

The Check N

Volume XXV-3

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

Summer 2018



Cardinal Principles

OF RECOVERY

The 24th annual IISAA Fall Retreat will be held the weekend of October 19-21 at scenic Camp Pyoca. We will follow the theme, *Cardinal Principles* (OF RECOVERY), which is a variation of the IISAA 2018-19 program of work theme, *Principles of Recovery*.

One definition of the word “*principle*” is *the basic way in which something works*. And, that is the way we are using the term as we look at the basics of the SAA program. Some principles are defined within the structure of an organization. Just as there are an official *12 Steps*, *12 Traditions* and *12 Concepts of Service* that many recovery programs follow, there are also *12 Principles*. Some of the other basic understandings of working a recovery program are experiential; they are learned in the process of doing the work. Much of the “collective experience” of 12-Step programs is sharing those principles of recovery that have led others to sobriety and serenity. During the retreat we will examine both the formal and informal principles that underlie our program of recovery.

Please start planning now to attend the retreat and to be a presenter. Ours is a “we” program, it only works when someone who has found recovery by working a solid, Twelve-Step program is willing to share the experience, strength and hope that he or she has enjoyed with the addict who still suffers inside or outside our meeting rooms.

The official retreat registration form will be available, in printed form and online, following the August 11th Intergroup meeting.

Who Will Carry the Message?

One year ago, there were **53** SAA meetings listed in our Indiana SAA Fellowship Directory. With the publication of the current directory, that number is down to **44** meetings or **17%** fewer meetings. In this quarter alone, we have lost three more meetings.

The only good news is that a new Monday Night *Westside Serenity Meeting* has opened.

Monday

INDIANAPOLIS

Westside Serenity Meeting
Weekly 6:00 p.m. ♀ ♂ ♋
Chapel Hill UMC
963 N. Girls School Rd 46214
Room 105
Contact: John A. (317) 985-0843

A list of recently closed meetings follows:

See *Message*, page 8

Inaugural Area Assembly September 8



Last year, the Indiana Fellowship of SAA addressed the issue of forming one or more Areas within the state. The group conscience was to create a single Indiana Area that comprises the entire state.

Since then, the ISO suggested that Indiana and Kentucky (which only has ten meetings) form a joint Area. While Indiana was open to the idea, Kentucky has elected to be an Area unto itself.

On September 8, 2018, from 2:00 – 4:00 p.m., Indiana’s Group Service Representatives will assemble for the first time. Each group should have elected and registered its GSR by then.

For convenience, the Assembly will be held immediately prior to the September Indiana Intergroup meeting in Room DG 434 of IU Methodist Hospital at 1701 North Senate Blvd. in Indianapolis. Everyone is welcome to stay for the Intergroup meeting.

The purpose of the Assembly is to organize the newly formed Area and to discuss the business items that will be considered at the 2018 SAA Conference in Houston in October.

Presently, each group is authorized to send its own voting delegate to the conference. Beginning in **2020**, each group will have its conscience on business items represented by a single voting delegate from each Area.

For detailed information about our 2018 Area Assembly contact *Jeff W.* at (317) 341-4012.

From the Editor

Coming of Age throughout the Ages

I have always enjoyed coming-of-age stories, whether in the form of a book, movie, song or TV program.

This fondness for that genre may be predicated on the fact that, as an addict, my own adolescent, coming-of-age, emotionally, mentally and physically, was delayed, if not destroyed. I am fascinated by how that process plays out in the lives of others.

An excellent illustration of that can be found in my favorite TV show of the winter TV season (since cancelled), *Rise*.

If you are not familiar with the program, it is the story of a group of high school students preparing to stage a production of *Spring Awakening*, a controversial play that discusses difficult issues affecting adolescents.

At first, the show seemed to be one dimensional, focusing only on the traditional angst faced by all teenagers trying to navigate the road from childhood to adulthood.

