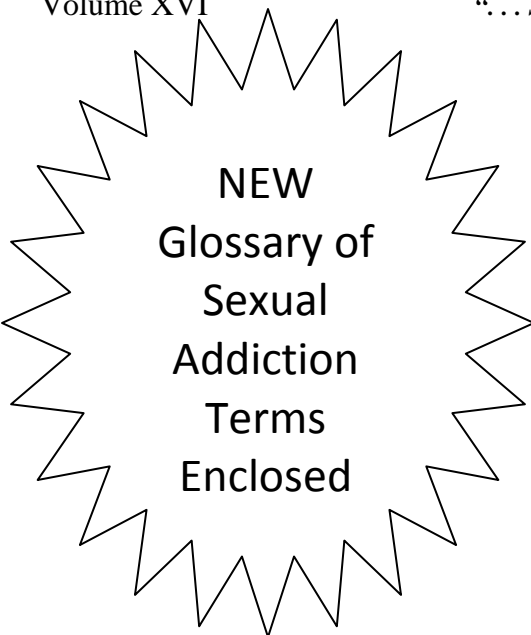


The Check N

Volume XVI

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

Summer 2009



NEW
Glossary of
Sexual
Addiction
Terms
Enclosed

Green Book
Pocket Version
Now Available

The Literature Committee of the ISO of SAA has published a new, smaller version of our basic text, *Sex Addicts Anonymous*.

While the original version of the book contains two major sections, general information and stories of recovery, the pocket size version only includes the general information section in its 98 pages.

The smaller dimensions of the book make it easy to carry in pocket or purse so that it can be referred to whenever and wherever you may choose.

The downsized book may be ordered directly from the ISO of SAA for \$9.00 plus shipping and handling. You can place an order by contacting the office at 1 (800) 477-8191 or by going online to www.saa-recovery.org.

Open Meeting Closes

The SAA Open Meeting dates back to at least 1994. In 1995 the meeting moved from the Greater Indianapolis Council on Alcoholism building to the AA Club on Carvel Avenue. On Thursday, June 25, five members of the fellowship turned off the lights and closed the door of that meeting room for the last time.

A number of meetings have started, endured and folded. Why should there be any greater concern about the Open Meeting? Because, “*Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry its message to the sex addict who still suffers.*” As Tradition Five states, our purpose is to continually carry the SAA message to those whose lives could be saved by following our program.

In many parts of the country, meeting groups have rigid requirements for twelfth-stepping new members into the fellowship. That is, the newcomer must meet with SAA members outside of a meeting who discuss the program with the newcomer and decide whether that person should be allowed to attend meetings. In Indiana, most of our meetings, even the “closed” ones, have an “open door” policy. Anyone can attend a meeting without being twelfth-stepped before hand.

This approach has proved fairly successful. However, it does not address the need to provide information about our program to the person who is still uncertain as to whether or not he/she is a sex addict. It also does not provide direct information to spouses, significant others, family members, clergy, counselors, probation officers, physicians, or others who may need to understand our 12-Step approach to recovery from sexual addiction. An open meeting fills this gap.

Our open meeting succumbed to low attendance, a less than welcoming landlord, and burnout on the part of those who have regularly attended the meeting.

Although non-addicts are not present at every open meeting, when they are the ability and willingness of the addicts who are present to be rigorously honest is diminished. If a group member’s *only* meeting is the open meeting, the recovery process may be slower and more difficult than it would be in a closed meeting.

The IISAA feels strongly that there should be at least one open meeting and *Jim F.* has volunteered to explore forming one. The meeting needs to be on a day and at a time that does not conflict with existing meetings. The meeting needs to be centrally located and accessible by public transportation. The facility should be available weekly, regardless of holidays, etc. At least two volunteers should be present each time the group meets.

See, *Open Meeting*, page 4

From the Editor

Is Service an Option?

As I understand it, ours is a **Twelve Step** program. The Twelfth Step--*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*--is as essential to our recovery as are the other eleven.

And yet, any time that a call goes out for volunteers to help with some project or outreach activity, the response is generally underwhelming.

How can it be so easy to turn our backs on the people who need us the most--the addicts who still suffer among and apart from us?

Early in my recovery, I learned that "in order to keep it, I must give it away to others." The "*it*" in question is my recovery and my sobriety.

