

AT BAY ©

Volume 1, Issue 1

Summer/Fall 2005

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Introducing At Bay

I am very pleased for the Bay Area SA fellowship, and for SA as a whole, to announce a new, regional publication devoted to recovery.

I am confident *AT BAY* will help many people, both those contributing to it, and those reading it. *AT BAY* is a great service to SA, and I have found that being of service is crucial to my sobriety and recovery.

My involvement with the Intergroup (NCSAI) has been very important and has opened up new horizons. I meet and work with SA's from all around the Bay Area, and inform my groups about international, national, regional, and local events.

The truth is, being of service to the fellowship does me a world of good. That is why I encourage everyone who can to

become involved in IG work at some point. Many local SA groups do not have IG representatives, and other positions are still open, most notably Corrections Committee Chair.

**

If you cannot always make the IG meeting in Hayward on the third Saturday of each month, you can still be of service. For example, you can be part of the phone team that responds to the NCSAI telephone hotline.

In addition, the Pass the Message (formally "Outreach") Committee, is planning on sending SA literature to Bay Area churches, and can use your help and input.

Finally, IG hosts our annual Unity Day (on the 17th of this month), and monthly speaker meetings that follows the IG business meeting.

Check our website:

www.sabayarea.org/events.html and this issue's calendar of events.

Connecting with the fellowship is a great way of introducing yourself, staying sober, and supporting Intergroup, and SA as a whole!

Thank you all for being a part of SA, a program of recovery that has saved my life.

God bless.

Best,
Brendan K.,
NCSAI Intergroup Chair

AT BAY turns to local and regional members of the fellowship for the strength of its content. Your stories are the lifeblood, and hope, to bring others through to the light of recovery. Six times a year, you will find the voice of local SA recovery on these pages, as well as a regular section from Corrections Facility Committee members. In addition to a bi-monthly area calendar of national, regional and local events, from time to time, there will be room for poetry and reflection on the 12 steps and 12 traditions of SA recovery. Comments or questions? email atbay@paradm.com
AT BAY

Have you signed up for the Fall NCSAI Annual Retreat?

November 11-13, 2005

At: Ben Lomond,

Editor: *The small victories*

One member of the SA fellowship has a girlfriend who works at a hospice south of San Francisco. She drives to his apartment once a week after dark to bring him left over doughnuts. The ritual is more a bond of mutual hope than a token gesture. On Fridays, he carries the doughnuts into work and sits at his cubicle.

His boss ignores his polite calls, and the office staff, some are fast trackers who strike him as cut-throat. They explain what he is wrong to think, and they right. As they receive promotions, he just sits, grinds his

teeth, and learns to smile. He sees several acrimonious emails sent by his co-workers about him. To put it mildly, he has taken a dislike to his workplace.

If this sounds familiar, why shouldn't it be? Most of us have struggled with the fear, isolation and resentment that are reminders for the sexaholic.

Some of us may attest to our Higher Power at work in these situations. Perhaps our friend's sense of powerlessness is being cultivated. Sometimes it has to work that way. Sometimes he

works the steps or prays. But there are dark days that are known, according to my sponsor, as 'having a stack attack.' A deep and muddy pool of negative emotion grabs at us. Lust whispers its cruel deception of entitlement and relief.

But our friend finds as he opens the box, in addition to the two doughnuts, the program, his sobriety, that of his local group, trust and faithful devotion of his girlfriend, the embodiment of his Higher Power. The compulsion and the will to act out seem to disappear. The swell of Gratitude washes over him.

He closes the box and starts to cry.

AT BAY

- **Avoid hanging out in the hotel room.**

There are too many temptations for me in the room and I feel sorry for myself that I can't be home with friends. Instead, I eat dinner at a new restaurant near the meeting and I show up early to introduce myself at the meeting. I only go to the hotel when it's time to crash.

- **Help others on the road.**

I reach out to newcomers in the meetings. Just like at home, I have to do the 12th step. The addiction does not stay at home when I leave town. I also try to be helpful anywhere I go like

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Do you have something you want to share with other SA members?

The next issue of AT BAY is seeking written submissions of individual experience, strength and hope.

For submission guidelines, please see the back of this issue, or for information, email

atbay@paradm.com

My Portable Fellowship

I have traveled for business about half the month for the last five years or so. I have been successful and unsuccessful staying sober on the road. I have found that the key to staying sober at home is working the steps, going to meetings, and following direction from a sponsor. Those really increase my chances on the road also.

