday – in Los Angeles.

While we're on the subject of chips and sobriety milestones, there's another curious and wonderful thing they do in Los Angeles. When you "take" a chip, you automatically get to share how you came to get it this time. It can be quite inspiring for those who are still struggling to hear the gratitude that often accompanies a milestone of this nature.

Writing this letter makes me realize just how wonderful Los Angeles SCA is. It's a tremendous celebration of spirit and a true fellowship where I believe we really try to inspire and encourage the newcomer. So, you may ask, why do I miss New York SCA? Aside from the diversity of membership in New York and greater participation from women and heterosexual men, the one thing I pine for is the Saturday 5 p.m. Incest and Childhood Sexual Abuse Survivors meeting, my spiritual home group! One advantage to having a larger membership is you can support specialized meetings. Just a quick perusal of the New York meeting list illustrates this: Romantic Obsession, 4th Step Writing Workshop, Integrating Healthy Sexuality, Bisexual Issues for All, Higher Power Workshop, and the 9th & 10th characteristics (the infamous

graphic language permitted meeting). It's like a weekly SCA conference!

Well, I've got to go now, otherwise I'm going to be late for a meeting (which is frowned upon here in LA). But I can't wait until I can visit you all in New York. And maybe some of you will decide to come out for our 1999 conference next February. I'll keep you posted!

Fondly, Phideaux X.

From an anonymous reader comes this very moving set of personal promises that I'm sure we can all identify with and long to acquire.

Dear SCAnner,

Recently in my step study group we had an exercise where we wrote our own version of the promises. It was helpful to hear other people's thoughts and I would like to share mine with you all.

"I can promise that we will be able to look ourselves in the mirror without recoiling or feeling like sleaze. We will feel the interconnection with other people whether friend, foe or stranger. We will see inspiration in the world and be constantly struck by things we recognize and notice around us. The feeling of dread and free floating anxiety will slowly be replaced with a centeredness and will feel like we are in our bodies. We will be grounded and notice our heartbeat, our breath and the feeling of wind on our skin. We will see how feelings can not destroy us and, strangely, we will come to know sadness and melancholy as friends. We will recognize that in God's world no thing is wrong and to just have faith is one of the most beautiful miracles of all".

These are my promises and slowly they are taking shape in my life. Thank you all for helping awaken my humanity through your shares and fellowship.

Anonymous

Suggested Guidelines For Meetings

Compiled from NY Intergroup Minutes by David N. NY

Currently before NY Intergroup is a document that details, among other things, suggested guidelines for SCA meetings. David N. has compiled these guidelines from past NY Intergroup Minutes. It is the intention of NY Intergroup to adopt these suggestions as a 'living document (ie., an ongoing, updated record of non-binding suggestions for the conduct of meetings based on the experience, strength and hope of the members of SCA'. The suggestions (all but the last one) have been appended with a commentary (Paul B, Orison A, Rob W, Daniel M contributed to this, along with David N).

DISCLAIMER

Intergroup is not a governing or ruling body (Traditions 2,9). Each meeting is autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or SCA as a whole (Tradition 4). Thus groups are free to make any and all decisions regarding their structure, conduct, scheduling and individual focus as long as they do not violate the 12 Traditions or harm other groups or SCA as a whole.

However, as SCA has grown and evolved, much wisdom has been gained by recovering addicts about processes which further recovery and those which can be destructive to SCA unity. The following is a list of suggested guidelines for individual meetings to draw upon when seeking such guidance. The principle of "take what you like and leave the rest" should be considered to apply to ALL the items on this list.

The first suggestion that Intergroup develop a list of *non-binding* suggestions for meeting formats and guidelines was documented in the Intergroup minutes of February 15, 1985. A committee was formed, but no evidence is available that such a list was ever compiled. However, many references to such suggestions are contained in the Intergroup Minutes. Citations to these minutes appear in the list as (I.M. <date>) with the date of the Intergroup meeting.

I. General Notes on Meetings

A. It is suggested that the Opening Statement from the fourfold be read at the beginning of the meeting, and the Closing Statement just prior to the end of the meeting.

Commentary: Reading the Opening Statement and Closing Statement at the beginning and end of each meeting sets the tone and reminds members what SCA is all

about. It explains the purpose of the program and outlines a framework for recovery.

B. It is suggested that each meeting have a chairperson, a treasurer and a literature person as officers, with a commitment to serve the group consistently over their term.

Commentary: Having regularly attending officers at a meeting provides structure and allows members to focus on recovery issues rather than business issues.

