

The Check IN

Volume XXIV

“... Spiritual Progress Not Spiritual Perfection ...”

Winter 2017

Meeting Updates

The Southport, Tuesday Night Step Workshop has converted from a workshop meeting into a regular, men-only, SAA meeting. The time and location remain the same.

TUESDAY

Southport

Southport Men's Meeting

Weekly, 6:30 p.m. ♂
Southport Heights Christian Church
7154 McFarland Rd. 46227
South Annex. Call for room info.
More Info: Ken S. (765) 571-0974

The Indianapolis, Friday Night, *Chapel Hill Meeting* has disbanded.

The Sunday, *Westfield Meeting* has dissolved.

The Saturday, *GLBT Meeting*, which has been on hiatus, will begin meeting again on a monthly basis beginning, January 21, 2017. The group will meet on the third Saturday of each month.

SATURDAY

Indianapolis

GLBTQ Meeting

Monthly, 3rd Saturday
3:00 p.m. ♀♂
Church of the Savior
6205 Rucker Road 46220
One block east of 62nd & Binford
Library--upstairs and to the right
More Info: Ted D. (317) 372-2294
inmale317@aol.com

Note: Please report all meeting changes to: Mike C., Indiana SAA Directory Editor; the IISAA Webmaster; and, the ISO of SAA.

Second Annual Sponsorship Workshop Set for February 4



Sponsorship is crucial in working all 12-Step programs. One can enter a sponsorship relationship either as a sponsor or a sponsee, without any experience or training. However, thousands of other addicts have trod this path and developed best practices for working the 12-Steps.

On Saturday, February 4, IISAA will hold its second annual half-day sponsorship workshop at Second Presbyterian Church, 7700 N. Meridian St. *Ted D.* and *Chris G.* are co-chairing the event again this year.

This free event is open to members of all S-groups. No registration is required. Just show up from 8:30 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. to enjoy coffee and donuts and to socialize before the workshop.

Between 9:00 a.m. and 1 p.m., three presenters will discuss the sponsorship relationship from the point of view of both the sponsor and the sponsee. The experience, strength and hope of those who have worked the Steps as a sponsor and/or sponsee will be shared. Questions will be answered and concerns will be addressed.

Spring Workshop, Saturday, April 29



IISAA will host its 22nd Annual Spring Idea Workshop on Saturday, April 29, 2017 at Second Presbyterian Church.

The theme of the workshop is *Awakening to Service*, a variation on our 2016-2017 program of work topic, *A Spiritual Awakening*. *Bill B.* and *Mike C.*, the workshop co-chairs, are looking for at least nine presenters. To volunteer, call Mike C. at 317-784-2180. The workshop registration form will be available following the February Intergroup meeting.

Due to increased costs, the registration fee will be raised to \$20 for the day. This includes a continental breakfast, snacks during breaks, lunch and workshop materials.

On-line registration will NOT be available this year. This change is in response to the small number of people who used the on-line registration option and the high cost of providing the service. Those registering for the event will need to pay by cash, check or money order; or, make arrangements for financial aid.

HAPPY 2017

From the Editor

Beginning Anew

A collage of wisdom from various sources.

I was born on New Year's Day; so, for me starting a new calendar year means starting a new year of life.

Today I close the door to the past, open the door to the future, take a deep breath, step on through and start a new chapter in my life, because I can't start the next chapter of my life, if I keep re-reading the last one.

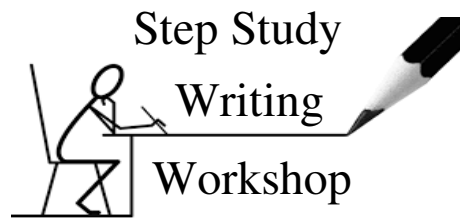
There came a day when I realized that turning the page was the best feeling in the world, because I realized there is so much more to the book than the page I was stuck on.

I am free of the past. What I need to know about the past is that no matter what happened, it has all worked together to bring me to this very moment. And in this moment I can choose to make everything new.

Sometimes the bad things in our lives put us directly on the path to the best things that will ever happen to us. So, I choose to let my past make me better not bitter; and, where necessary, to raze the old to raise the new.