In addition, here are some strategies that have worked for me while traveling:

- **Plan your meetings in advance.**

Before I leave town, I find the group's website or call Nashville SAICO. I also make sure I have directions to each meeting. This makes a big difference. It's too stressful to be on the road, struggling and trying to find a meeting.

Most groups around the country will not be able to call back to you on the same day or sometimes even the same week, so advanced planning is needed. I also attend open AA meetings to fill out my schedule. I try to do a meeting a day on the road.

- **Raise your hand and introduce yourself as a visitor.**

Most SA's will go out of their way to welcome you into their meetings. Capitalize on this to get to know the people and ask for them to join you afterwards for coffee and fellowship. I have learned I have to speak up for myself and ask.

I can't afford to be resentful when people don't reach out to me- I have to reach out to them.

"HE WHO FINDS HIMSELF, LOSES HIS MISERY"

MATTHEW ARNOLD

"RECOVERY IS AN INSIDE JOB"

ANONYMOUS

Removing the mask, parts I,II

Part I

Sometime past midnight in North Beach, I am loitering in a door-frame. No one who might make the mistake would be caught dead in this part of North Beach after midnight. But something brought me.

It is the 1980's and I am outside a small porn shop in San Francisco's North Beach and it is cold and foggy. I prefer the stark lit inside to neon of dark, 'disreputable' theatres down the street in a city that has lost its way.

Inside the store, hundreds of unseeing eyes -- from video racks, and, from tables, the paperbacks. No patrons, no rumpled raincoats in tortoise rims, no furtive glances at this hour. Just the proprietor, the creak of the floor that gives me the willies, and the banging in my head that repeats '*Are you crazy, get out.*' And another voice: *One day, you'll pay.*" As I look around me, I am aware of a presence off to the side. I recognize this person because it is someone, and this someone is me. It could be my conscience, or my negative self, or the ego, watching me experience lust from outside myself.

Deadened eyes belonging to the man behind the counter scan the place and those on the wall scream silently. I don't really listen. *Maybe, the waiter is not coming, not this time. The check won't be arriving, for awhile.* Nothing's of interest, so, like a connoisseur, I pass the proprietor, neither of us making contact. He is behind a tall counter to deter robbers and has not moved since I walked in.

With the feeling of abomination rising in me, I head straight into the night fog.

One thing is certain. I cannot stop. It means, wanting not to follow the familiar pattern of my addiction means nothing. Right from wrong, not for anyone, anything will I stop. I am a runaway train down a mountain grade.

At the outbreak of AIDS, I solicited a prostitute, she with bulging eyes, strung out and sickly, telling me go have sex with myself (my words, not hers) when I said how little I'd be willing to pay her. Actually, the coward in me prefers pornography, the better to manage the various forms of lust. Better than commercial sex. I vow never, I won't ever give in to the urge to pay for sex again. I lie to myself (a habit in and of itself), that thrift with my sex drive had somehow saved me. Complete denial. Control of the risk of exposure. In truth, I stopped approaching prostitutes because there was this problem: I ejaculated or lost control of my bowels when I became caught up in imagining just before it was about to happen.

SA looks at it this way: Behind my behavior there is the lust craving that propels me into acting out. The nature of crave is, of course, to desire, as in a strong, inward desire. According to Merriam-Webster, the word *crave* originates from the source *krefja*. Prior to the 12th century, *krefja*, meant, to demand, adapted from Norse to the Old English *craftian*. *To demand. To crave.*

The demands of Lust lay ugly siege to the body and spirit, like Vikings assailing Celtic settlements. The difference being I rolled out the red carpet.

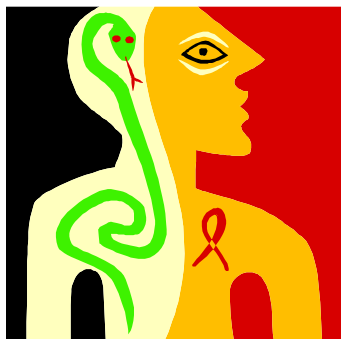
Were it not for Sexaholics Anonymous. I would be at the mercy of Lust, and certainly unwilling or unable to stop. Yes, therapy and counseling helped, but left me with my lust addiction untreated, convinced for the time being that my problems were caused by exposure to pornography.

I spent more than three and a half decades feeding and hiding behind insatiable lust, the one pre-marital relationship took place in college. People will disown me, said a *third* voice, because, *I am not worthy of love*, and I feared not being able to perform with someone for whom I feel something other than greedy arousal.