C. It is suggested that meetings set their own boundaries by group conscience as to the use of graphic language in shares, and that such boundaries be stated as part of the meeting format. It is further suggested that unless allowance of graphic language is specifically adopted as part of the meeting format, that members refrain from graphic descriptions during shares that might be triggering to others. (I.M. 7/27/86, 8/13/89)

Commentary: The use of graphic or sensational language in meetings can be a trigger for many addicts to act out. However, some addicts in recovery find that they need to say exactly what is coming up for them around their sexual issues. By taking a group conscience on the use of such language and announcing it as part of the meeting format, members can set their own boundaries and choose whether they wish to attend such a meeting.

D. It is suggested that meetings discourage members from naming specific acting-out places during shares (this would include the use of proper names, street numbers, and "on-line" addresses). (I.M. 8/13/89, 2/16/97)

Commentary: The naming of specific acting out places by proper name or address can be triggering for many addicts, and may also lead them to act out in new ways and in places. Refraining from the naming of these places in open sharing can be a conscious choice to move toward recovery, as well as simply a courtesy to other addicts for whom this information would be potentially damaging.

E. It is suggested that meetings set their own boundaries in discouraging "cross talk". While "cross talk" is difficult to define, it may include speaking aloud while someone else is sharing, commenting directly on, or criticizing what someone else has shared. It is suggested that group chairpersons encourage members to focus on themselves

in sharing, or on identification with the qualifying speaker, if the meeting has one. (I.M. 1/19/86)

Commentary: In recovery we are encouraged to keep the focus on ourselves. The use of critical or shaming language toward others in meetings is destructive of a safe environment in which to share. As active addicts, secrecy, guilt and shame were usually very much a part of our addiction. Having the safety to share our secrets without fear of overt judgment is a tool of recovery. Directly referring to the shares of others can be threatening to many addicts who fear such judgment, even if the reference is merely to identify with the person sharing. However, identification with speakers at meetings may be beneficial. These members have volunteered to do service by sharing their experience strength and hope, and allowing for identification is a way of encouraging others in their recovery.

F. It is suggested that meetings set their own boundaries by group conscience as to the agreed upon length of members' shares. In the absence of timed shares, it is suggested that group chairpersons encourage members to voluntarily limit the time of their shares so that as many as possible who wish to share may do so. (I.M. 9/29/85)

G. It is suggested that the chairperson of each meeting be responsible to adhere to the agreed upon format for the meeting, and that the format only be changed during a business meeting on the basis of a group conscience. (I.M. 7/27/86)

Commentary: This is consistent with Tradition 2, that says there is only "one ultimate authority" as far as our group purpose is concerned, that is, "a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience". If the chairperson were to deviate from the agreed upon format, then he or she would be assuming too much authority, like someone who governs. Instead, Tradition 2 says our leaders are "trusted servants." By following the agreed upon format, the chairperson is serving the will of the group and not his or her own agenda.

H. It is suggested that chairpersons discourage announcements not related to SCA from being made during SCA meetings. (I.M. 11/17/85)

Commentary: This suggestion reflects several traditions, including 5, 6 and 10.

According to Tradition 5, the primary purpose of each group is "to carry its message to the sexual compulsive who still suffers." SCA-related announcements are inherently geared toward the primary purpose; non-SCA related announcements are not. Also, an SCA meeting offers addicts an oasis from the outside world; bringing in non-SCA announcements would be an intrusion into that oasis. Non-SCA announcements during meetings might also suggest that the group endorses an outside enterprise (in violation of Tradition 6) or give the impression that SCA has an opinion on an outside issue (contrary to Tradition 10).

I. It is suggested that groups hold periodic business meetings, and that any group consciences taken during these meetings be recorded and retained for future reference. It is further suggested that each meeting document its meeting format, specifying such things as the literature to be read, the presence/absence of a break, timed shares, etc. (*I.M. 1/19/86*)

Commentary: Experience shows that if group consciences and meeting formats are not written down, over time they are quickly forgotten. Once they're on paper, however, it's easy to transfer the information from outgoing officers to incoming officers. This makes it easier for new officers to fulfill their duties and maintain the consistency and integrity of a meeting, as well as save time by avoiding the need to take new group consciences on decisions already made in the past to the group's satisfaction.