Given the large cast that makes up the drama troupe performing the play, there are multiple opportunities to explore a wide variety of the issues faced by adolescents. And, the show does a superb job of examining teen homelessness, teen pregnancy, the question of abortion and young people dealing with their sexuality in terms of sexual orientation and gender identity.

If the plot ended there, it would still be an awesome story; however, it does not.

In what was an unexpected bonus for me, the storyline

expanded to include the concept that not only teenagers experience the “coming-of-age”; each of us repeats that process as we mature through life.

The real focus of the series is on relationships. These include the relationships between teens and their friends, teens and their rivals, teens and their lovers. But, it also gets into adult-child relationships exploring parent-child dynamics, sibling issues, disabled persons, single parents, divorce, aging, death and more. The mechanics of how adults relate to one another is shown in how bosses relate to their workers, how colleagues interact, how teachers influence students and how students inspire their teachers.

The epiphany that I experienced in watching as the season unfolded is that, as we continue to work our way through life, we come-of-age as children, as adolescents, as adults, as singles, as couples, as heterosexuals, as homosexuals, as transgendered persons, at middle age, and in old age. In other words, the process of coming-of-age is an ongoing, repetitive exercise that leads from one stage of our lives to the next. Failure to “come-of-age” at any stage of life, or in any situation, can lead to serious issues which can lead to or worsen an addiction.

Peace

Mike C.

The Fellowship of the Ring




With apologies to the author *J. R. R. Tolkien*, we have our own Fellowship of the Ring.


Like Frodo Baggins, who was desperately trying to return a ring to its origin, our quest was to locate a ring lost at the fall retreat, so that it could be returned to its owner.

Many who attended the retreat participated in the search to find *Judy J.*'s wedding ring which was lost sometime during the weekend. Alas, our efforts were unsuccessful, leaving Judy distraught. As a sign of his unending love, Judy's husband, *Bill J.*, bought her a replacement ring. However, it could not totally recapture the sentimental value of the original.

So, it is a great pleasure to report that the missing ring has been found. It had apparently fallen to the bottom of Judy's suitcase and gotten tangled in a piece of clothing.

Thanks to all we participated in the search and to all who called upon their Higher Powers to see that the quest for the return of the ring was successful.

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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Couples Meeting Affiliates with RCA

It has been determined that the couples-only SAA meeting that was proposed for the Indianapolis area does not meet the requirements for an SAA meeting, due to the fact that many of the members would be aligned with COSA. Intermixing members from both fellowships violates Tradition Six in both organizations: *An SAA/COSA group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the SAA/COSA name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property, and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.* Even if it was developed as an “open” meeting, conflicts with Tradition Six (and some of the other Traditions) seems inevitable.

Rather than push the boundaries of either fellowship, it was decided that the group will affiliate with the *Recovering Couples Anonymous* Fellowship.

Membership in the newly-formed RCA group will be restricted to those couples in which both partners are members of either SAA or COSA.

Meetings will be held the first and third Saturday of each month beginning at 6:00 p.m. at St. Luke’s UMC, 100 W. 86th Street in Indianapolis. Enter Door 6 and go left to Room N101. The meeting will be open to any couple, straight or gay, that is seeking to overcome the devastating impact of sex addiction in their relationship.

If you have an interest in attending such a meeting, please contact **Amy J.** (317 991-2770), **Jim J.** (317 794-6393) or **Mike B.** (317 459-4544).



Show Me Your Friends

*Show me your friends; and,
I’ll show you your future.*

It seems a little strange, but neither the 12-Steps nor the 12-Traditions includes the word “meeting” or “meetings”. And yet, all 12-Step programs operate as groups and urge their members to “keep coming back”. In fact, the first word of Step One is “**Our**” and the first word of Tradition One is “**We**”, both *plural* pronouns. It is obvious that the intention of Bill W. and Dr. Bob was that the 12-Step recovery program works best in a group setting.