I won't regret the things I haven't been able to do. This is the perfect time to refresh and start anew. I won't fret about what I couldn't achieve. I look forward to the dreams in which I believe.

This is the beginning of a new year. I have been given this year to use as I will. I can waste it or use it for good. What I do this year is important, because I am exchanging a year of my life for it. When the year ends, it will be gone forever. Let me make it a good one.



A Step Study workshop which focuses on using writing to work through the Steps is open to new members.

This group will use the *Step into Action* workbooks as the basis for working through the 12 Steps.

The workshop will meet at the Fishers United Methodist Church, 9691 E. 116th St., Room 278, on Mondays from 7:30 – 9:00 p.m.

The workshop will only remain open to newcomers until all members of the group have completed their First Step.

For complete details, contact **Bill W.** at 847-508-2494.

I will try to have patience with all things, but chiefly with myself. I will try not to lose courage in considering my own imperfections. I will constantly set about trying to remedy them and every day to begin the task anew.

I will begin to be now what I will be hereafter.

Peace

Mike C.

New Phone Service

Effective January 1, 2017, IISAA will switch to a new provider for our telephone information line.

In the past, we have had both a local and a toll-free, long distance number. Our new provider will offer the level of service we need, along with voice mail services at a lower cost.

Our new Information Line phone number is **855-784-8739**.

Do You Know A Good Picnic Site?





The last two years, the IISAA summer picnic has been held at the Moose Lodge #17.

As we plan for the 2017 picnic, the Moose Lodge is undergoing a period of transition. The lodge may or may not continue to exist. As of now, we cannot count on that venue being available for our picnic.

Do you know of a good site for our annual picnic? An ideal site would be privately owned, have a large picnic shelter, provide restrooms, have adequate parking and be on an Indy Go bus line. The rental cost needs to be reasonable and the facility should not require us to provide liability insurance.

If you know of such a place, contact **Jim F.** at 317-525-0968.

The **Check  N** is the newsletter of the Indiana Intergroup of Sex Addicts Anonymous (IISAA) and is published quarterly.

The **Check  N** is provided free of charge to SAA members and others upon request.

Material for inclusion in the newsletter, permission to copy all or part of the newsletter, or comments for improving this publication may be addressed to:

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Indianapolis, IN 46244

E-mail: iisaa.mikec@gmail.com
Phone: (317) 767-2763

My Daily 10th Step Inventory

Nick F.

My addiction led me to spend time at La Verna Lodge, an extended care residential treatment center for men who are struggling with addiction and have complex recovery issues. While there, I was introduced to a 10th step checklist which I now complete every night before bed. Perhaps you would find it helpful in your recovery.

Simply ask yourself:

- A. What did I take from the SAA meeting today that will assist me in my recovery, and how does it apply to me? Who did I meet at the meeting?
- B. Who is my sponsor, and did I call him/her today? What Step am I on?
- C. What occurred today that made me feel selfish, afraid, controlling, defiant, angry, resentful, frustrated, etc.? What role did I play in it? How could I have dealt with it differently?
- D. What recovery "stepping stones" occurred today (other than number of days sober)?
- E. What were my tasks today, and were they completed? If not, why?
- F. What addictive behaviors / attitudes / emotions (character defects) do I need to work on?
- G. How balanced is my recovery at this time? (I rate each of these five aspects of my recovery on a 10-point or an A-F scale): physical, mental, emotional, social, & spiritual.
- H. What were the highlights of my day?



Sunshine and Serenity Highlight Retreat

Those in search of *A Spiritual Awakening* at the 22nd annual IISAA fall retreat were greeted by nearly perfect autumn weather. The sun shone bright and temps were at, or above, normal.

The 115 people who came in search of recovery included 77 members of the Indiana Fellowship and 38 guests representing 10 other states. Nearly 25% of those in attendance were newcomers to the retreat.

In addition to numerous opportunities to relax and enjoy the beauty of Indiana in the fall, there were 22 recovery-focused presentations, meetings, and activities from which to select.

The evaluation results indicated that the retreat met the needs of most of those who attended. And, the event showed a \$4.76 profit.

Camp Pyoca has been reserved from October 20-22, 2017 for our 23rd retreat.

