



# F.W.S. Newsletter

*Dec. 2020*

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## Welcome to the 2020 December Issue of the F.W.S. Newsletter

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**Editor's note:** Please be sure to check <https://slaafws.org/events> for upcoming events.

## **Executive Director's Report**

As I sit down to write this, it is 85 degrees in South Texas. So much for Autumn breezes. Nevertheless, we have pumpkin spice lattes, so we can pretend!

Tomorrow is Thanksgiving here in the U.S. With the runaway train which 2020 has been, this holiday seems more poignant than ever to me. My immediate family (including my 85-year-old mother in Florida) has so far managed to make it through the COVID-19 pandemic relatively unscathed. My partner's family has not been nearly as lucky. My 16-year-old son is restless and bored, but healthy and thriving in his online classes. His biggest worry right now is "Will I have a normal senior year next year, with prom and a graduation service and all that?" At his age, he simply does not grasp yet how lucky he is in so many ways for that to be his main cause for stress.

Like millions of others, we panic when one of us coughs or cannot smell something the other feels should be "smell-able." We have removed people from our lives (hopefully temporarily) who scoff at social distancing or refuse to wear a mask. Instead of attending cookouts or quinceañeras, we now simply ride in the Texas Hill Country or assemble jigsaw puzzles or rake leaves in the backyard. Life, while at times monotonous and mundane, is also full of unexpected joys we never had time to enjoy before. Oddly, we know our neighbors better now than we did before social distancing. Just a wave across the street sometimes feels like a hug.

So this Thanksgiving, I am giving thanks for a great many things. First, of course, the lives and health of those I love. I also am grateful for the untold number of healthcare workers and other essential personnel out there who are battling on our behalf. I give thanks for Hector and Christina in the F.W.S. Office, both of whom keep me sane and productive.

On behalf of the F.W.S. Office, we give thanks this year for our wonderfully supportive Fellowship, including the Board of Trustees who have allowed us to work remotely when possible, so that we can protect ourselves and our community. We realize how lucky we are to have that option when so many worldwide are facing income insecurity. We give thanks for the members of our Fellowship who have called or written to check on us, to contribute, and to order merchandise. Hearing those familiar voices and seeing those familiar names is a source of relief and comfort.

If you observe Thanksgiving, I hope yours was wonderful. Onward toward 2021!

Respectfully,

Pam Martin  
Executive Director

## **Board of Trustees Chair's Message**

The Board of Trustees ("BOT") had two members, Anne K. and Celia G., opt out of service in October. The Board Development Committee ("BDC") is actively working to fill the two open positions on the BOT. Gabriel G. has taken over as the new Chair of the Board Outreach Committee ("BOC") and I have assumed the role of Chair of the BDC.

The BOT is keenly aware that hard copy pamphlets and brochures are not readily available to many members, especially new members, because of the pandemic and the lack of in-person meetings to distribute these materials. The Board Publishing and Distribution Committee ("BPDC"), lead by Christina M., is focusing on possible e-publication of these important recovery tools. This process is currently underway and moving forward.

The current pandemic has also played a pivotal role in our planning for the CY2021 ABC/M. While the BOT would love to be able to hold an in-person ABC/M in the summer of 2021, the COVID virus remains a huge obstacle to holding such an in-person ABC/M. Plans are currently underway to hold a multi-day ABC/M virtually so that all of the business of the Fellowship may be dealt with at the next ABC/M, including motions and items for discussion ("IFD's"). If it is possible to also hold an in-person ABC/M there is a contingency plan to hold a hybrid ABC/M where some participants can attend in person and the rest could attend on an on-line platform.

The LifeSaver Program has continued to grow each month but the pandemic and a general economic downturn has impacted most non-profits in the United States as overall revenues have declined in 2020. Now, more than ever, the Fellowship needs all of our members to help support our recovery programs with their contributions and the LifeSaver Program allows for members to make a monthly contribution which is matched dollar for dollar by some of our generous members up to a total of \$101,000. Every dollar members contribute to the LifeSaver Program results in a \$2 donation to F.W.S. Please consider joining the LifeSaver Program and lending your support to help the addict who still suffers. You can contribute by going to the F.W.S. website: <https://slaafws.org> and clicking on the LifeSaver Program link.

Our recovery world has significantly changed as many of us continue to shelter in place and attend virtual meetings. Many of us remain isolated and vulnerable. Now more than ever we need to reach out to the addict who still suffers and reconnect with those who can help keep us sober and on the path to recovery. Please stay safe.