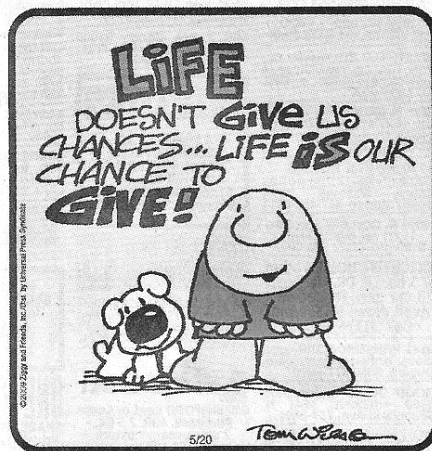
The fundamental difference between an active addict and one in recovery would seem to be *selfishness*--or a lack thereof. A practicing addict is totally self absorbed. A recovering addict comes to understand that a meaningful life is not all about one's self; but rather; it requires caring about and caring for others.

I will be eternally grateful to my Higher Power for leading me to a program that saved my life. I will also treasure the blessing that I--a sex addict--have the capacity to serve another suffering person by sharing my experience, strength and hope.

If I am unable or unwilling to do so, how authentic is my recovery?

Mike C.

ZIGGY



Anna R. Leaves a Legacy

One drawback of an anonymous program is that those who contribute greatly to its success do not receive the recognition they deserve. Another drawback is that when a member of the fellowship moves out of the area, there is oftentimes little or no further contact. These drawbacks were apparent in the recent death of **Anna R.**

Anna and her husband Eric were members of the local recovery community for several years. During that time, Anna shared her creative talents with the fellowship through her art, her writing and as a presenter at IISAA workshops and retreats. Anyone who read or heard one of Anna's presentations of her *Tales from the Journey* can attest to the deep

spirituality and keen insights that Anna brought to recovery.

Anna's own journey led her away from Indiana and eventually to Ohio where she passed away on April 16. At her calling in Noblesville, four posters that she had painted for the 2001 IISAA workshop were on display. They illustrated one of its themes, *The Road to Recovery*.

Anna exuded a childlike innocence and curiosity that endeared her to those who knew her; she was a creative presence, and freely shared herself through service to the fellowship. Her human journey has come to an end; however, her courage and wisdom have left a legacy of hope for those still on the journey to recovery.

Step Study

Do you want to *learn about* the 12 Steps? The Tuesday Step Study meeting in Indy will begin a new cycle of step study on August 4.

Step Workshop

Do you want to *work* the 12 Steps? The Indy SAA Step Workshop has begun a new series of meetings. See the spring issue of *The Check-In* for complete details on joining the group and working the Steps.

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

The Check **IN** 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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E-mail: Mike.Cecil@gmail.com
Phone: (317) 784-2180

NOT a Crank Call

Tim J.

One of my favorite service opportunities is "answering" the toll-free SAA hot-line once a week. (Those who do this don't really answer calls, but instead respond to the messages that are left by those calling the number.) Some Mondays there are no calls, other times there are two or three to respond to, and once in a great while (as might be expected) a crank call. But most callers are serious.

The other day I needed to respond to a caller who gave a strange number for me to call. (Most callers are from the 317 area code, with occasionally a call from area codes in the central Indiana region, such as 812 or 765.) But this call came from a Tennessee area code, an area I'm very familiar with since my wife grew up there.

Nevertheless, I called it and the response I got was something like this: "Hello, are you the massage parlor I called?" Thinking it might be a crank call, but wanting to proceed, I briefly explained SAA and asked whether he had in fact called our number for a serious purpose.

The caller, (whom I'll call "Billy" in this article), explained that he was a truck driver from Tennessee who drove from Nashville to Gary and came back through Indianapolis. His compulsive behavior, as he explained it to me, was a desire to find massage parlors while on the road where he could have sex and keep it secret from his wife. I don't know what he typed into his "Google" search (and I wouldn't

share it here if I did), but for some reason in searching for such parlors the number of SAA appeared on the screen.

Billy said to me, "I knew it was God trying to tell me that I needed to stop that behavior," and so, he added, "I called that number." We talked for quite a while about what SAA meetings were like, the 12 Steps, and how he might find a meeting here or back home.

When he was coming back through Indianapolis, I promised to find a meeting that he could attend. But when I checked with him later, he confessed, "I just don't think I'm ready for those meetings yet, but when I am, I'll call that number again."

I was disappointed that Billy hadn't reached the point that he was truly ready to get help for his addictive behavior. But I was really glad that the Indiana Intergroup made it easier for him to find that help--if and when he is ready for it.