J. It is suggested that each group elect an Intergroup Representative for a suggested term of one (1) year. It is further suggested that this person have a substantial amount of time in program (90 days minimum, 6 months preferable) and make regular reports to the group about Intergroup activities. (*I.M. 9/25/88*)

Commentary: Intergroup Representative is an important position because it keeps autonomous groups connected through the collective body of Intergroup. The term of one year is suggested because it allows for consistency at Intergroup, which often takes many months to make decisions. And since Intergroup generally meets only once a month, the service is not considered much more taxing than other positions, which require weekly appearances at meetings for 3 to 4 months. The 90-day to 6-month requirement is recommended because Intergroup makes decisions that could potentially affect the entire fellowship, and members with less than 90 days are not likely to be informed enough about program to help substantially in making those decisions. It is also crucial that the

Intergroup Rep. report back to the meeting he or she represents; in this way, he or she is a true representative by keeping the group informed and also fielding the group's questions and opinions, so that these can be communicated back to Intergroup.

II. Notes on Financial Issues

A. It is suggested that persons elected to perform the duties of Treasurer have a substantial amount of time in program (90 days minimum, 6 months preferred), and be known by the group to be reliable and responsible. (*I.M. 7/27/86, 9/28/86*)

Commentary: Tradition 5 states that each group's primary purpose is to carry the message to the sexual compulsive who still suffers. Part of that mission is for each group to continue to exist, and responsible attention to financial matters is an important aspect. In addition, newcomers to the program are often unsure about their commitment to the fellowship, and need to be allowed to make their own determinations about whether they belong, without the pressure of a service commitment. Having the financial and business needs of the group handled by a regular member also fosters the sense of safety so important to recovery.

Although all officers at a meeting have important responsibilities, the treasurer's job is unique in that 1) it involves the handling of money, sometimes large sums; and 2) it usually requires contact with people outside the meeting (i.e., the person collecting rent on the meeting space, the Intergroup treasurer, etc.) As such, it is important that the treasurer be accountable to the group, so that his or her handling of the money can be monitored. Since for many addicts, irresponsibility with money plays a role in their disease, the temptation to mishandle money may prove tempting, especially for newcomers. It has happened that both newcomers and old-timers alike have taken a meeting's money, leaving the group unable to fulfill its financial responsibilities and placing it in jeopardy of losing its meeting space. It is essential, therefore, that the treasurer be someone known to the group so that at the very least peer pressure and the knowledge that he or she will be held accountable will keep him or her on a responsible course.

B. It is suggested that group treasurers send 10 percent of gross collections or \$5.00 (whichever is larger) to SCA Intergroup, provided that the meeting is financially sound (i.e., able to meet its rent expense and continue as a meeting). (*I.M. 3/6/88, 12/10/89*)

Commentary: The suggested donation to Intergroup is in keeping with Tradition 1 that "our common welfare should come first";

personal recovery depends on SCA unity. Intergroup is a collective committee of representatives from individual meetings, and consequently focuses on matters that affect SCA as a whole. Production of the meeting list, 12th step outreach work, the annual conference and production of new literature are just some of the functions that Intergroup performs. Without the financial support of the fellowship, these important aspects of recovery would not be possible. SCA Intergroup is the vehicle by which SCA groups can act in unison on matters affecting the entire fellowship, and the donation to Intergroup reflects the importance of having an organization to oversee collective concerns.

C. It is suggested that group Treasurers maintain a "log book" recording collections and expenses and pass this record on to following Treasurers. (*I.M. 9/28/86*)

Commentary: Keeping regular records is consistent with maintaining rigorous honesty, an important aspect of recovery. It also provides a framework for other group members to see how the financial affairs of the group have been handled in the past, so that these practices can be continued.

D. It is suggested that group treasurers make regular reports to their groups, particularly if the meeting is in dire financial straits. (*I.M. 9/28/86*)

Commentary: This suggestion is in keeping with the principles of honesty and openness, as well as the need for groups to remain solvent in order to continue their primary purpose. It is particularly important that this information be shared with the group in the event that there is a problem with making the meeting's rent. By regularly letting the group know the state of its finances, timely efforts can be made to bolster support for the meeting, or find less expensive space for the meeting location. Regular reports also help support Tradition 4 by underscoring a group's autonomy and highlighting Tradition 7 by demonstrating that the group is "fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions." Also, as full disclosure about our addictions moves us along in recovery, so full disclosure of a meeting's financial state can help a meeting maintain a sound financial footing. For groups in dire financial straits, a regular report may also have the beneficial effect of enhancing contributions and thus putting the meeting on a sounder financial footing.