Tragedy after Retreat

While driving home from the retreat, *Charlie K.* fell asleep at the wheel, veered into oncoming traffic and struck a motorcyclist head on. Charlie was not injured, but his car was totaled. The motorcyclist, Ronnie Wier, was air-lifted to IU Methodist Hospital in Indianapolis, where he died the next day. Please keep Charlie and Mr. Wier in your thoughts and prayers.

Potential Ice Storm Cancels Holiday Party

The threat of hazardous, icy roads caused the cancellation of the 26th annual IISAA Holiday Party.

Icy conditions on Friday night, December 16, resulted in numerous slide-offs, crashes and lengthy delays. Some commuters reported that it took over five hours to get home from work.

On Saturday, the scheduled date of our party, the national weather service was calling for a repeat of Friday's conditions. The Indiana State Police were warning all motorists to avoid evening and overnight travel.

Preferring to err on the side of caution and not wanting to put our fellowship members in danger, the decision was made to cancel.

The food which had already been purchased was donated to community organizations to help feed the needy.

Indy Pride Relocates

Indiana's largest gay pride event, Indy Pride, is moving from the American Legion Mall to Military Park for its 27th annual pride event, on June 10, 2017.

IISAA has staffed an information booth at Indy Pride for many years. Included in the wide cross section of over 100,000 people from throughout the Midwest who attend this event are a number of counselors and therapists. Indy Pride is IISAA's largest annual out-reach activity each year.

The Three Stages of Sexual
Addiction
Impulsive
Compulsive

Repulsive Substitute Prayer for Porn?

Recently at my home meeting, during a discussion of the addictive nature of pornography, **Bob G.** mentioned that he had read an article that suggested that prayer can also be addictive.

I looked up the article on the Internet. It is entitled, *Drug Addiction, Love, and the Higher Power*. The article's four co-authors cover a number of issues related to addiction and the power of prayer. This manuscript is a scholarly treatment of the issue and is accompanied by a page-and-a-half of citations.

Reading the article from the perspective of a sex addict, I came to see that prayer might become a substitute for other addictions (including sexual addiction). While a "prayer addict" would still qualify as an addict and might require monitoring and treatment, the person would certainly have a less destructive form of addiction.

Some pertinent points from the article follow:

Prayer, meditation, early romantic love, and drug abuse may have in common activation of mesolimbic dopaminergic pathways of the brain and the generation of intense emotional states. In this sense, reliance on a Higher Power may operate as a substitute addiction, which replaces the psychobiological functions formerly served by drug use.

Several recovery approaches from alcohol or other drug abuse involve rituals of turning of one's will over to the care of a Higher Power. While the "Higher Power" concept could encompass any entity that engenders a spiritual tone (e.g., "life force"), often it is a loving God or other supernatural-type (Borras et al., 2010). The Higher Power purportedly

operates as a daily presence in the recovering person's life, and the recovering addict tries to communicate with the Higher Power through prayer and meditation (Borras et al., 2010).

Some researchers believe that reliance on a Higher Power may provide several direct benefits, which in turn could facilitate the recovery process (Borras et al., 2010). For example, attending religious services provides the opportunity to satisfy basic needs for regulation of sociality, meaning in life, and a context within which to participate in group and individual prayer or meditation (Borras et al., 2010; Krause, 2010).

Evidence suggests that intense, early-stage romantic love, or love addiction in a more extreme form, provides a psychobiological topography similar to drug addiction. In an interesting parallel, many drug addicts report having a "romantic relationship" with their drug of abuse; thus, the lines between love addiction and other addictions may perhaps become blurred (Sussman & Ames, 2008).

Prayer may or may not mirror addictive processes depending in part on the type of prayer. It has been shown that, for people considering God to be a real entity with whom they interact, improvised-type prayer recruits brain areas of social cognition including the temporoparietal junction, the temporopolar region, and the anterior medial prefrontal cortex (Schjoedt, Stodkilde-Jorgensen, Geertz, & Roepstorff, 2009). One may conjecture that this type of prayer ritual provides an elaborative processing function, is comparable to normal social interaction, and permits a means of self-reflection.

Importantly, however, other types of prayers may be associated with more primitive brain regions. Some research has shown that engaging in silent, established religious prayers (e.g., the Lord's Prayer) activates the mesolimbic dopamine reward system . . . the same neural circuits recruited during romantic love and drug-seeking behavior. Thus, prayer may operate like self—other communications, or may operate

on an intensely emotional level, the latter process being potentially addictive.