Acting out is seldom a solitary experience, it often involves one or more acting-out partners. In some cases it is a social activity (think strip clubs, swingers groups, adult bookstores). Like-minded people come together to engage their sexual passions.

In active addiction, the addict develops a circle of acting-out partners. Sometimes these people are known by name (real or assumed); more often than not, they are nameless, nondescript individuals. The tie that binds them is their mutual compulsion to act-out sexually. The more that the addict associates with these people, the deeper into addiction the addict sinks.

While deepening contact with this new-found circle of consensual victims, the addict typically

reduces contact with long-held friends and relatives. Together, the acting-out partners pull each other further into the pit of addiction. Continuing these hook-ups guarantees future failure.

To improve the chances for a successful future, addicts must change the people they allow into their circle of friends.

This is where meetings become important. It is in meetings that the group-think process shifts from sexual acting-out to seeking healthy sexuality. In these groups, addicts find the support and encouragement to stop acting-out, work the Steps, and serve others.

Meetings are the place where each addict comes to understand that he or she is not alone. Going forward with the support of our new recovery friends enhances the likelihood that we can live sober and serene lives.

Of course, the only way that the meeting group can help us to move *from shame to grace*, is if we *keep coming back*—coming back to a new group of friends and a new and promising future.

Spring Workshop Succeeds at New Venue

Some 40 members of the SAA fellowship from Indiana and neighboring states attended the 23rd annual IISAA Spring Idea Workshop, *Progress NOT Perfection*, on Saturday, April 28.

The new venue, North United Methodist Church, worked well, in terms of location, facilities and welcoming atmosphere

Thanks to **Jeff W.** who chaired the event with his trusty partner, **Kelley W.**

What Are the Principles of Recovery?

Principles of Recovery is the IISAA 2018/2019 theme. Unlike the Steps and Traditions, the Twelve Principles exist in multiple forms and variations—all quite similar, but not strictly defined (*A Gentle Path through the Twelve Principles*, Carnes, 2012, p.4). The table below lists each Step and one or more terms that describe the principle revealed in that Step (AA's preferred terms are italicized). Individual perspective is reflected in the term(s) used to describe each principle. We will explore the Principles in *The Check-IN* and at the retreat and spring workshop.

STEP NO.	STEP	PRINCIPLE
ONE	We admitted we were powerless over addictive sexual behavior - that our lives had become unmanageable.	Acceptance <i>Honesty</i>
TWO	Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.	Awareness <i>Hope</i> Surrender
THREE	Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood God.	Commitment <i>Faith</i> Spirituality Trust
FOUR	Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.	<i>Courage</i> Honesty Responsibility
FIVE	Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.	<i>Integrity</i> Openness Truth
SIX	Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.	Honesty <i>Willingness</i>
SEVEN	Humbly asked God to remove our shortcomings.	Courage <i>Humility</i>
EIGHT	Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.	<i>Brotherly Love</i> Commitment Justice Reflection
NINE	Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.	Accountability Amendment <i>Discipline</i> Responsiveness
TEN	Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.	Commitment Patience <i>Perseverance</i> Trust Vigilance
ELEVEN	Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood God, praying only for knowledge of God's will for us and the power to carry that out.	Attunement Faith Meaning <i>Spiritual Awareness</i> <i>Spirituality</i>
TWELVE	Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these Steps, we tried to carry this message to other sex addicts and to practice these principles in our lives.	Charity Generativity <i>Service</i>

The Principles Found in Steps One, Two and Three

The principle that underlies Step One, *We admitted we were powerless over addictive sexual behavior – that our lives had become unmanageable*, has been described using the terms **Acceptance** and **Honesty** (see the chart on page 4).

These are not different principles; they are simply different ways of describing what takes place in Step One.

Acceptance looks at the verb “admitted” in Step One. One definition of the word “admitted” is “to acknowledge that something is true”. A second definition is “to confess to having made a mistake”.