And, I do believe that his/my Higher Power directed him to find that number and have the courage to dial it. When he "comes back" to Indiana, I pray he'll have the courage to come back to our number, and reach out one more time for the change he knows he needs to make.



Pesky Picnic P.E.S.T.S.

The Annual IISAA Picnic was held on Saturday, June 20, at a wonderful venue, St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Southport. A warm day, accentuated at times by

cool breezes, provided a great opportunity for food, fellowship and fun. The social portion of the program was planned by picnic Co-chair **Phil B.** who got us on track with "train" dominoes, bocce ball and other activities. Co-chair and Chef **Mike P.** grilled delicious burgers and hot dogs. Baked beans, potato chips, deviled eggs, chocolate chip cookies and other assorted side dishes rounded out the menu.

A great time was had by all of the **21** people who attended. And, therein is the problem. An occasional ant or mosquito should be expected at a picnic. However, the greatest of pests at our picnic is **Persuading Enough Sex-addicts To Show-up.**

In order to allow members with legal issue to attend the picnic, Intergroup agreed to move it to a private, church site. A nicer venue would be hard to find. However, the church requires renters to provide liability insurance; and, it cost us \$252 for the day. Even with several donations that were earmarked for paying the insurance expense, the cost per-person with such low attendance is proving to be prohibitive. Given the small number of people who did show up, the Indiana Intergroup will probably have to re-evaluate the location of the picnic and even, perhaps, how it is held.

The tradition of the annual picnic as a premier social event predates the formation of Intergroup and deserves to continue. To do so will require increasing attendance or reducing expenses. Please direct any ideas or suggestion you may have to your Intergroup Rep.

Open Meeting, from page 1

To avoid burnout on the part of one or two people who would lead the meeting, it has been proposed that Intergroup coordinate volunteers from other meetings to chair it. It is vital that the chair or at least one other person in attendance has enough time in the program and enough recovery to share “how it works” with those who seek an answer to that question. A suggestion has been made that the format of the open meeting should be a Green Book study meeting. The topic for each meeting would come from a reading out of the *Sex Addicts Anonymous* book. Such a format would keep the focus of the meeting on the SAA message and ease the job of chairing the meeting.

During the June IISAA meeting several people volunteered to chair a new open meeting for one month each. A question was raised as to whether IISAA should commit to a new open meeting unless and until volunteers could be found to lead the meeting for the next 12 months.

The former open meeting donated its treasury of \$246 to IISAA. That money could be earmarked to help a new open meeting with its rent, literature needs, tokens and other expenses.

If you have ideas on forming a new open meeting, or if you would like to volunteer to chair a new open meeting for one month of the year, please contact **Jim F.** at (317) 525-0968.

If you feel like going to a meeting,
go to one . . .

ISO Convention Report

Richard S., IISAA Delegate



The 2009 ISO of SAA International Convention was held in Oakland, California over the Memorial Day Weekend.

I actually arrived on Tuesday, May 19, so that I could attend the ISO Board Meetings on Tuesday and Wednesday. I have provided a copy of my formal delegate report to each meeting’s Intergroup Representative. If you have an interest in reading it, ask your Intergroup Representative to see it. If your meeting group would like a more in-depth report on the convention, I will be pleased to come and present one to you.

Approximately 125 groups were represented at the Delegate Meeting. I was disappointed with the quality of the motions that were considered for presentation with regard to their content. Nonetheless, the delegates did approve a strategic fundraising effort for the 2009-2010 fiscal year in the hopes that the ISO will not have the financial shortfall that was experienced last year.

A fund raising campaign entitled *Independence from Addiction* was announced to run the week of July 4 – July 10.

Some meetings have expressed a desire to hold a month-long effort that consists of passing the basket a second time at meetings and contributing the proceeds to the ISO. Since every meeting group is autonomous, they can decide whether or not to be involved in this fundraising effort and for how long.

In addition, the fundraising committee at the international level is in the process of changing its name to the Seventh Tradition Committee in an effort to instill a more accurate understanding of what the committee is about.

As a result of good planning and hard work, this year’s convention had a net profit of \$19,236. This income will help to ensure that the ISO has adequate funding throughout the year for the many programs that it initiates and supports.

The convention schedule for the next three years is:

- 2010 - Albuquerque, New Mexico
- 2011 - Houston, Texas
- 2012 - Vancouver, BC, Canada

I hope that your meeting group will be able to send a delegate to the convention each year.