Acting out always refers to a state of inner turmoil, a disorderly world of fantasy that attracted me sure as a hummingbird to sugar water. I began seeking shrinks merely as a way to talk about myself, other people, to hide behind lust, just egoism. Strip me of ego and you what do you have? You have an addict who behaves like an addict.

It wasn't supposed to be this way. *I just have a very active sex imagination.* I was, am, astonished to find there are people who have never seen the inside of an adult video store or massage parlor, or peepshow. To a sensible person, Lust is temporary, a ludicrous quirk, a smack to the cerebral cortex. Pornographic imagery travels on the mind's screen, suspended in time, like a magic show; only it's only an illusion, the lights come up once the show is over.

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The Second Step, Part II

Adam frowned

He retraced steps back to the Garden
And went looking for the apple once more

The serpent swallowed the rotten core whole
It sidled up, encircled Adam's waist

Image by image shook the mind of man with lust.
Now, look, here, Adam, look.

All manner of the forbidden, seen, the world's garment was peeled away, until Adam's eyes could no longer contain the truth

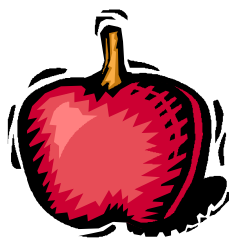
But, Adam, whose destiny the godhead had spoken by sending into exile, surrendered and reconciled with his Father.

When God heard this, He clapped His hands and from above the birds, thunder shook

The serpent unwound its form

And waited, in the brier for a cypress tree to grow in its place, and give rest for a wanderer, perhaps, three or another millennia.

Anonymous



"Came to Believe that only a Higher Power could restore us to Sanity"

The Second Step of AA adapted by SA

Seedling

While gazing the dance of a dying willow tree as it combs the wind through its silken, sleepy leaves was then I beheld a lone fallen seed.



Perplexed and troubled at the paradox I'd found
Whether it be nurtured and held or left to lye on the ground.

Shall it be loved and coveted, I fought with discord.
Or left to fend on its own accord.

Shall it be coddled and cooed and bathed in song
Or left where it lye might it be trounced upon.

Shall we rampart and prune wrought its limbs
Or left to bird and beast less it's odds grow dim.

Need it be praised and embraced and strengthened with food
Or left to the elements in the hope it take root.

The coda alas will behold it to be Which will gift fruit
Whilst the other beget weeds.

Roger D.

Inside Story — The SA message

Every person has dignity:

No matter what their station in life, economic status, addictions, illness, no matter what they've done: every person has dignity.

It is in that spirit, those of us who have recovered (BB pg.vii.) believe that at one time we were powerless over lust and our lives were unmanageable.

In working the steps our blurred vision changed and we saw more clearly the wreckage of our past. We set about to right the wrongs and live a spirit filled life. Things got better. We felt healthier. Those around us saw a miraculous change.

We realized that God & the 12 Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous were doing for us what

we could not do for ourselves. In our growth we were so grateful that we realized we had to continue to work with others to keep what was given to us.

So we are now carrying the message to those who still suffer. These are the thoughts of just one recovered individual, who, after serving three years in prison is choosing to carry the message to other incarcerated men. Although, as Chairman of the Sexaholics Anonymous Correctional Facility Committee, I do not speak for the entire fellowship.

Others may have varied opinions as to why they do service work in other areas.

I am in service, John C.

This may be copied and made available to responsible people where needed.

This section is dedicated to the work of the SA Correctional Facility Committee, and those who contribute to SA by doing 12 step work in prisons or hospital facilities.

Future articles can be 150 to 300 words. Send text or an attachment to 'Inside Story' c/o atbay@paradm.com

If you would like to contact the CFC, or John C., forward your email to the above or write to this address:

5923-A Terrace Ln.
Farmington NY 14425

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In deference to those lucky people, they can return to their world and share what they saw, *hey, what a lark!* They can turn giddy and laugh as the demon retreats to the unhappiness whence it came.

For the addict, lust possesses; this is meant in the absolute sense. It means being unable to be free without using lust, shake lust or to be intimate, or experience anything sexual without lust, because it is there, waiting for me to turn to it when I screw up. I was able, proud and self-reliant, and it never dawned on me that I needed help.