E. It is suggested that group Treasurers transfer a description of their duties (process of paying the rent, donation to Intergroup, recording of collections, conduct of the Treasurer's break, etc.) to the next Treasurer following an election. (*I.M. 9/28/86*)

Commentary: Following this suggestion serves the group's continued existence and continuity. In the absence of written guidelines, this "hand-off" is very often the only transference of group conscience regarding the meeting's financial dealings with the outside world. Also, in keeping with Tradition 2, meeting leaders are "trusted servants; they do not govern." As such, each treasurer is not expected to put his or her individual stamp on job, but to humble themselves by following a uniform and efficient process. Codifying the process leaves in place the "principle" of handling the money by eliminating the "personality."

III. Notes on Elections

A. It is suggested that chairpersons or treasurers who conduct elections allow opportunity for ALL volunteers and nominations to be made before closing the floor to further volunteers or nominations. It is further suggested that specific mention be made that persons can nominate themselves or others. (I.M. 10/4/87)

Commentary: Tradition 12 reminds us to "place principles before personalities." The principle at stake in elections is fairness to all members who may wish to use the tool of service. Allowing an appropriate time for the floor to be open, and specifically asking for further nominations or volunteers gives members a chance to consider the opportunity for service. Elections by acclamation immediately after someone volunteers can be seen by newcomers as a "personality" issue, (i.e., someone is more popular) and therefore is being elected. Some small meetings may have difficulty in getting members to perform vital services, and therefore any volunteer is considered to be the presumptive officer. In general, however, it would be appropriate for the current chair or treasurer running the election to ask if there are any other volunteers or nominations before affirming the election of the only candidate.

B. It is suggested that prior to opening the floor to volunteers or nominations for each position that the current holder of each position give a brief outline of the duties involved in the service commitment.

Commentary: This process allows members to become familiar with the duties of the position. It is also sometimes the only means of passing on the procedures of running the meeting in the absence of a written format. Furthermore, it allows more time for members to consider whether they wish to volunteer or nominate someone.

IV. Notes on Speakers

A. It is suggested that meetings set their own boundaries by group conscience with respect to how much time someone qualifying at the

meeting should have on his/her sexual recovery plan. (I.M. 10/13/91)

Commentary: The function of a speaker/qualifier at an SCA meeting is to allow the assembled group to share and find identification with the experience of recovery. While every member of the group is equally important and everyone has valuable experience about his or her addiction to share, the speaker should be someone who has current experience about recovery to share as well. Taking this example to an extreme, many members of the fellowship might prefer not to listen to the qualification of a person who had been acting out directly before coming to the meeting to speak. The appropriate time to listen to a member in such circumstances would be during open sharing. It is useful and helpful to the recovery of all to have set guidelines on the amount of time a person needs on his or her plan so everyone in the group knows they can expect to hear about "How It Works" when they come to a speaker meeting. This is a one-day-at-a-time program, and all any of us has is today, but since long-term sobriety is one of the goals of the program, it is beneficial to recovery to have it reflected in those who speak.

B. It is suggested that speakers be selected to share their experience strength and hope, and above all, their recovery.

Commentary: Speakers should be encouraged to keep the focus on their problems with sexual compulsion/sex addiction, although they may bring up their experience in dealing with other addictions, other issues, and other recovery programs as they relate to their recovery in SCA. Speaking is a form of service, and speakers are encouraged to keep in mind that an important aspect (if not the most important thing) about a qualification is that it is a form of Twelfth Step work, through which the speaker is carrying the message and reaching out to the still-suffering sexual compulsive/sex addict in the rooms, newcomers, people just coming back, and people struggling with the compulsion to relapse. As such, the qualification needs always to be more than a personal gripe session or opportunity to vent. That is not to say that sometimes a speaker will not express feelings around issues that he/she is confronting at that very moment. We are only as sick as our secrets, and keeping things bottled up in a qualification won't do anybody any good. Speakers should always be encouraged to remember to tell the group: what it was like when they were acting out; what happened to bring them into recovery and the Program; and what it's like now. Focusing on their life in recovery and how they stay sober one day at a time (e.g., going

to meetings, staying on their recovery plan, keeping a day count, having a sponsor and sponsees, doing service, etc.) is also a reminder of how the program works.

V. Notes on Beginner's Meetings

A. It is suggested that meetings which identify themselves as "Beginner's Meetings" make some explicit efforts to welcome and provide support for beginners. Some suggestions from those currently in use include: the regular presence of a literature person with a full supply of literature; the reading of a prepared statement addressing the specific fears and concerns of newcomers; acknowledgment of the presence of newcomers; specific sharing time reserved for newcomers; an interim sponsorship coordinator; or the inclusion of a social break to encourage regular members to talk to newcomers.

