

The Check IN

Volume XXVIII-1

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

Winter 2021

Sponsorship Workshop Saturday, February 6

The 6th annual IISAA Sponsorship Workshop, scheduled for Saturday, February 6, is being co-chaired by **Ted D. and Dan O.**

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the workshop is slated to be held exclusively on Zoom.

You can register by sending an email to registration@indiana-saa.org. Please include your first name, last initial, email and/or phone number. You will then be sent the Zoom link. This will help to ensure each person's anonymity and confidentiality while helping to avoid Zoom bombing. If you are interested in being a presenter, please include that information in your registration email.

Check the IISAA website indiana-saa.org for workshop updates, or contact Dan O. (812 344-1731) or Ted D. (317 372-2294) with questions.

26th Annual Spring Workshop Saturday, April 17

IISAA's 2021 Spring Workshop has been scheduled for Saturday, April 17. As of now, it looks like the event will be held via Zoom. As the date gets closer, you can check for complete workshop information, including the program and how to register, on our website, indiana-saa.org.

The workshop will continue our program-of-work theme, **Connecting In Recovery**. This theme lends itself to a broad range of recovery topics.

Jeff W., the workshop chair, is looking for presenters who can share their experience, strength and hope about **Connecting In Recovery**. Social distancing is guaranteed, as speakers can present their session from home. As with the fall retreat, we will also have a site in Indianapolis for those who feel more comfortable having a tech savvy person to take care of the technical details.

Contact Jeff at **317 341-4012** for more information or to volunteer your services.

A New Year



A New Bundle of Sticks

"I compare the troubles which we have to undergo in the course of the New Year to a great bundle of sticks, far too large for us to lift.

But God does not require us to carry the whole at once.

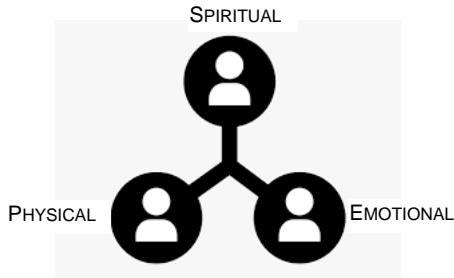
He mercifully unties the bundle, and gives us first one stick, which we are to carry today, and then another, which we are to carry tomorrow, and so on."

John Newton



From the Editor

Three Connections



SAA is a *spiritual* program. In it, we seek to establish or re-establish a **spiritual connection** with a Higher Power and with the spirit that resides within each of us.

In Step 11, our goal is to improve our connection with the God of our understanding by seeking conscious contact with that Higher Power.

And, in Step 12, *“Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we try to carry this message to other sex addicts . . .”* Having been through a soul searching process of looking at our own faults and failings; acknowledging the harm we have caused others; and, making amends wherever possible, we are able to relate to others on a deeper, spiritual level. Our focus shifts from judging others to finding the common characteristics that unite us as human beings. Having freely received the gift of recovery, we strive to offer it freely to others.

In SAA, *“We have found, through long and painful experience, that we are unable to achieve recovery from sexual addiction through our own efforts.”* The primary connection that we seek is with our Higher Power. However, the SAA program cannot be worked alone. Even though there is no mention

of “meetings” in the Steps, they are essential to sustaining recovery. The **physical connection** of being in the same location with other similarly affected addicts gives strength to each member. The necessity to move to virtual meetings, brought on by the Covid-19 pandemic, has highlighted that truth. While most members of the fellowship are thrilled to have meetings available electronically, no one I know finds such meetings to be on a par with the face-to-face contact that is part of our normal meetings. Nothing online can match the support of a hug or a fist bump from another caring addict.

A common characteristic of most addicts is a lack of **emotional** authenticity. We have learned to hide, suppress or bury our true feelings. For many of us, it was never safe to express our emotions. Being able to freely and openly express whatever we our feeling, without fear of criticism or reprisal, is a major advantage of being united with others who have suffered similar trauma to us. The **emotional connection** we find in recovery results in the feeling, perhaps for the first time, that “I am not alone.”

This trifecta of spiritual, physical and emotional connection dramatically improves

our chance of achieving recovery.
Peace
Mike C.

Recovery Goals for the New Year

I will give up hope that the past can be anything different than what it is. Maya Angelou

I will not be embarrassed by my emotions. It is my emotions that make me human.

I will focus on being a human being and not a human doing.

I will acknowledge that my greatest desires are to love and be loved.

I will walk away from people who don’t value me. They might not know my worth, but I do.