We speculate that, at least for some people, part of the process of yielding to a Higher Power pertains to loving the Higher Power romantically, at least in metaphor. That is, instead of "loving" the drug, the person "loves" the higher power, activating the same VTA-NA pathways with a subjectively less harmful replacement that serves the same psychobiological function that drugs of abuse had previously served.

To summarize, drug addiction, intense love (and love addiction), and reliance on a Higher Power may operate similarly. At least five similarities may be noted. First, all three behaviors may impact the brain motivation—reward system (VTA-NA pathways). Second, all three behaviors may be utilized to improve one's mood. Drug use, romantic love, and praying to a Higher Power all may induce affect elevation that is of greater intensity than typical affective changes produced by other common pleasant behaviors. Third, emotional and psychological dependence on the object of the behavior (drug, love object, Higher Power) may occur. In fact, dependence on a Higher Power is encouraged in Twelve-Step programs (Sussman & Ames, 2008). Fourth, if deprived of the object of the behavior, craving, or other withdrawal symptoms may tend to ensue (e.g., yearning for the mood enhancement produced by a drug, feeling dejected after a breakup, feeling spiritually empty without one's Higher Power). Finally, one can become preoccupied with the drug, romantic partner, or Higher Power, such that one may bypass other life opportunities and responsibilities in order to continue a constant connection with the object of the behavior.

Daily prayer to a higher power with a long-range view could lead to avoidance of a series of addiction-like decisions and behaviors (Taylor, 2002).

So, it would seem that one might substitute prayer for porn or other addictive pursuits.

What Does the ISO DO?

The primary purpose of SAA is to reach out to the sex addict who still suffers. Meetings do that at the local level; Intergroup does it at the state level; and, the ISO of SAA does it at the international level.

The ISO is bound by the same Seventh Tradition as any other group. Its income is limited to donations from members, member groups and the sale of SAA approved literature. ISO needs our financial support. During 2016, ISO reached out in the following ways:

Office Communications:

- outreach emails sent: 360 per month
- incoming phone calls: 1,000 per month
- voice mails returned: 30 per month (90% of telephone calls answered live by a staff member)
- the Outer Circle is sent electronically to over 7,600 members on our e-mail list

SAA Store:

- SAA green books sold: 935 per month.
- convention workshop and speaker audio sales: 240 per month
- pamphlets and booklets sold: 7,700 per month
- chips, medallions, key chains & bookmarks sold: 3,200 per month

Free Outreach Activity:

- printed outreach literature (includes individuals, special events, prisoners): 76 people per month
- the Outer Circle newsletter (printing & mailing costs):
 - mailed to prisoners: 615 people per issue
 - mailed to members upon request: 760 people per issue
- SAA literature pages (free online views): 3,520 per month
- SAA green book available to the blind (from the national library service)

Website Activity:

- visitors to our outreach website: 40,000 per month
- visitors page views:
 - meetings: 14,200 per month
 - women's page: 3,000 per month
 - self-assessment: 4,300 per month
 - the Outer Circle: 1,100 per month
 - group guide: 415 per month
 - SAA literature pages: 3,520 free online views



Indiana Meetings By County

Indiana Area Formation

As SAA reorganizes from a Regional Structure to an Area Structure, the groups that make up the Indiana Fellowship will need to determine the number and make-up of our Area(s).

There are currently 52 active meetings listed in the Indiana SAA Fellowship Directory.

One obvious area would include the 38 meetings in a one-and-one-half-hour driving radius of Indianapolis. The remaining 14 meetings in Lake, Porter, St. Joseph, Elkhart, Allen, Vanderburgh and Clark counties would need to affiliate with other Areas or choose to align with the meetings in the center of the state.

Areas are supposed to be geographically contiguous to facilitate area assembly meetings and area activities. Of course, any Area would be free to invite members from any SAA group to its activities. However, each Area will only select one delegate to represent its interests at the ISO International Conference. To insure that its group conscience is heard, each meeting group would probably want to affiliate with an Area in which it can take an active role.

Who Needs Recovery?

Author's name withheld by request.