Commentary: Having written guidelines for "beginner's" meetings can be very helpful in a program that relies heavily on an oral tradition to pass along the structure and guidelines for chairing meetings and running treasurer's breaks. This is a particularly important point because many meetings have officers who are quite new to the program, and may not remember all the elements that need to be covered in their remarks to the group—or fully realize the reason why each element is important. The presence of a consistent structure is particularly important for beginner's meetings which very often provide the first impression of what SCA is about. While there should always be enough flexibility in a meeting format to allow the chair and treasurer to be natural and to "own" the greetings and messages they are giving to the group, there also needs to be enough structure and organization to ensure that the meeting continues to serve its intended purpose.

VI. Special Concerns

A. It is suggested that group chairpersons be empowered by their groups to maintain the boundaries set by group conscience. This includes the use of discretion when a member becomes abusive or threatening (physically or verbally), presents a hazard to the other members of the group by creating a hostile environment, or refuses to respect the group conscience. Chairpersons or individual group members are encouraged to call for a group conscience where such a situation exists and may vote to exclude such person(s) from their meeting. It is suggested that groups balance the 1st and 3rd Traditions in reaching a decision on such a situation.

LA and NY SCA Conferences 1998

by Jerry J (LA) and George P. and Mark F (NY)

The LA Conference

Reclaiming Our Lives

The LA SCA Conference took place on St Valentine's Day weekend February 13, 14 and 15, at the Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel. This is where the Academy Awards used to be held when they were just a small dinner party.

The theme of the Conference this year was "Reclaiming Our Lives". The keynote speaker on Friday night was Patrick Carnes. There were between 150 and 170 participants. Workshops over the weekend included topics such as: Welcome to SCA, What is a Sponsor, The 12 Steps, Multiple Addictions, Relationships. During each workshop session one of the workshops was always devoted to the newcomer to ensure that the fellowship continued to be seen and acknowledged.

Two workshops that captured a lot of attention were the Recovery and Incest Workshop and the Sexual Anorexia Workshop, which was a topic for a workshop probably for the first time. On Saturday night a banquet was served while 3 speakers, Marshall, Maciek M and Bill M recounted the beginning of SCA in LA.

After the banquet (a new feature this year) there was a country dance (with instructor), and everyone (some less willingly than others) got to participate in country dancing. On Sunday afternoon there was a musical based on *Hair* and set in pre-historic times called "The Dawn of Addiction". A raffle was drawn. The winner won a trip to the Bahamas, which was donated by a member.

The Conference was a great success especially since the Conference was able to make a donation of \$500 to Intergroup after all expenses were accounted for.

The NY Conference

From I to We: Into the Heart of Recovery

The 1998 NY Conference took place on the weekend of April 17, 18 and 19 at St. Barnard's School on 13th Street. The Conference took place a month earlier this

year due to impending renovations to the usual NY Conference venue, the Gay and Lesbian Center which is just a block west of St Barnard's. The theme of the Conference was from "I to We: Into the Heart of Recovery". The theme came out of the recognition early on during conference planning that many of the conference committees members were experienced in SCA Conference service, and immediately found themselves working together to get things done rather than on their own.

The new location was a great coup for the Conference. St Barnard's had been used for the NY Holiday Show last year and had proved to be such a success that it was felt the conference could benefit from being wholly in the one location instead of split up between two venues as has occurred in the last few years.

All the workshops were able to be held on the one floor and all the assembly activities were able to be held in the school theatre. There were no other people in the building to either disrupt or compete with the conference.

The Friday evening opening meeting featured three speakers Paul W (out going chair of NY Intergroup), Mary Anne and Frank T (ISO Treasurer).

Throughout Saturday and Sunday there were workshops that were divided into four categories: Back to the Basics, Spirituality, Healing our Relationships and a group of workshops that were categorized as Miscellaneous. Workshops dealt with topics like: From Shame to Grace, Sexual Co-Dependency, The Power of Abstinence, Do You Have the Recovery You Want, Facing Sexual and Social Anorexia

On Saturday evening there was a catered dinner, followed by a show entitled "Double Insanity" (a parody of *Double Indemnity*), written by Former SCAnner Editor Joe F, and to finish the evening a dance.



The Next Issue

In response to a fellowship wide feeling that there is not as much, or not enough focus on the Steps, the Winter 98-99 Issue of the SCAnner will focus on The Steps. Those measured plans of action that have kept this fellowship going from strength to strength and have kept most of us from acting out....