I will give compliments freely.


I will accept compliments graciously.


I will strive for progress not perfection.

I will not correct people, even when I know they are wrong. The onus of making everyone perfect is not on me. Peace is more precious than perfection.

I will live one day at a time.

I will be grateful in all circumstances.

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:

Mike C.
P.O. Box 44090
Indianapolis, IN 46244

E-mail: iisaa.mikec@gmail.com
Phone: (855) 784-8739

A Zen Tea-ser



One day a Zen teacher stood before her students and with much ceremony made a cup of tea. After it was completed, she carefully held up the saucer holding the cup of steaming brew and presented a question to her students.

“How heavy is this cup of tea and its saucer?” The students eagerly raised their hands and taking turns gave answers ranging from a few ounces to a pound.

The thoughtful teacher replied, “The total weight of this cup of tea and saucer is of no matter.

The answer to this question depends on how long they are held in the hand. If held for a few minutes, they will remain light. If held for an hour, their weight will begin to make the hand and arm ache. Should they be held for hours, the hand, the arm and perhaps the shoulder will cramp, becoming numb and paralyzed. Loss of control will force you to drop the saucer and the cup of tea.

Please note that in each case the weight does not change; yet, the longer they are held, the heavier they become.”

True of a cup of tea; true of resentments.

Thanks to *Bill S.* a former member of the local fellowship for sharing this bit of wisdom.

Welcome 2021

Ignacio M.

As one day, month, and year come to a close, and the promise of a new set dawns upon us, it is an important time for each of us to reflect on what truly matters: life, health, love, relationships, (personal) growth, purpose/meaning, gratitude, contribution and compassion, rather than on task lists, accomplishments, material possessions, (self-imposed) work/ school/home pressures, financial profits/losses, power, promotions, customer fulfillment, market share, etc.

Please remember that:

(1) At your deathbed or funeral, few of your work/school colleagues, up or downstream stakeholders, supervisors, teachers/ professors, competitors, adversaries (for sure), or others will be present or even compelled to attend. Those whose lives you do positively impact, on the other hand, will be honored to be there and will think of you long after.

(2) Your ability to learn, grow, relate and contribute will be severely compromised with poor health; neither will you be able to pursue much without food, shelter & clothing.

(3) Your completed task list of today and career progression or achievements do not represent your identity and even less so your humanity.

(4) Your material wealth is a blessing for which to be grateful and to utilize with those whom you love and those less fortunate, as

well as to leave this world better than you entered it. Plus, your talents and skills are blessings for the good and benefit of those whose lives you are given the chance to come into contact with.

(5) What matters most, in the end, is the positive relevance you have each day in others’ lives— from those closest to you to those in dire need of human kindness, near or far, human, animal or otherwise. How you treat any other being says little about the other being and everything about you.

(6) Gratitude for everything, from waking up in the morning, to all that you take for granted, all your opportunities and possessions, alongside humility and forgiveness, balance against most ills and ill will (your own and of others); And . . .

(7) You have a choice in most everything you say or do, even when what happens to you may be outside of your control.

As the 1993 song by Jimmy Cliff goes “*I can see clearly now . . .*” May the year 2021 be one in which you and all your loved ones can see clearly what is most important. Keep this squarely in mind at all times; continue moving forward in this new decade of modern human history: and every day make each moment truly count.

With your eyes on the ball and your priorities in the right order, the rest will fall into place.

Cheers & all the best!

Meeting Groups, Intergroups, Areas & the ISO, the Distinctions

“Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon SAA unity.”

As stated in the First Tradition of SAA quoted above, for SAA to be effective, it must be unified. The Indiana Fellowship of SAA currently includes over 40 individual groups meeting within the borders of our state. And, while most SAA members are rightly focused on their own personal sobriety, understanding how the SAA Fellowship is structured may help us to achieve greater SAA unity. This should allow us to more successfully carry the SAA message of recovery from sexual addiction to more suffering addicts. The following chart offers a quick overview of how each level of our fellowship

SAA Meeting Groups

SAA meeting groups form the backbone of the SAA fellowship and are the source of all decisions affecting SAA as a whole.

Duties include:

- Reaching out to the addict who still suffers apart from us.
- Welcoming the newcomer.
- Providing a safe meeting location.
- Adhering to the 12 Step program of SAA recovery.
- Making literature and other recovery materials available to the group's members.
- Supporting the local SAA Intergroup.
- Supporting the Indiana Area of SAA.
- Supporting the international

Indiana Intergroup of SAA

IISAA is an autonomous SAA member group that meets regularly to conduct business for the benefit of its member groups.