When I came to SAA three years ago, I was uncertain if I was a sex addict. Like everyone else, I knew about alcoholics and drug addicts, and habitual gamblers. Maybe overeaters had issues, and certainly smokers were "addicts". But looking at women and dirty pictures, fantasizing and masturbating to porn were all "normal" activities for men in our society.

According to research, somewhere between 25% and 75% of men (and women) have "an affair" while they are married, and since my activities were nearly all via the internet, or single event activities while on business trips, they didn't really "count" as an ongoing "affair". Yes, I had been caught a total of 5 times over 15 years, but I loved my spouse and kids. I had no desire to replace them. My activities were really no different in intent than cheating on my diet by having an occasional ice cream cone.

Perhaps I did have a small issue, as I kept returning to the internet for porn and to contact women for chatting and other web-enabled activities, despite getting caught and making promises. But it was "only" basic flirting and "fairly harmless". Usually, I would spend at least 5 hours a week at work on my activities and several hours each night at home (probably 5-6 nights per week - I'm not really sure anymore). In an average week, I would spend about 20 - 30 hours on this hobby. But many people have a hobby where they spend 25 hours per week, don't they?

Each time I was caught, I confessed to a certain level of compulsion. Perhaps I had a

problem with porn. Yes, I sent emails to women and chatted, but I had only met one in person and we only kissed. Yes, I had met with women on business trips, but not locally. Yes, I had met with women locally, but only after we were married. With a clearer mind now, I can write down my chronological list of lines in the sand and see how porous they really were. Some were lies all along - I remembered the pre-marital cheating but never admitted it until the end. Some were compartmentalization - I truly believed my claim that I didn't screw around locally at the beginning - until I wrote down a list of every woman I had been involved with, in any way. That "line I didn't cross" was riddled with holes.

In November 2013, I was caught in my lies for the fifth time. I was only certain of one problem. It wasn't that fantasizing was injurious, that my habitual small lies had become part of my character, that I was risking my sexual and physical health in my encounters with strangers, that I had violated my wedding vows. The one problem I was certain of was that I would continue to get caught in my lies. I had no idea - no concept - of the depth of my addiction, so there was no way I could rationally evaluate if I truly "had a problem". I had so completely compartmentalized my activities and promises that I had hidden all the data that should have alerted me.

So what convinced me - and still convinces me - that I was and am an addict, that I needed - and still need to work at recovery? It's actually pretty simple: **MAKE A LIST.** It doesn't have

to be called a "First Step". It's simply a list of all the activities that led someone: you, your spouse, your employer, or the law to believe that you might have a problem. A list of sexual partners, a list of illicit websites, a list of "gray area activities" (aka "Middle-Circle activities") any of those will help clarify whether you, like me, have an excessive amount and extent of these behaviors. When I listed just the real people with whom I interacted in violation of my marital vows, and the span of years (30+) over which it occurred, it shocked me. When I listed the "minor" activities that were part of my addiction over the internet, from cheerleader sites to flirtatious comments in chat rooms, on game sites, via emails or IM, the postings and dating sites visited, I knew I had a problem. And, when I now list the number of times per day that I still "check out" women, even when I am in year three of my recovery and clean from Inner-Circle behaviors, I know that I still have a problem - I'm still an addict. And I know that being able to admit that I'm still an addict is important to my recovery.

So who needs recovery? Addicts. Are you truly an addict? Make a list; it's that simple. Pull the events and names out of the compartments in your head, and put them on paper. When did it start, and how long has it been going on? How many people or websites has it involved? How much time and money have been devoted to it? How many people is it being hidden from? A list - any list - will help give you clarity. Do you need recovery? Are you an addict? Make a list.

HELP WANTED

WEBMASTER

Flexible hours, work from home. IISAA is need of a volunteer to maintain and update our website.

With the exception of those who are on probation or parole, the most common way people access information about sexual addiction recovery in Indiana is via the Internet. Our website provides the addict who still suffers apart from us a way to learn about the SAA program and to make contact with us.

Contact Jeff W. at 317-341-4012 to volunteer or for additional information.

CALL CENTER HELP

Can you spare 15 minutes, one day each week, to respond to calls for help from the sex addict who still suffers and from those seeking to know more about the SAA program?

Volunteers are needed to return calls from those who contact IISAA seeking information on sexual addiction recovery and meeting times and locations.