Among other things there will be 12 mini qualification from individual members sharing how they have used each one of the Steps to stay sober, healthy and serene.

Already members from across the country have come forward, eager to write about their experiences:

	Step One	
Step Two		Spoken for
Step Three		Spoken for
Step Four		Spoken for
	Step Five	
Step Six		Spoken for
	Step Seven	
	Step Eight	
	Step Nine	
	Step Ten	
Step Eleven		Spoken for
	Step Twelve	

But there are still a number of steps that have not been spoken and would love someone to speak on their behalf....so please feel free to call me and claim the step you would like to share about. My number is (212) 929 7608



What is Intergroup?

Interview with Paul W, outgoing Chair of NY Intergroup

What is Intergroup? It's a year-long business meeting that doesn't end at the end of the year....it just goes on year after year. In March 1998, Paul W completed a year-long service commitment as Chair of NY Intergroup. I caught up with Paul one afternoon recently and asked him about his experiences as Chair of NY Intergroup.

David: You've just completed a year as Chair of NY Intergroup. Can you tell me, what is Intergroup?

Paul: Intergroup is a group of representatives that get together once a month to talk about issues that affect SCA NY as a whole. The Representatives are elected individuals from each meeting. There are Committees like Literature, Retreat, that report at the Intergroup meeting on developments in the Fellowship. Also issues that come up at meetings and affect the fellowship as a whole are discussed at Intergroup.

David: What does Intergroup achieve in its monthly meetings?

Paul: I think it achieves quite a lot. One of the main things is that Intergroup acts as a conduit for important information that may affect the fellowship as a whole, such as service requirements for special events or ISO Conference planning. Information can be distributed to representatives who then can take that information back to the meetings they represent and distribute that information to the individual members of the fellowship. That's the main purpose of Intergroup. Secondary, but just as important to that, is that it allows each meeting representative to weigh in on issues that affect the fellowship as a whole. Each group is autonomous and Intergroup acknowledges that, but the individual meetings need to be represented to the fellowship as whole. Intergroup is the mechanism through which this happens.

David: What are some of the difficulties you encountered as Chair of Intergroup?

Paul: One of my biggest difficulties was that I was terrified. I had been a representative the previous year and there were some

events that had occurred when I was a representative that I felt uncomfortable about, in terms of the way people interacted. I was really afraid to be in the position of trusted servant to facilitate a meeting where that sort of thing might play out again.

David: Did being the Chair of Intergroup help you with your own sobriety?

Paul: Absolutely. The most simple and direct way was that it gave me a place to be every third Sunday of the month from 3:00pm to 5:00pm to facilitate the meeting. Don't misunderstand me, if I hadn't been there someone else would have done it, but I had made a commitment and it really offered me an opportunity to follow through on that commitment. The other thing that it taught me was that I didn't do it perfectly and that was okay. It was really alright. I showed up at each meeting and did the best I could do and I tried to treat myself and everyone in the room with respect. As a perfectionist, it was really valuable to be in a situation where I could practice letting things be. As a sex addict in recovery, sometimes I get myself into grey areas. My sponsor helps me realize that that is part of the fabric of my day and that my reaction is what can either keep me in sobriety or take me out of sobriety. Intergroup gave an opportunity to practice being imperfect while remaining in sobriety.

David: What do you think you achieved personally in your year as Intergroup Chair.

Paul: I think I was able to let go of some of my fear about showing up and doing that kind of service. I also feel I built some confidence around it. I felt that the more I did it the better I got at it, and that felt really fulfilling. It also gave me an opportunity to work with people from the fellowship who I might otherwise have not got to know. That was really valuable. In terms of Intergroup itself, I feel the biggest success in a practical way was the Beginner's Pamphlet. Finishing that piece of literature, and seeing it possibly accepted by ISO as piece of literature for the whole fellowship feels successful to me.

David: What advice would you give to the incoming Chair?

Paul: Well if he were here..... (laughs) It's funny that you should ask that question..... [The Interviewer is in fact the incoming Chair of NY Intergroup. Ed.]. My predecessor told me to "Run for the hills!" (Laughs). I thought that was funny and then I got terrified. I think the advice I would give the incoming Chair is to trust his/her instincts because they will be a good indication of the direction the meeting needs to go to. The other thing I would say is, have faith that everyone who is there is there because they want to be there and has something valuable to contribute. Sometimes it is incumbent on the Chair to bring the group back to the issue on the floor because of time restrictions, while keeping in mind that everyone's contribution is valuable. I feel fortunate to have worked with the people I worked with in Intergroup and to have seen their commitment to their work and to representing their groups and keeping their groups informed.