Duties include:

- Maintaining the IISAA website (indiana-saa.org) as a hub for statewide information and announcements.
- Operating a telephone information line.
- Publishing a quarterly newsletter, *The Check-IN*.
- Publishing the quarterly *Indiana SAA Fellowship Directory*.
- Supporting new groups.
- Producing outreach activities:
 - Sponsorship Workshop
 - Spring Workshop
 - Summer Picnic
 - Fall Retreat
 - Holiday Party

Indiana Area of SAA

The Indiana Area of SAA is part of the ISO service structure.

It is one of 80+ Areas that enhance the capacity of the ISO to fulfill its mission to help all SAA member groups carry the SAA message.

Duties include:

- Receiving local meeting groups concerns for resolution at the ISO level.
- Forming an area-wide group conscience on matters affecting the SAA fellowship as a whole.
- Electing and funding a delegate to the annual ISO Conference.

International Service Organization

The ISO Office, located in Houston, Texas is the principle place of business for the International Service Organization of SAA, Inc. (ISO)

The ISO is the service structure created to help all SAA member groups carry the SAA message.

Duties include:

- Maintaining the ISO group registry.
- Maintaining all ISO websites.
- Printing, selling and distributing approved SAA literature.
- Enacting the decisions of the SAA Conference, Board of Directors, and their committees.



Connecting Spirituality and Sexuality

Chris C.

When I started to get a handle on the Twelve Steps of SAA, I found I was still mystified about one thing: what is the relationship between sexuality and spirituality? Both were very intense forces in my life but I could not make them fit together.

I had been raised in a religion and a family that did not place a lot of shame or guilt around sex. I had access to information about sex; had some good role models for healthy sexual relationships; and, saw people who had happy, fulfilling family lives. Still, I could not figure out how my spirituality and my sexuality connected.

My understanding started with facing what my addiction had done to me. I became addicted to masturbation as a preteen and felt a lot of shame about it. Much of my spiritual energy began to be devoted to hiding my shame; and, that shame drove me away from people.

The next step was to explore what sexuality and spirituality were about at their core. I was sure that healthy sexuality was not actually about the intensity my addict had sought. What I was truly looking for in sex was acceptance and connection. What I was seeking spiritually was a way out of my loneliness; I wanted a deep bond with my God.

Then it hit me. In my spiritual and sexual searching, I was looking for the same thing—**connection** at a deep level. My spiritual search was for a Higher Power and my sexual search was for an intimate partner. They were obviously the same search, just in slightly different directions.

“I feel I can’t be sexually healthy without being spiritual.” *Sex Addicts Anonymous*, p. 206

The NEED for Intimate Connections

Human beings, much like most other animal species, are social by nature. We are born out of a coupling of other human beings and we seek to love and be loved by those like ourselves.

Humans are hard-wired to be social. The need for connection with others is built into our DNA. And, connection, at its deepest level requires intimacy.

Intimacy has been defined as closeness between people in personal relationships. Intimacy is often considered to be synonymous with sex. And, while physical intimacy is an intricate part of any loving relationship, there are at least four types of intimacy: *emotional, mental, spiritual, and physical*. Therapist Alyssa Mancao, LCSW, has stated that fostering a sense of closeness in any relationship (romantic or otherwise) requires a combination of all four.

Intimacy is what builds over time as you connect with someone, grow to care about each other, and feel more and more comfortable during your time together. This is an apt description of what happens within SAA meeting groups.

Intimacy is a key component of the 12-Step philosophy. In fact, the level of intimacy that the 12-Steps require may be very difficult for many addicts to achieve.

As addicts, we tend to be self-centered, self-absorbed and secretive. Letting others see us as the unique individual that each of us is can be scary and requires courage. The fact that our sponsor and other group members stand ready to listen to us, without judgment, and to share their own experience, strength and hope can make opening up to ourselves and others much less intimidating.

It is our need for physical intimacy that drives our addiction. However, as most of us have learned, physical intimacy, without the other forms, is not true intimacy at all. It is, instead, a pseudo-intimacy which leaves us unfulfilled.

Physical intimacy is an action. When it is uncoupled from our thoughts, feelings and connection to some power greater than ourselves it becomes a selfish disconnect from our partner. It is devoid of any true relationship.

See, *Intimacy*, page 6

Healthy Grief

John A.

