

The Check N

Volume XIV

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

Winter 2007

Working the Steps. . . The Empowerment of Knowledge

Richard S.

I recall my struggles with addiction before and after I became involved with a recovery program. So much of those struggles revolved around my ignorance about addiction and myself. I kept doing these same stupid, self-defeating things over and over again, always having some positive expectation from the experience. All that really became of it was more shame, guilt and self-hate for not being a stronger person.

Not long after joining SAA I became involved in a 12-Step Workshop. As I worked The Steps, I learned more and more about myself and my addiction. It is this knowledge that has gotten me to where I am today. I have been empowered to make good decisions about things that used to baffle me.

I did not make this journey alone. I had the experience, strength and hope of a number of people in the program who travelled the information highway of the workshop and recovery with me. The love, care and understanding of these people will be with all the days of my remaining life. My only regret is that I did not meet them sooner. Doing so might have helped me avoid inflicting so much hurt on my family, friends and myself. However, I have come to realize that there is a reason behind all things that are a part of life, even the bad ones.

Working the Steps is an empowering experience. The knowledge gained from it is immeasurable. The side effects are peace, serenity, understanding, the ability to make good decisions and the willingness to share that experience with others.

Is it easy? No. Is it time consuming? Yes. Before recovery I could have thought of many excuses for not working The Steps. Isolation and lack of intimacy are two that instantly come to mind. Those are things that feed my addiction.

Ten years after my initial Step Workshop, I am doing another one. Why? Because the program tells me that I don't have to do The Steps perfectly the first time in order to work them and I am still a work in progress. And I am able to share my experience, strength and hope with others who are looking for help as they work The Steps for the first time. The payback for me is that I learn and share more about myself and strengthen my recovery at the same time. What a deal!

See, *Empowerment*, page 4



A Special Events Plan for 2007

Mike M.

On Saturday, December 16, members of the SAA Fellowship met for our annual Special Events Planning Meeting.

We began our discussion with a list of topics that were suggested by the 2006 retreatants, as well as a few that had filtered in from other members of the fellowship. I was pleased and a bit surprised to see how the discussion quickly lead to the idea for this year's topic: "**Healthy Meetings for Healthy Recovery**," with a sub-topic of sponsorship underlying it.

Here is a list of the related topics that were presented:

- + SAA meetings
- + Healthy meetings
- + New meetings
- + Revitalizing meetings
- + Newcomers at meetings
- + Sponsorship
- + Meetings on the solution, rather than the problem
- + Wisdom from the fellowship about problems meetings have faced
- + The 12 Steps at meetings
- + The 12 Traditions at meetings
- + How do our meetings encourage sobriety?
- + Group inventories (are our meetings following The Steps and The Traditions?)

See, *Special Events Plan*, page 3

From the Editor

Courage!

Addiction is not for the weak or fearful. Neither is recovery. Both require courage.

Perhaps one of the most courageous steps a person can take in life is to admit that he/she has a problem.

It also takes courage to seek help.

I have observed the look on some newcomers' faces when, after having introduced themselves, the rest of the meeting group starts applauding. They seem perplexed as to why they should deserve this recognition. It is really quite simple, every one of us has shared the experience of attending our first meeting and we recognize the amount of nerve that it took for us to do so.

Additional courage is needed to move from being a passive observer within our meeting groups to being an active participant. Volunteering to chair the meeting, to give a lead, to serve as secretary or Intergroup Representative all require a courageous leap of faith.

Stepping out into the wider fellowship by attending a

workshop, picnic, retreat, or holiday party taps even further into our reserves of bravery.

The greatest demonstration of courage for a recovering addict, however, may be when he/she is able to declare to the world-at-large, "I am an imperfect person who is working to improve myself". And, then to offer a helping hand to others who may share the same problem.

I witnessed this type of valor at the Indiana Aids Walk when I visited the SAA booth. **Larry A.**, **Harry D.**, and **Dale W.** were all there distributing literature to those who sought it.

The mere presence of these men--their willingness to go public with their addiction-- no doubt, inspired some of those attending the AIDS Walk to find the nerve to step forward and ask for information. They may have acknowledged for the first time, even to themselves, that they, too, struggle with these issues. Becoming informed may save their lives.

Having experienced the false pride and bravado of addiction, I know I was genuinely proud to be associated with these three courageous recovering addicts.

Mike C.



Correction

In the previous issue of The Check-In, it was stated that the Tuesday Step Study meeting in Indianapolis was the first meeting in the state to use this format. In reality, the South Bend Serenity Meeting has been listed as a Step Study meeting for quite some time.

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.

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The Value of a Buck ... or Two

Richard S.

Having been involved in this recovery experience for a little over ten years I have saved countless thousands of dollars from what I would have spent had I still been acting out. I spent at least ten dollars a week fueling my addiction and there were times when I spent well over that amount.

What did it get me? Isolation, shame, guilt, lack of intimacy with my family and friends and a myriad of other negatives brought into my life and affecting not only me, but people that I cared about.

A few years ago I realized that I was not fulfilling my responsibilities to this wonderful program called SAA and I made a decision to obligate myself to taking financial responsibility and repaying this program by contributing through the Lifeline Partnership Program.

I know talking money in a recovery program is a turn-off for some people; however, this program exists only through individual and meeting groups contributions to support the work that it performs. I make a monthly donation using my credit card as a means of giving back to this program some of what I have gotten from it. It has saved my life, my relationship with people that I care a great deal about, and I have met some wonderful people in this program.