But then, I've told myself many lies prior to recovery, and a few good ones since. I wonder why I had no friends, or those who understood me to share the good, no one to call in the wee hours in distress, and not nearly enough, to help find the opening to the cave when darkness enters, once it

I WILL PUSH MY PAIN TO
THE OUTER LIMITS, FIND
THE CORNER OF HELL
ONLY MY ADDICT
UNDERSTANDS, UNTIL I
CAN'T ENDURE,
AND ABSOLUTELY NOT
ONE BIT MORE. THEN,
GOD STEPS IN.

*"Haven't we had
enough?," He asks.*

does. I invited it in. It is a bad dream that won't go away.

I will push my pain to the outer limits, find the corner of hell only my addict understands, until I can't endure, and absolutely not one bit more. Then, God steps in.

"Haven't we had enough?" He asks.

What is it like to wake up addicted to lust, wasted, remorseful, with an empty, scratchy feeling, as if *'oh, this is not working'*, of hopes of a normal life that are out of reach, after the shame of bingeing, abstaining and more bingeing? Think standing over the melted pavement next to a downed power cable, sparks shower everywhere, when you realize, despite all knowing to the contrary, you are going to grab a hold of those *millions* of volts.

If you had known me when, you'd have seen someone with perhaps some slight fixed disturbance, a serious, gaze, a sensitive person, struggling, mucking through life. You could not know how Lust, the killer of joy, silently and invisibly induced paranoia, depression or the widening and complex destructiveness of a person rending apart, in torment, unwholeness, or *unholiness*.

The next thing I know I am in my shrink's office, Monday afternoon in September of 2002.

I sat down and began removing the mask.

Part II

Until that moment I had not found the courage or truth behind these words, there was not a thing I could have done to reveal the stigma. *"I think I am a sex addict, and I need to go to a 12 step program."*

You bet. After ten years of therapy, I had come to - 'Step 1/2' - about to surrender in my heart and my soul.

Coming off acting out, I attended a Sexaholics Anonymous meeting once a week, and, as every newcomer learns, it is different than expected. Then two, four, five, six meetings a week.

Disclosure, and relief from the obsession. I had spent the greater part of a life trying to keep the pain at bay with lust. For the first time, I shared my darkness and left it in those meeting rooms, forced to share and listen to other embattled souls. Inevitably, I met people who gave freely of their experience. I became the newcomer and there is this umbrella of guys-who-were-once-the-newcomer and a few females who went before, who had burnt their hands on the furnace door, and you know what this experience of support feels like? It feels Great.

Like a whole world opening up, I am joyful to be part of it. Like this new guy. Amazed, as my friend, Scott W. says, *'we stick together or we perish alone.'*

So I read program literature as if I knew what they were talking about. It began to seem to make sense to me. And, when they asked me to lead, I did. Sober, I realized means serving the fellowship. As the Bob Dylan song goes, *"You got to serve somebody."*

If you think you can manage lust or sex, then stop reading this article. You might be wasting your time. If you are a newcomer or hope to work the SA program with others, please read on, because, I don't need to tell you, when the urge hits, without God, in meetings or in phone calls to other SA's, I'm finished.

If you believe lust puts you on the same playing field as everyone else, as I did before coming into SA, it's time someone dashed your hopes, friend.

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REGIONAL

**Events Schedule
9/05–11/05**

- SEPT. 17 ANNUAL NCSAI UNITY DAY, KAISER HOSPITAL, HAYWARD, ROOM 'M', REGISTRATION FORM IS AVAILABLE FROM NCSAI IG WEBSITE,

WWW.SABAYAREA.ORG/
EVENTS.HTML

- OCTOBER 8, 10:00 AM TO 4:00 PM WED. OAKLAND 'HAPPY, JOYOUS AND FREE' PRESENTS MONTHLY STEP STUDY WORKSHOP, AT CHURCH, 4101 PARK BLVD., OAKLAND, CA

- OCTOBER 15 OR 22, (TBA) CCSAI & NCSANI UNITY DAY, FAIR OAKS, CA. REGISTRATION FORM AND DIRECTIONS AVAILABLE ONLINE

WWW.SABAYAREA.ORG/
EVENTS.HTML

- OCT. 14,15,16 SOUTHERN CAL. SA & S-ANON REGIONAL UNITY CONFERENCE, IRVINE, CA. TO REGISTER, CONTACT PETER D. PDEHAAN@MYCIDCO.COM, OR,

WWW.SABAYAREA.ORG/
EVENTS.HTML *

- NOV. 11-13 NCSAI ANNUAL MEN'S RETREAT, MT. CROSS LUTHERAN CAMP, BEN LOMOND, CA, REGISTRATION FORM AND DIRECTIONS AVAILABLE FROM NCSAI IG WEBSITE *

October 2005						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

November 2005						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			



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REMEMBER TO SEND DETAILS TO THE AT BAY CALENDAR PAGE.
PLEASE EMAIL ATBAY@PARADM.COM SIX TO EIGHT WEEKS IN ADVANCE.**

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If you and I are much alike, we are, in fact, different from others. My sponsor classifies people as two kinds, addicts, and non-addicts.