In closing, I am ever mindful that my responsibilities as the ISO Convention Delegate for IISAA include keeping you informed of ISO business throughout the coming year. If you should have any questions, concerns or ideas, you are always welcome to call me at (317) 840-0304.

Thank you for your continued support of the Indiana Intergroup and the ISO of SAA.

If you don’t feel like going to a meeting,
go to two.

Healthy Sexuality

Ken L.

What is healthy sexuality?

As addicts, we are well aware of what unhealthy sexuality is for each of us – those things in our inner circle of unhealthy activities and those middle circle activities (triggers) that might lead to our inner circle activities, but what is the converse of this?

Given the fact that humans are sexual beings and have a very strong sexual component (how we are wired), how can that sexuality be both managed and expressed in a healthy manner?

There seem to be some common components to healthy sexuality.

1. Sexual activity must be consensual. To be able to consent, a sexual partner must be an adult with full mental capabilities.
2. Sexual activity must be legal.
3. Sexual activity is not the center of one's life. Sex is only a part of one's life.
4. Sexual activity must not be secret.
5. Sexual activity does not interfere with one's finances, relationships, or work.
6. Sexual activity must be pleasant for both participants.
7. Sexual activity is not harmful to anyone else.
8. Sexual activity does not involve force, threats, or abuse, either physically or mentally.

The basics of healthy sexuality lie in the greater concept of a healthy lifestyle of which sex is only a part. To develop a healthy lifestyle requires attention and

kindness to oneself. It flows from a growing awareness of yourself, your thoughts, feelings, and emotions and how they impact your life. You have to learn to treat yourself with kindness and respect so you can learn to treat others in the same way. Before you can be open, honest, intimate, and vulnerable to some else, you must first learn (or relearn) to be that way with yourself.

I think healthy sexuality has to be examined within the context of two different lifestyle conditions:

1. In a committed, monogamous, relationship with a partner.
2. As a single person without a single, committed relationship.

In the first case, within a committed, monogamous relationship with a partner, healthy sexuality is expressed as being completely engaged with your partner. Engaged means on all levels, not just sexually. It should be an open, honest relationship, where each expresses and receives intimacy on all levels – each is open and honest in their communications, both verbal and non-verbal; each is vulnerable to the other. In both sexual and other activities, the key is selflessness, not selfishness. It is all about meeting your partner's wants and needs and, through the fulfillment of those needs, the fulfillment of your own needs. Healthy sexuality lies in a balance of all aspects of life. It requires a good work ethic, outside interests, and the development of one's spiritual side (self-awareness on its most basic level). It is only through coming to know oneself that one can best serve one's partner.

The key through all of this is the concept: "Do no harm, either to others or to yourself." In every case, actions and thoughts should be measured against this simple, basic concept. Is one being selfish, jealous, envious, or resentful of one's partner? Are thoughts and fantasies correctly focused on one's partner's whole person?

In the case of the single person, healthy sexuality is somewhat more nebulous. How can a single person experience healthy sexuality? It is more likely to occur within the context of a healthy relationship in which sexual activity with a consenting adult partner might occur at some point into the relationship's development. This would be in contrast to going out and looking for a consenting adult to have sex with without the "attached strings" of a committed relationship.

While casual sex between consenting adults is much healthier than forced sex with an adult or a sexual encounter with a child, it is still not as healthy as sex between two consenting adults in the context of a healthy total relationship. Casual sex always has a greater potential for one or both parties to get hurt than does sex in a healthy relationship.

When measured against the simple standard of "Do no harm to others or yourself," healthy sexuality becomes a bit clearer. Motives are the key for a single person. Are one's motives open and honest and directed at getting to know another person? Are one's motives clear to the other

IndyPride

Richard S.

IndyPride '09 was held on June 13 in downtown Indianapolis. The Indiana Intergroup hosted an information booth as part of its mission of "reaching out to the addict who still suffers".

While the event is primarily for the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgendered community, there were some in attendance who were heterosexual. Being a diverse fellowship, SAA welcomes all who are looking to recover from sexual addiction, hence the reason for our booth.

In my experience over the past three years, this was the largest pride celebration in attendance and in booths offering information or vendors selling their products. Despite rain which fell toward early evening, we were able to answer questions about the SAA program of recovery from people who stopped by the booth and to pass out literature regarding meeting times and locations.

It was one of those times that had a "feel good" moment to it. Many times people thanked us for being there, whether they took literature or not. Other times we had the opportunity to answer a few questions and a person would walk away with literature in hand. Sometimes it was for themselves, other times for a "friend." What was important was that they were willing to accept the literature.