Most addicts operate in an altered reality known as denial. Despite a plethora of evidence to the contrary, we tell ourselves that we don’t have a problem. Step One calls us to a reality check. It asks us to acknowledge the objective reality that our lives are in peril, due to our addictive behaviors.

Seen from another perspective, Step One calls us to **honesty**. It asks us to concede the reality that we have a serious, life-threatening problem. It calls us to be truthful.

The terms used to describe the principle found in Step Two, *Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity*, are **Awareness**, **Hope** and **Surrender**.

Once again, these are not three different principles but facets of the same one.

Until an addict can break the bonds of denial and see the true nature of his/her addiction, there is a belief that “I can handle this.” The reality, of course, is that our best efforts to “handle this” are

precisely what led us to the SAA program. Einstein defined “insanity” as doing the same thing while expecting a different result.

In Step Two we become **aware** that we are indeed insane. We continuously repeat our best efforts, but cannot break the stranglehold of addiction in our lives.

Unless we are able to accept that there is some power greater than ourselves to whom we can turn for support, Step Two would leave us hopeless. Instead, it offers us the possibility of a solution to our problem that we may not have considered previously. In that, there is new found **hope**.

To accept the hope that Step Two alludes to, we find ourselves in a position of having to give up our false belief that we are strong enough to overcome our addiction. **Surrendering** the belief that we have the power to manage our own disease forces us to consider what higher power(s) there are that might enable us to succeed where our own best efforts have failed.

Step Three, *Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood God*, contains a principle that can be identified by such terms as **Commitment**, **Faith**, **Spirituality** and **Trust**.

The conclusion that our best efforts have failed to deliver us from addiction and that there is a power greater than ourselves that can, leads us to question what that higher power might be.

Step Three uses the term “God”, because the founders of AA, from which we adapted the Twelve

Steps, were reflecting their Judeo-Christian upbringing. While they were broadminded enough to consider that not everyone would accept their experience of “God”, they knew that, for the Steps to work, an addict needed to reach outside of him- or herself to some entity that offered a power greater than they possessed.

Committing to such a power was crucial. The “power” chosen had to be one that could withstand the cunning, baffling and powerful pull of addiction.

Placing one’s **faith** and **trust** in some outside power to help overcome addiction is akin to placing one’s faith and trust in one’s family doctor or a medical specialist--one’s life could very well depend on that choice. Nonetheless, the option of which higher power(s) to latch onto remained up to the addict.

For many, the question of higher power came down to their own **spirituality**. Those who had strongly held beliefs as to the nature and providence of “God” were able to call upon the strength of their belief and to place their recovery in “God’s hands”.

Some, especially those who had had a negative experience with organized religion, struggled to “turn over their will and their life” to some nebulous “spirit”. Fortunately for them, the 12 Step program allows them to select a more tangible entity, such as a friend, a meeting group or a sponsor to serve as their higher power.

The core of Step Three is to commit to some external source of strength in which the addict can place his or her faith and trust.

Scabs & Scars

God enters through
the wound.

C. G. Jung

Every human being is wounded. This truth may be most evident in those of us who suffer from addiction.

My experience in recovery has led me to realize that it is pain that drives addiction. The pain may result from an emotional, mental, physical or spiritual wound, or some combination of all of these.

Addicts enter 12-Step recovery rooms battered, bruised and broken—often near death.

The pain they bring with them is usually chronic. The addict has dealt with it over much of his/her life. Usually, the pain is also acute, it is immediate and unbearable. If it were not, the addict would not have sought out treatment.

Like patients entering an emergency room, these addicts are surrounded by others who understand the pain, not because they have been trained in specialized medical school programs, but because they have experienced, firsthand, life's hardships. Having experienced similar issues in their own lives, group members welcome the newcomer with outstretched arms and the *Promises* offered by the SAA 12-Step program.

Those who accept the help that is offered begin to heal and to see the promise of a better tomorrow.

They discover that all healing is internal. While bandages, casts, medicines, splints or physical therapy may speed the healing process, it is some power, greater than they are, that restores them

to the good health that addiction has destroyed.