A training handbook and support are provided.

Interested applicants should contact James U. 812-876-7795.

SPONSORS & SPONSEES

Experienced members of the fellowship sought.

If you have participated in a sponsorship relationship, either as a sponsor or a sponsee, you have experience, strength and hope to share with others.

Presenters are being sought for the Second Annual IISAA Sponsorship Workshop on February 4, 2017.

Contact **Ted D.** at 317-372-2294 or **Chris G.** at 317-775-8430 to get the complete details.

PRISON OUTREACH CHAIR

Most sex addicts have engaged in one or more illegal activities. Some got caught; some did not.

Most jails and prisons do not offer 12-Step programs for those who have been convicted of sex related crimes. The inmates must rely on AA or NA meetings, which most prisons do have, to work on their sexual addictions.

The ISO of SAA reaches out to inmates by providing recovery literature, coordinating letter writing sponsorships, and, where possible taking meetings into prisons.

James U. 812-876-7795 can provide complete details.

NINE OPENINGS

Speakers are needed for the 22nd Annual IISAA Spring Idea Workshop.

There are openings for nine presenters. Anyone who has had **A Spiritual Awakening** is qualified.

This is a short term, temporary position. Work one shift for one day and potentially change the life of a suffering sex addict.

Contact Mike C. at 317-784-2180 to apply.

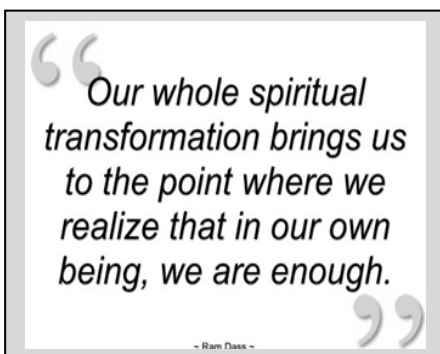
NO EXPERIENCE NEEDED

As SAA converts from a Region-based organization into an Area-based organization, each group will need to elect a **Group Service Representative (GSR)**.

The GSR will be the liaison between the group and the Area. The GSR will be asked to attend an annual Area Assembly. At this meeting, Area concerns will be discussed and a delegate will be chosen to represent the Area at the ISO of SAA International Conference.

An Area Formation Committee has been formed to suggest the boundaries for one or more Areas in Indiana. As this revised structure is implemented, it will be important that each group has a GSR.

Thoughts on Spiritual Awakening



Religion is belief in someone else's experience.

Spirituality is having your own experience.

Deepak Chopra

You must be willing to let go of who you have been to become who you were meant to be.

Anonymous

The spiritual journey does not consist of arriving at a new destination where a person gains what they did not have, or becomes what they are not. It consists in the dissipation of one's own ignorance concerning oneself and life, and the gradual growth of that understanding which begins the spiritual awakening. The finding of God is a coming to one's self.

Aldous Huxley

Only God can turn a
MESS into a MESSage,
a TEST into a TESTimony,
a TRIAL into a TRIumph,
a VICTIM into a VICTory.

Unknown

Using TIME and PRESSURE,
God changes
caterpillars into butterflies,
sand into pearls and
coal into diamonds.
He's working on you too.

Rick Warren

When I let go of what I am,
I become what I might be.

Lao Tzu

I think a spiritual journey is not so much a journey of discovery. It's a journey of recovery. It's a journey of uncovering your own inner nature. It's already there.

Billy Corgan

Spirituality is NOT a religion.

Being spiritual just means you are in touch with your own divine self.

Anna Pereira

“You think of yourselves as humans searching for a spiritual awakening, when in fact you are spiritual beings attempting to cope with a human awakening. Seeing yourselves from the perspective of the spirit within will help you to remember why you came here and what you came here to do.”

Unknown

Spiritual abuse can be hard to identify, but is no less difficult to endure than any other kind of abuse.

Anonymous

2017 Calendar

January

14 IISAA Meeting, 4 p.m.

February

4 Sponsorship Workshop
8:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

11 IISAA Meeting, 4 p.m.

March

11 IISAA Meeting, 4 p.m.

30 **Check IN** Deadline

April

8 IISAA Meeting, 4 p.m.

29 IISAA Spring Workshop
Awakening to Service