David: How do you think you might take what you learned as Chair of Intergroup back into your life?

Paul: I feel I developed more confidence in myself and I learned how to give space to people I didn't necessarily agree with. I think I learned how to value their opinions and to listen to them, truly listen to them, not just wait politely till they had finished. That was certainly something Intergroup will allow me to take back into my life, the belief that "you are valuable", and though I may not agree with you, I am going to give you the respect to listen to you. I am grateful for the opportunity to have been Intergroup Chair, because of the reality that it wasn't always pleasant. It wasn't always fun. I didn't always feel good about it, but when the last meeting came and we had elections, the feeling that was in the room made me think "I'm glad I did this!" I felt glad I had shown up. I felt okay that it had not been perfect. I felt I had brought so many different aspects of myself to the service.....I felt I could use my humor, my sensitivity, my feelings, my listening skills. Being the Chair offered me the opportunity to share all these parts of myself with others. I got to see people do work that meant so much to them and that they were really proud of. I felt it ended on such a high note and I'm grateful to be able to walk away with that experience.

The Great Nationwide Traditions Search

by David A-S (NY)

At the 1998 ISO Conference, it was decided to make greater strides towards getting a first draft of an SCA Book. Peter C in LA offered to collect recovery stories, beginning with those already published in the SCAnner and I was assigned the task of beginning to collect information about the Traditions. My first recourse is to turn to you, SCA Groups, and ask you to record some of your experiences with working the Traditions in your group. Here's my suggestion. Throughout the month of June, (which is Pride month), I suggest that we all take pride in our group by setting aside some time, (perhaps a whole meeting, perhaps an additional meeting), where we can answer some of the questions listed below that assess our group in relation to the Traditions. Any group experiences you have to offer will be put forward for the compilation of the SCA Book.

Tradition One

Our common welfare should come first; personal progress depends upon unity.

What is our common welfare? How do we acknowledge and share it with each other? What happens to our group when we put our uncommon valor (those things that make us stand out) first? How is our personal recovery dependant on the unity of the group? What are some of the ways in which we support that unity? How does our personal recovery support the group as a whole? The fellowship as a whole?

Tradition Two

For our group conscience there is but one authority - a loving God as may be expressed in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.

How does our group handle problems that may develop within the group? Do we try to sort things out behind the scenes or do we bring everything to the attention of the whole group? Are we open to negotiating doing things in new ways or are we absolutely fixed in the way we do things? Do we give in to loud and over bearing individuals or do we seek to find a mid-point in all decision making? How do we do this? Do we make decisions on the spot or do we allow people the time to think about the issues? Are we willing and able to let all point of view be heard? How do we rotate service positions in our group? Or do we allow the same people to keep doing the same tasks over and over? Do we trust and accept that what the group decides as a collective is the appropriate decision for the time being, or do we plot and scheme to get our own way?

Tradition Three

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

How do we welcome newcomers in our group? How do we ensure that newcomers

are not left alone to feel isolated and unwelcomed? Is our group open to anyone who may want to join our group or do we inadvertently (through our attitudes), tell some people that they are not welcomed? Do we seek to find out people's background, education, professions to ascertain if they are 'right' for our group, or do we share our experience, strength and hope with whoever comes to our group?

Tradition Four

Each group should be autonomous, except in matter affecting other groups or SCA as a whole.

In what ways is our group autonomous? In what ways is it not autonomous? Does our group seek to find out how other group function in order to benefit from the diversity within the fellowship? Does our group have a group representative who liaisons with the whole fellowship for us? Has our group ever done a group inventory? Do we share our concerns with other groups through our Intergroup? What kind of things do we learn from other groups in our fellowship? Tradition Four asks us to be obedient to the unenforceable, what does this mean?

Tradition Five

Each group has but one primary purpose - to carry its message to the sexual compulsive who still suffers.

How does our group reach out to those who still suffer (even those within our group)? What does the slogan 'You can only keep it, if you give it away' mean in relation to this tradition? Do we remember that to digress from our primary purpose is to sometimes muddle our relationships with other members in our group? What kind of actions do we take when we discover that we are one of those who still suffers? How do we stay focused on our primary purpose?

Tradition Six

An SCA group ought never endorse, finance or lend the SCA name to any outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.