...Wednesday December 9th 2020 a friend of mine from high school name Jerry A. passed away. I am taking it hard because he was one of my first friends that I met and started to hang out with when I moved back to Indianapolis to live with my mom when I was 14.

After high school, we lost contact. The next time I saw him was in 1998 for our 10-year class reunion. He was married; I was not. One of the reasons I wasn't is because I was still in my active addiction.

The next time I saw Jerry was 20 years later for our 30th class reunion in 2018. We found each other on Facebook, and we started texting each other and catching up. He had lost a leg due to diabetes which forced him to retire from his truck driving job. He was in very bad health which caused him to have to go to the hospital to have work done on his heart and lungs. He passed away from a cardiac arrest.

The reason I'm journaling this is because his death has really got me thinking about my recovery and the gratitude that I have for it.

If I had not found recovery, I could have been the one dead, in prison or homeless. But, my higher power has always watched over me, even before I followed him. Before I was in recovery, he was always there keeping me from getting too far into trouble. And, believe me, my addict was getting me into deep trouble, especially towards the time that I hit my rock bottom.

Losing friend Jerry really makes me realize that life is short. I don't know when my time will end. I know God does not

promise me tomorrow. So, I must be prepared each day to do my best at being the person that the god of my understanding wants me to be: a good father, a good husband, a good brother, a good son, and a good member in my fellowship. I need to be there for 'the addict that still suffers' when that person is having a bad day. I can help pick them up, because I know how it feels to be in such a bad place.

I put myself in bad places all my life, because I didn't know any other way to express myself. My sexual acting out got me arrested three times and almost caused me to lose my wife. Fortunately, the god of my understanding set me free and saved my marriage by getting me into the SAA program and by my doing the work.

I now know that I have to talk to my wife when I'm thinking stupid; and, if my wife is not available, I need to talk to my sponsor. If he's not available, I need to talk to another member in the program.

I appreciate my recovery. I appreciate being sober. I appreciate all of my friends in this Fellowship.

I know it's okay to be sad about my friend dying, but I have to express my grief in a healthy way.



Intimacy, from page 5



in • to • me • see

It is our need for physical intimacy that drives our addiction. However, as most of us have learned, physical intimacy, without the other forms, is not true intimacy at all. It is, instead, a pseudo-intimacy which leaves us unfulfilled.

Physical intimacy is an action. When it is uncoupled from our thoughts, feelings and connection to some power greater than ourselves it becomes a selfish disconnect from our partner. It is devoid of any true relationship.

When our thought processes fail to take into account the needs of our partners, or the harm that indiscriminate sex can have, our physical relations may leave us feeling empty, predatory or used.

Of the many emotions that play into true connection between two people, love stands out as being the most essential. To love someone is to care more about their needs and desires than our own. Sex devoid of love is little more than mutual masturbation.

When we see healthy sexuality as a gift from our creator and the ultimate connection possible between two people, we enter into it with the spiritual intimacy that confirms that the act is greater than "having sex"; it is "making love".

Service to others is the rent you pay for your room here on earth.

Muhammad Ali

Recovery Wit & Wisdom



Tom T., a member of the local fellowship, collects quotes, phrases and slogans about recovery from addiction. He recently sent *The Check-IN* a copy of his list of 105 aphorisms. As editor of *The Check-IN*, I also collect such maxims to use as fillers or to summarize articles. I shared with Tom some 30 items that I had acquired that were not included in his list.

In an effort to share the wisdom contained in many of the items collected, *The Check-IN* is initiating a new feature column. Going forward, each issue will include items from our combined lists. If any of you have recovery quotes, phrases or slogans that you would like to contribute to this list, please send them to *The Check-IN* using the email address found at the bottom of page 2.

- 💡 A man doesn't control his destiny; but, he can control what masters him.
- 💡 An addict's mind is a dangerous place to be alone.
- 💡 Courage is action despite fear!
- 💡 Everything will be OK in the end; if everything is not ok it means it's not the end
- 💡 Find the space between thought and addiction - focus on it.
- 💡 Humility is the opposite of pride - we must balance pride.
- 💡 If you can spot it, you got it.
- 💡 It's not over when you slip, it's over when you quit!
- 💡 No matter what I get done in the day or don't get done, I am still enough.
- 💡 Please God, not now!
- 💡 Take out the trash - any thought that is not from the here and the now.
- 💡 There are always two choices, two paths to take. One is easy; and, that is its only reward.