Sexaholics Anonymous taught me that I *identify with the SA in the room*. For addicts like us who have done our research, according to the program, we act out to fill the empty chasm inside. No one knows what this looks like or where it comes from, no one had to tell me I never fit in, because I always knew, but there are very disconnected and lonely people who don't become addicts.

So I'll return to the term 'misconnection,' because it applies to me. My emptiness and fear and my disconnected soul demand an answer to the big questions: *Why can't I stop? Who Am I?, Who's got the Power?* Provided I allow it to, lust supplies the answer:

I'll give you whatever you need... feed me, c'mon, you know it's just a matter of time, on...and...on..., and... on.

You might be curious and persistent as to the meaning of your addiction. As I said, I needed to find my limit of endurance, or pain, and be readied for myself, what the White Book describes, when, *'in the crucible of our experiences.'*

If you still want to manage sex, get your wife, your job, your boy/girlfriend/back and things back to normal, here it is: Despite my very best to be a good soul, before sobriety,

the doctor was always in, *and medicating*. I was, as one member has said, *'In Hell.'*

In recovery, I came to understand this to mean I am *not* normal, not in the sense my thinking, was ever, truly 'normal.' Each time I acted out confirms the wrong, brought to surface from years of fear and negative emotions, a spontaneous combustion, fire roaring past the walls of sanity, too crippled in spirit to do anything else.

Night after miserable night, misconnected, on the computer, listening to my chorus of shame emerging like the sound of birds before the bloody, raw sun, I wondered how far I had strayed from my holy source of life.

A binger, always, I swore it off, even as it got worse, clinging to my feeble and best intent, my abstention predicated on the external twists and turns of life. True, self-reliance never did work, but I told myself, I just needed the sheer will.

* *

Pornography exists as images projected from without onto a solid field, a moral floor or wall.

The more my lust addict refutes the presence of the moral, the more the habit becomes entrenched, and the more entangled and desperate I become to escape this world of rules and consequence, the need to deny my spiritual connection with God.

There was no power on earth to keep my betrayal of me to myself, because acting out became too overbearing. Eventually, something had to give. I remember thinking, I will keep going, get caught or die, whichever comes first.

My best thinking? A disaster. *"Lust kills,"* the White Book says. I kill me, repeatedly. I was in a small

meeting recently in New Jersey where the first person to speak delivered a powerful and honest share. Afterward, we went around the room, one by one. A young SA who had recently acted out, mentioned that the speaker's general description of sex with many women didn't sound so bad compared to the prospect of having to hold on to the SA sobriety definition. I won't forget the speaker's response:

'You want my life?', he said, as he looked Mr. insobriety right in the eye, *'You got it.'*

That my addiction has caused deep, complex damage made me all the more willing to keep it invisible. No one pays notice. No one knows the price of addiction or has endured the pain. Except me, and God.

Bless us,
Anonymous

The contributor is familiar with SA recovery in and around San Francisco.

Next Issue, Part III, IV, steps in recovery on the urban front.

AT BAY

'YOU WANT MY LIFE?',
HE SAID, AS HE
LOOKED MR. INSOBRIETY
RIGHT IN THE EYE,
'YOU GOT IT.'

My Portable Fellowship
Continued from Page 2

airports or out with co-workers. This gets me out of myself. I make many calls back to people in my home fellowship too.

Meeting people around the country in this fellowship is a great blessing. My boss is always surprised that I have friends in almost every city. I don't have to be alone again- SA is a real gift!

Steve A
Walnut Creek, CA

**'I HAVE LEARNED
I HAVE TO SPEAK UP
FOR MYSELF AND
ASK.**

**I CAN'T AFFORD TO
BE RESENTFUL
THAT THEY DID NOT
REACH OUT TO ME-**

**I HAVE TO REACH
OUT TO THEM.'**

The Twelve Steps of Sexaholics Anonymous
Reprinted by permission of SAICO.

1. We admitted we were powerless over lust—that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a Higher Power could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people we had harmed, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these Steps, we tried to carry this message to sexaholics and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

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