One day at a time, scabs form over their injuries, enabling healing to commence. However, scabs are fragile. If bumped or broken, they must keep reforming, until the healing is complete. Slips and relapses keep the scab alive and slow down long-term recovery.

Eventually, though, an addict who is committed to recovery will awaken to find that a scar has formed over the injury site. The scar is the only reminder to the addict of his/her former life and the pain that he/she has endured. With luck, the new scar tissue may actually be stronger than the skin it replaces, making a new injury at that site less likely.

And so it goes, newcomers enter into the emergency rooms we call 12-Step groups. They are met by other wounded individuals who have worked a spiritual program that has allowed them to overcome the pain that led to their addiction. The initial repulsion the newcomer may have felt at the sight of so many scabs and so many scars is lessened as they come to understand that these blemishes are a sign of the healing power that has relieved our pain and restored us to sanity.

Know Sobriety,
Know Peace.
No Sobriety,
No Peace.



Storm Stalls Pride Event

IISAA once again sponsored a booth during the 2018 Indy Pride celebration in Military Park.

The only major issue we faced was a severe weather alert which caused security to shut down the event and close the park. Our booth volunteers, *Mike C.*, *Phil B.* and *Ranga N.* took shelter under a nearby bridge until the danger had passed.

Our booth location this year, in a designated healthcare area, was far superior to last year. We had a steady flow of people pass by the booth. Many of them elbowed the person they were with and nodded toward our sign. They then offered that their companion might qualify for membership. The more serious passersby took time to stop, check out our literature and/or ask questions. We distributed 86 pieces of literature throughout the day; but, more importantly, we raised awareness of the Fellowship among the estimated 100,000 people in attendance.

Given the nature of our addiction and the stigma of sexual addiction, it is understandable that some members are hesitant to appear in public at our booth. Special thanks go to Mike, Phil and Ranga for their willingness to be the face of SAA at this event.

Things Are Looking UP

A reality of addiction is that often times the addict has to hit rock bottom before the pain of the addiction moves him/her to action. It is at this point that most newcomers enter our meeting rooms. While hitting rock bottom is a painful, often demoralizing experience, it offers at least one benefit. At that point there is only one way to go and that is UP.

One person's insight, gleaned from a bottoming-out experience is found in the following statement.

To appreciate the wisdom of the piece requires two steps.

Step One: read the passage:

Pretty Ugly

Abdullah Shoaib

I'm very ugly.

So don't try to convince me that

I am a very beautiful person.

Because at the end of the day

I hate myself in every single way.

And I'm not going to lie to myself by saying

There is beauty inside of me that matters.

So, rest assured, I will remind myself

That I am a worthless, terrible person.

And nothing you say will make me believe

I still deserve love.

Because no matter what

I am not good enough to be loved.

And I am in no position to believe that

Beauty does exist within me.

Because whenever I look in the mirror I always think

Am I as ugly as people say?

Step Two: read the passage again; this time from the bottom up.

Danny D.

Danny D., an influential SAA old-timer, passed away on June 30.

If a 12-Step meeting is to thrive, someone must champion the cause. For many of the SAA meetings on the south side, that person was Danny D. A man with many more strengths than flaws, Danny helped to build up our fellowship by starting meetings, sharing his story, sponsoring newcomers, supporting Intergroup, attending events and serving as a presenter at workshops and retreats.

Danny's obituary included the descriptive terms: adventurous, rebellious, competitive, hardworking, creative, tough, compassionate, jack-of-all-trades, and outdoorsy. Those of us who knew Danny through SAA might add to that list terms such as: welcoming, honest, contrite,

understanding, caring, supportive, non-judgmental, involved, active, dependable, insightful, forgiving and committed.

A man of such substance will surely be missed.

Picnic Pleases

The Indiana SAA Fellowship has been coming together for a summer picnic since the late 1980's. The picnic provides another outer-circle activity for members of the local S-groups and their guests.