We also had the opportunity to say "hello" to a few recovery friends who stopped by the booth to chat for a moment.

A special thanks to **Phil B.** for his willingness to show up early

and stay for much of the day, and to **Larry A.** and **Chris L.** for taking over late in the afternoon.

Lifeline Partners

Richard S.

I often find myself caught up in the busy-ness of life; cutting grass, pulling weeds, watching my favorite TV shows and going to play Texas Hold'em at a local pub. It is in those times that I sometimes forget about how much of a difference recovery has made in my life and how grateful I am for that difference.

In the old days I would spend \$20-\$30 a week on my addiction and think nothing about it. When I first came to SAA, I had the perception that putting a dollar or two in the collection basket was sufficient for giving back financially to my recovery program--particularly since I was attending four meetings a week when I first started out.

As time has passed and the value of the dollar has diminished, I have realized that I need to become serious when it comes to supporting my recovery program.

Without SAA I would still be in denial about the self-destructive nature of my addiction and I would still be dealing with issues such as relationships, isolation, overspending on my addiction and being a selfish, egocentric, self-absorbed individual.

So, as a means of giving back to the program that has meant so much to me over the years, I became a part of the Lifeline Partners Program. I called the ISO staff and had them enroll me in monthly contributions through my

credit card. All I have to do is pay the bill when it comes due.

The personal satisfaction I receive is immeasurable. I feel as if I am doing my part to keep my recovery program alive. And, I am giving back to the program that has given so much to me.

The Seventh Tradition tells me that, as a recovering person, I have a certain responsibility and I try to fulfill that to the best of my ability. The monthly amount I give to the ISO isn't that much by itself; but, with other members of the fellowship who participate in the program, it has a very profound and positive impact on the financial stability of SAA.

I invite every one of you who reads this to join Lifeline Partners and become a part of a group of recovering addicts who "pay it forward". Simply call the ISO office, 800-477-8191, and give them your credit or debit card number. They will be pleased to sign you up for this wonderful program of giving. The amount you contribute is entirely up to you.

S-Anon Comes to Central Indiana

The Twelve Step recovery program listed below is NOT affiliated with SAA. IISAA is providing information about this group for members of the fellowship who believe their own program of recovery or that of a family member might benefit from attending.

S-Anon, a 12-Step program for family members of sex addicts, now has a meeting in Fishers.

Central Indiana S-Anon Family Group
Giest Christian Church
12756 Promise Road, Fishers, IN
North Campus Hospitality Room
Mondays at 7 p.m.
Contact: Kami (317) 965-6125

Sponsorship and Service Work

Richard S.

It recently occurred to me that as a sponsor for a member of the fellowship I was doing him a disservice by not including service work as part of his recovery plan.

Why service work? Service work reinforces the recovery program. It is another means of getting out of the isolation of the addiction and meeting other members of the fellowship. Friendships are developed through service work. Service work builds self-esteem which is an important component of recovery. Service work allows the recovering addict to give back to the program. For those who cannot financially give back, service work can provide the same sense of accomplishment and usefulness.

Service work can be done at many levels.

The purest form of service in any 12-Step program is that of sponsorship. Guiding another addict through the Steps is mutually beneficial.

Some meetings have a specific time set aside for members of the group to give leads thus sharing their past struggle with sexual addiction and the experience, strength and hope they have realized from working a recovery program. A good sponsor can serve his sponsee and the group by directing the sponsee as to what should be shared and how it should be shared. A powerful lead is helpful not only to the person

who gives it but to other people in the meeting who hear it.

Each meeting group has a need for people to chair meetings, and to serve as secretary and/or treasurer providing the important functions of keeping a written history of the meeting as well as keeping track of the contributions received by the meeting group and how they are utilized. Some meetings are organized to the point of offering a recovery library that requires a librarian to properly maintain the collection and make sure that materials are accounted for when they are borrowed. In addition, some meetings provide ISO pamphlets for the members to take with them. This requires someone to inventory and order the literature.

One can also serve the meeting group by becoming a representative to Intergroup. Reps help maintain clear lines of communication and share their group's conscience on important issues considered by Intergroup. The *two* representatives that each group is entitled to have on Intergroup can provide further service as officers and committee members. This allows IISAA to function with greater efficiency and to accomplish more service to the groups and to the addict who still suffers apart from us.