Has our group had occasion to deal with unscrupulous individuals or organizations that tried to get us to participate in activities not related to our group's primary purpose? How did we deal with this? Does our group allow outside issues and enterprises to enter into our group, so that our meetings become a market place? Do we concern ourselves with others' social and financial status and forget to focus on the spiritual nature of our program? Do we place too much importance on fellowship and forget to apply the steps and traditions to our lives? Are we all aware how our group functions and are we fully involved in all its functions to ensure the survival of our group as well as SCA as a whole?

Tradition Seven

Every group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.

Is our group able to support itself by filling all its service positions? How does our group contribute to Intergroup and ISO (International Service Office)? Is our group beholden to any person(s) or organization through special deals that give our group certain privileges? How does this affect our group? Does our group have a prudent reserve in case of emergencies? Is everyone in our group aware of how our finances are handled? Is our group able 'to hold its own', by, for example being fully stocked with literature? Is it connected to the rest of the fellowship and fully informed of developments that are taking place at the Intergroup and ISO levels?

Tradition Eight

Sexual Compulsives Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers.

Does our group defer to certain individuals within the group, assigning them special roles or powers because of their knowledge of the program or do we encourage everyone to find out about the program by reading and discussing our literature and service manuals? How do we encourage people in our group to take on service positions? How do we ensure that we are represented at all levels of our fellowship? How do we offer our service at conferences and other special events?

Tradition Nine

SCA, as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.

How does our group ensure that all service positions are rotated? How do we ensure that everyone in our group participates in all things that affect our group? How do we encourage the members of our group to get involved in all levels of our fellowship? How do we teach the members of our group to be self-sufficient and responsible at the same time? Are the members of our group accountable to our group and the SCA fellowship as a whole? Are we consistent in our running of our group, do we for example make sure we begin and end our meetings on time?

Tradition Ten

SCA has no opinion on outside issues; hence the SCA name ought never be drawn into public controversy.

Are our meetings for the discussion of all the latest books, films, television shows, politics, or our psychotherapy sessions or do we focus on how to recover from sexual compulsion using the steps and traditions of SCA? Do we notice how we can split a room when we offer an opinion about a film or book? Is our recovery based on reaction? Do we notice how people are drawn to us when we talk practically about how to use one of the tools of the program? Do we know how to mind our own business? How do we lead by example within our group? How do we focus on the things we have in common rather than on our differences?

Tradition Eleven

Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, television and films.

How do we present ourselves to others in the fellowship as well as those outside the fellowship? What are some of the ways in which we share our recovery by example? When we speak about SCA are we conscious that we do not speak for SCA as a whole but

only about our own experience? When cooperating with media do we make sure that our anonymity (if not for our sake then for the sake of our loved ones) is protected? Is our recovery something people come towards or run away from? How do we experience sitting patiently, within our group, waiting for God's time and God's way to resolve our needs?

Tradition Twelve

Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

How do we ensure that we guard each other's anonymity while still ensuring that we share our strength, hope and recovery with one another? How is confidentiality different from anonymity? Do we pry into each other's lives or do we support each other in our recovering from sexual compulsion? Are we able to love and accept unconditionally everyone in our group, even though we may not agree with everyone's opinions? What steps are we taking to familiarize ourselves with the principles of SCA, so that we are not as easily swayed by the personalities of our group members? How do we ensure that recovery is fun and exciting while sticking to the suggested guidelines?



SCA ISO is currently working toward creating its own SCA Book that will include sharing from members about their struggles with addiction and their successes with recovery. If you would like to submit your story and help others by sharing your strength, hope and recovery of the program, please send your story to:

The SCAnner
c/o SCA NY
PO Box 1585
Old Chelsea Station
New York NY 10113-0935

SCA Information Lines

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

SCA International Service Organizations
PO Box 1585
Old Chelsea Station
New York NY 10113-0935

National Hot Line (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
Midlands/Odessa TX	(915) 560-5240
Milwaukee MI	(414) 299-0755
St Louis	(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 of these fellowships in cities and countries that have no SCA meetings. Contact ISO for this information at least 2 weeks in advance. The following information is provided in the spirit of fellowship. For information on SLAA and SAA meetings in the USA and over seas write to:

SLAA PO Box 650010 West Newton	
MA 02165-0010	(617) 332-1845
SAA PO Box 70949 Houston	
TX 77270	(713) 869-4902

SCAnner Subscriptions

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

For all other SCA Literature

SCA/ISO
PO Box 1089
Milwaukee WI 53201-1089