This year's event saw nearly 30 hearty Hoosiers and one of our Buckeye buddies enjoying great food and even better fellowship under gray skies.

The click of Bocce Balls and the clinking of horseshoes, along with the laughter of the competitors, could be heard by those who chose to engage in spirited conversations beneath the large picnic pavilion.

Thanks to *Jeff H.* for preparing delicious burgers, brats and hot dogs, along with French Fries and onion rings. And, thanks to *Jim F.* for coordinating the use of the venue and leading its cleanup.

SUCCESS

is not final.

FAILURE

is not fatal.

It is the

COURAGE

*to continue
that counts.*

Winston Churchill

Message, from page one

- The **Bloomington, Tuesday Meeting** has disbanded.
- After about 15 years of operation, the last two remaining members of the Thursday Night **South Bend Serenity Step Study Meeting** have decided to “lay the meeting down.” They plan to continue to meet for recovery support, but no longer as an SAA group.
- The Richmond, **Thursday Hope Meeting** has dissolved.

Tradition Five states that, “Each group has but one primary purpose — to carry its message to the sex addict who still suffers.

The question that seems obvious is, “*Why are we losing so many meetings?*” A follow-up query might be, “*How does the Indiana SAA Fellowship keep Tradition 5 as we lose more meetings?*”

All around us, there are indications that sexual addiction is more prevalent than ever. Names like Harvey Weinstein, Bill Cosby, and even Donald Trump are linked to furtive acting out behaviors that may rise to the level of addiction. The “*Me Too*” movement further speaks to a greater recognition of out-of-control sexual behavior. Addiction to Internet Porn has not only ravaged adult society, the average age of those exposed to it is between 9 and 11 years of age.

It would seem, then, that there would be a greater demand for our program, not less.

It may be that the new awareness of debilitating sexual practices is partly responsible for the loss in the number of people turning to SAA. Previously, S-groups offered the only organized approach to dealing with sexual addiction. Today,

however, many other groups, especially churches, are acknowledging the existence of sexual addiction. Programs, such as *Celebrate Recovery* are becoming common in many congregations. This may explain part of our loss.

Another possible reason that we are losing meetings (and members) is that 12-Step sexual addiction recovery programs present a fractured approach to overcoming sexual addiction. Those suffering from alcoholism, drug addiction, overeating and gambling issues find a single, focused approach to recovery in AA, NA, OA and/or GA. Sexual addiction recovery, on the other hand, presents a splintered approach. A person who seeks help with unwanted sexual behaviors must sort through the offerings of:

- Sex Addicts Anonymous
- Sex & Love Addicts Anonymous
- Sexaholics Anonymous
- Sexual Compulsives Anonymous
- Sexual Recovery Anonymous

Is it any wonder that a person might be overwhelmed by the choices?

Recovery should not be a competition. The real goal is that the addict who still suffers can find the help he/she needs.

Still, the loss of so many meetings seems to be a call to action; or, at least to a thorough discussion of what can be done to make our meetings more relevant, more welcoming and firmly rooted in the 12-Steps.

Are we carrying the SAA message of 12-Step recovery as well as we can?

Just Do It!

*The way you do
something impossible
is with a pretty simple equation.
You do it in possible Steps.*

Daily Horoscope



Portrait of a Recovering Addict?

*I love the person that can smile in trouble,
that can gather strength from distress,
and grow brave by reflection.
'Tis the business of little minds to shrink,
but he whose heart is firm,
and whose conscience approves his conduct,
will pursue his **principles** unto death.*

Thomas Paine

2018 Calendar

July

14 IISAA Meeting, 4 p.m.

August

11 IISAA Meeting, 4 p.m.

September

8 Area Assembly, 2 – 4 p.m.

8 IISAA Meeting, 4 p.m.

30 Check **N** Deadline

October

13 IISAA Meeting, 4 p.m.

19–21 IISAA Fall Retreat
Cardinal Principles