Meeting Updates

The ongoing Coronavirus pandemic has wreaked havoc with SAA meeting formats.

As of now, some groups are holding meetings in an in-person format only; some meetings are utilizing a telephone or on-line format only; and, others have adopted a hybrid approach which allows members to attend in person or electronically.

The roll out of several safe and effective vaccines holds hope that the pandemic will be brought under control by mid-year.

In the meantime, groups will continue to adapt to the ever changing circumstances.



For these reasons, it has become increasingly difficult to publish a meaningful, up-to-date directory.

For now, the Indiana SAA Fellowship Directory can be

found in two forms on our website, indiana-saa.org. There is an image of the directory as it is normally printed and the electronic directory that is maintained on the website. Every effort is being made to keep both forms of the directory accurate and current.

Nonetheless, it is recommended that anyone who plans to attend a meeting for the first time; or, one they have not attended in a while, get in touch with the person(s) listed as the group's contact(s) before going to the normal meeting site.

The group contact can provide the latest meeting information and the necessary log-in information for any Zoom or tele-meetings.

Novel Coronavirus Results In Novel Retreat

Covid-19, which has wreaked havoc with everything in 2020, is commonly referred to as a novel coronavirus (nCoV) because it is a new strain of coronavirus that has not been previously identified in humans.

One impact this “new” virus has had on the Indiana fellowship of SAA is that it forced the 26th annual IISAA fall retreat to be held using a new, virtual format.

The **Retreat Planning Committee**, co-chaired by **Mike P.**, **Spencer A.** and **Ted D.**, began planning this year’s event long before Covid-19 reared its ugly head. Over the course of the year, the committee constantly monitored the spread of the disease and the recommendations of health officials to determine whether the retreat could be held in-person, virtually via Zoom, or as a hybrid event. Once Camp Pyoca’s board of directors closed the camp to large outside groups, the only options left were to go virtual or cancel the retreat.

Determined to not let this recovery tradition die, the committee quickly developed a plan to conduct the entire retreat via Zoom.

The result is that nine presenters, including two from California, one from Ohio, and two from West Virginia, offered eight breakout sessions on a variety of topics related to the retreat theme, **Connecting in Recovery**.

Despite a few technical glitches, which were resolved quickly thanks to the efforts of **Ranga N.** and **Ted D.**, the day offered

quality recovery opportunities on par with those in our face-to-face retreats.

Few of the 42 attendees took time to evaluate the sessions; but, those who did rated the day as an unqualified success.

The promise of safe, effective vaccines available to everyone by mid-year offers hope that the 2021 retreat will return to Camp Pyoca on October 15-17, 2021. Nonetheless, the RPC has already decided that future retreats will include a virtual component. This will allow us to take advantage of presenters from outside Indiana who have experience, strength and hope to share and to include suffering addicts who cannot attend the retreat in person.

The Retreat Planning Committee is composed of nine subcommittees.

- Retreat Direction
- Budget
- Clean Up
- Food
- Program
- Publicity
- Registration
- Theme
- Virtual

The goal is to have two co-directors for each committee. This allows for more people to gain experience in putting on the retreat; allows for a greater sharing of responsibility; and, it protects the process, if one of the co-directors is unable to complete their duties.

If you would like to serve as a subcommittee co-chair, contact **Mike P.** at (765) 228-6865.

Each committee also has need of volunteers to offer fresh ideas and to help lighten the load. Call Mike P. to offer your assistance.

Covid Cancels Holiday Celebration

The IISAA Holiday Party has been held since 1992 and is the second oldest of our annual special events. Only the summer picnic has been around longer.

The event had an unbroken run from 1992 until 2016 when it was cancelled due to the forecast of an ice storm which never developed. That was until this year.

The ever changing Covid-19 restrictions and an explosion of cases in the fourth quarter of 2020 made it impossible to hold the event face-to-face. And, since this is a social event rather than a recovery event, it made no sense to try to hold it via Zoom.

The good news is that vaccines have now been approved and are being administered. If they prove effective, by next December the coronavirus pandemic should be history. We will then be able to once again meet face-to-face to celebrate the holidays in 2021.

2021 Calendar

January

9 IISAA Meeting, 4 p.m.

February

6 Sponsorship Workshop
9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

13 IISAA Meeting, 4 p.m.

March

13 IISAA Meeting, 4 p.m.

31 **Check  N** Deadline

April

10 IISAA Meeting, 4:30 p.m.

17 IISAA Spring Workshop
Connecting in Recovery