If you are a sponsee and want to know more about service work, ask your sponsor or pick up a copy of the pamphlet, *The IISAA 12th Step Volunteer Form*, which includes an extensive list of volunteer opportunities. If you are a sponsor, encourage your sponsee to get involved in service work.

If you do not have a sponsor, you can still become involved in service work. Does it require some time? Yes, but the time spent doing service work is more than repaid by the benefits that you receive

It is important to be aware that service work should never interfere with your recovery. If you find yourself in a situation where you are considering acting out due to the stresses of your service work, then it is time to take a step back and rethink how much you are doing.

I will be happy to answer any questions about service work and how a person can become involved. The important thing is to become involved. Service work is at the heart of a successful meeting; and, it is what keeps the program viable and active.

Meeting Changes

The following are new meetings or existing meetings that have changed locations. See the Indiana SAA Fellowship Directory for complete details.

Suspended until further notice:

The Thursday Open Meeting

Moved to new location:

Monday Noon Meeting
SS. Peter & Paul Cathedral
Rectory
1347 N. Meridian St.

Saturday Let It Out Meeting
Irrington Friends Meeting Place
831 N. Edmundson Avenue

New Meeting:

Wednesday Noon Meeting
SS. Peter & Paul Cathedral
Rectory
1347 Meridian St.

Healthy Sexuality, from page 6

person and are both “on the same page’ as to the nature of the relationship?

Are fantasies directed toward a whole person or just to body parts (objectification)? Do fantasies lead to masturbation that is out of control and interferes with daily life and relationships? In social situations, are the motives honest and open or predatory? Are there hidden agenda? Do overt actions mask sinister motives? For example, is humor being used to entertain and get to know a person or is it being used simply to gain access to sex.

Do one’s fantasies demean and objectify another person? Does one enter into a relationship with the same emotional commitment as the other person; or, does one look at the relationship as “friends with benefits” leaving the other person open to emotional harm by allowing the other person to think that the relationship is more than that? Does one lie and mislead for sex thereby not allowing the other person to get to know the real person?

One of the most complex issues in healthy sexuality is the issue of masturbation. It is a problem most addicts struggle with. For many of us it is the “gateway” activity for our addiction. Masturbation seldom occurs in isolation. It often is preceded by or leads to excessive fantasy, objectification, and compulsivity. Addictive personalities can get lost in the activity and it often takes on a life of its own and throws the essence of our recovery into danger. The pleasures associates with the PIG (problem of immediate

gratification) can lead to increasingly deviant stimuli to get the next fix.

For me, masturbation can never be a healthy activity. To engage in it (for me) requires fantasy and I cannot control my fantasies. From experience, I know that once I get enmeshed in my “cycle” of masturbation e.g. stimulation - activity - more stimulation - activity - increased stimulation, etc. I go to places I cannot afford to go.

So, the question remains: Is there such a thing as healthy masturbation?

To be able to answer this, one needs absolute and rigorous honesty.

1. Can it be done without an unhealthy fantasy i.e. focusing on body parts, objectifying a person? Does it demean and denigrate another person?
2. Can it be done without interfering with one’s life activities? Is it part of a broader lifestyle?
3. Does it harm anyone, including oneself, or any relationship, committed or casual?
4. Does one isolate as a result of it?

The main argument for masturbation seems to be that it relieves sexual tension and eliminates or lessens the desire to act out in much healthier ways. My response to that reasoning is that this technique can be, and often is, a “slippery slope” that leads to the more harmful behaviors that the masturbation is supposed to ease or eliminate.

Masturbating to relieve tension seems to me to be “treating the symptom” not the cause. If there is an urge to masturbate so as to relieve the desire to act out in more harmful ways, one has to look deeper into why that tension exists and its underlying causes. Masturbation seems to me to only delay the inevitable slip. It also delays the ultimate confrontation and dealing with whatever issue is really behind the urge.



Retreat Planning Is Underway

The 15th annual IISAA Fall Retreat, **October 23-25**, is still four months away, but planning is well under way and the preliminary groundwork has been laid.

The official call for volunteers and registration form will be available at the August Intergroup meeting.

Our focus will be on ‘*Living in the Solution*’. Please place the dates on your personal calendar and be thinking about a topic YOU might present.

2009 Calendar

August

8 IISAA Meeting, 4 p.m.

September

12 IISAA Meeting, 4 p.m.

30 Check  N Deadline.

October

10 IISAA Meeting, 4 p.m.

23-25 15th Annual Retreat,
Living in the Solution