Please, won't you consider becoming a part of the Lifeline Partners Program and give back some of what you have gotten from it? It doesn't have to be a lot, only what you can afford. Even five, ten

or fifteen dollars a month will help this program to carry the message to the addict who still suffers and to develop more programs for those of us already in it.

Call the ISO office at 800-477-8191 and they can set you up for a monthly contribution using your credit/debit card.

Special Events Plan, from page 1

- + Meeting formats
- + The new ISO Group Guide (there will be a draft available by then)
- + Readings for meetings
- + Openings/closings/prayers
- + Carrying a common message vs. group autonomy
- + Cross talk in meetings
- + Participation/contribution/service to meetings
- + Meetings are self-supporting
- + Meetings alone are not enough



There is more than enough here to keep us occupied for the workshop and retreat.

Other discussion included:

Spring Workshop: We are looking for a workshop General Chair. Mike M. is willing to be Program Chair, but needs help with logistics (food, location, and so on). Our goal is to have the workshop in early or mid April.

Summer Picnic: Mike P. has agreed serve as chair of the Picnic Committee once again. Thanks Mike! The picnic will likely be at Brown County State Park again, unless we find a private site. If you have suggestions regarding the location, please pass them on to Mike P.

Fall Retreat: Mike C. has agreed to be the General Chair of the retreat once again. Thanks Mike!

Bob T, who was this year's Food Chair, has agreed to come back for an encore. Thanks Bob! We are still looking for a Program Chair for the retreat.

Holiday Party: Richard S. has agreed to chair the Holiday Party Committee again. Thanks Richard! Bill J. has already started the process of getting us back onto the calendar for the Lawrence United Methodist Church. Several people expressed a desire to have fliers and maps for the holiday party – is there a volunteer to help prepare those for next year?

In closing, I would like to thank everyone who attended the planning meeting. It was very productive and positive.

I left feeling encouraged and excited about the Fellowship's future. On the other hand, I did note one concerning trend that I would like to point out. The general chairpersons for our events are the same as they have been for a long time. There are 30 or so meetings in Indiana, which means that there are probably upwards of 300-400 SAA's attending meetings. Please don't forget that we are "self-supporting." That doesn't just mean that we put the usual \$2 in the hat at each meeting, but that we do what is needed to keep the Fellowship healthy and strong.

I was at a meeting over Christmas that had to move because the regular meeting place was closed. It turned out that our back-up site was also closed. So, we wandered a bit before finding a place to meet. Someone asked "why didn't 'they' check this earlier?" I'd like to remind us all that "they" is us. No one is going to do our recovery for us – the unity of the SAA Fellowship depends on our own efforts.

In Recovery, What Have I Learned?

Richard S.

I had a realization a number of years ago that my addictions were the effect and not the cause. What does that mean? It means that my inability to deal with my emotions lead me to a lifestyle of addictive behaviors.

Some of these emotions occurred when I was an infant and others during my adolescence. As a means of dealing with these unresolved issues, I chose to use various addictions as a means of resolving them. Although there was really no positive effect from these choices, I kept making them over and over again. I think my expectation was to achieve a different result each time, even though it never happened that way.

For more than four decades I repeated that process, over and over again. My warped thinking kept telling me that these bad decisions were working, but deep down I knew they weren't. But that didn't stop me from making them, repeatedly. Finally, a few years ago, I realized I was struggling with my emotions: fear, anger, resentment and anxiety among others, and, these emotions were affecting my decisions. This helped me to put a face on my addiction issues.

At last, it wasn't just a battle to not act out or to struggle with the terms of this fight as though they were coming from the addiction. They were coming from me and my struggle with

my emotions. I didn't have to force those emotions inward anymore. I could choose to deal with them in the light of day. And I did so by going to meetings where I could talk about them, openly, for the first time. No judgement, no criticism and no negative consequences.

Now, as an adult, I had to take responsibility for my choices. It mattered that I had issues, but I had to start making better choices on how to deal with them.

I have learned that I am much more emotional about many more things that affect my decision-making process. Call it my feminine side or whatever. It feels good to feel. I accept my tears of sadness and happiness. I accept my feelings of serenity and peacefulness. I accept my feelings of anger, resentment, fear, anxiety and any other negative feelings that may occur. I accept the feelings of shame and guilt from the consequences of my acting out. Perhaps, most importantly, I accept my feelings of joy and happiness from not acting out and dealing with every-day life.

Holiday Party

Richard S.

The Indiana Intergroup hosted it's annual Holiday Party on Saturday, December 16. It was held at the Lawrence United Methodist Church for the third year in a row and is planned to be at that location for next year's gathering, as well.

There were approximately 40 people in attendance who enjoyed some really good food.

It was also a great opportunity to meet and chat with some wonderful recovery friends and their significant others. A hearty "thank you" to all who helped with the preparation and cleanup including ; Mike C., Bill J., Ken S., Morris B., Dale W. and others.

Empowerment from page 1

Ignorance has been my teacher in the past. When I look at where and what it has gotten me and the people I care the most about, I can now make the choice of knowledge and know that I do not have to walk this path alone.

The Twelve Promises have come true for me. Not because I more deserving but because of working the Steps. Without working these Twelve Steps I would still be struggling, powerless against the addictive behavior that had become my life. I only had to be willing to open myself to the care of others in this program and accept their love and understanding. Thank you Chuck F., Bill H., Dan S., Kevin P., and David. You have made this ten-year journey so meaningful.

2007 Calendar

January

13 IISAA Meeting, 4 p.m.

February

10 IISAA Meeting, 4 p.m.

March

10 IISAA Meeting, 4 p.m.

31 Check  N Deadline.

April

14 IISAA Meeting, 4 p.m.