Service feeds Sobriety,  
Seth S.  
BOT Chair

## **Board Committee Reports**

### **Board Copyright and Translation Committee (BCTC)**

#### **Participants**

Chair	Rick S., PA
BOT Member	P.A. K., TX
Executive Director	Pam Martin, TX
Non-BOT Member	Sam E., NJ

Meeting, 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday each month, 5:30 PM EST

Two main functions of this committee are to approve S.L.A.A. literature that has been translated into other languages and collect appropriate royalties, and to watch for unauthorized use of our material, printed or recorded, that bears our copyright.

The revision of the “Is It Really Necessary” pamphlet which details the rules of using S.L.A.A. copyrighted literature without violating our copyright has been submitted for review and approval by the BOT for additional input prior to re-publication.

Our S.L.A.A. in a life preserver logo has been renewed and good for another ten years.

We have eleven countries with current agreements with F.W.S. or approved RFIs for various S.L.A.A. publications that have been translated or are being translated.

We are planning a review and updating of our Mission Statement.

Rick S.  
BOT – PA

### **Board Outreach Committee (BOC)**

New Chair: Gabriel G.  
In the restarter/refresh faze with new chair.  
Prioritizing new and old agenda items.

### **Board Programs and Membership Committee (BPMC)**

*Submitted by P.A. K., Chair BPMC*

The Board Programs and Membership Committee consists of P.A. K., Board Committee Chair; Gabriel G., Trustee; Jim B., non-BOT Member; and Austin H., non-BOT Member. The Committee meets at 12:30 p.m. CST on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of the month.

## Mission Statement:

The Board Programs and Membership Committee (BPMC) provides guidance, oversight and support to successfully implement the ABM/IRC\*, maintain the F.W.S. Newsletter, and other projects to benefit the membership of the Fellowship.

The BPMC updated the above Mission Statement in October so the Fellowship has a better understanding of what our objectives and goals are, and was approved by the BOT.

Because of COVID-19, we are looking into having a couple of virtual workshops temporarily in place of the IRC.

We are nearing the completion of the ABM/IRC Manual. This is a great tool for host cities of ABM and IRCs. The final editing is being completed. A lot of time and work has been put into this project. The committee hopes to get it to the Board for approval very soon.

The ABM Planning Committee for 2021, which is a sub-committee of the BPMC, has had two meetings. The BOT, the BPMC, and the ABM/PC (Planning Committee) has made a decision on the plans for the 2021 ABM which is to have a virtual ABM, but is still looking at a face-to-face ABM in San Antonio. We are carefully keeping an eye on the COVID Virus to make a final decision in February. Until then we are moving forward with a virtual ABM. The ABM will have more days added due to Motions and IFDs that were submitted last year plus the newer motion submissions. This will take more work from the Board Technology Committee (BTC).

Host applications are being submitted for the 2022 ABM. If your city or Intergroup wants to apply, the application can be found at [slaafws.org](http://slaafws.org), the S.L.A.A. website.

\*Annual Business Meeting/International Recovery Convention

## **Treasurer's Report Year End September 30, 2020**

Our generous members, excellent literature and devoted staff allowed F.W.S. to maintain its operations through the end of the fiscal year despite the challenges brought on by the pandemic. Some of our peers in the 12-Step World cut back on operations or drew down from their reserve funds. We did neither.

Total non-designated Contributions to F.W.S. in the fiscal year of approximately \$111,700 exceed the total for each of the past five years. The most recent year with a higher total was the 2014 fiscal year with approximately \$132,000 of Contributions. Individual members continued and increased their generous contributions, including through growth of the LifeSaver Program.

Basic Sales of Merchandise during the full fiscal year of over \$212,000 are essentially the same as Basic Sales of Merchandise in the prior full fiscal year, despite drops in sales of pamphlets, chips and medallions to groups once the pandemic hit. This strong level of sales is due largely to sales of the printed Basic Text, *A State of Grace* hard cover and soft cover and the *Step Questions Workbook*. Ebook income was also strong.

The staff took the year end physical inventory. They maintained proper physical distancing and the outside CPA firm "observed" the inventory. We had a positive inventory adjustment on the Balance Sheet.

The outside CPA firm has since issued a clean review report on our financial statements. Detailed year-end financial statements will appear in a future *Newsletter*.

Thanks to my colleagues on the Board Finance Committee: Gabriel G. (CA -Board Member), Ava H. (NY – Non BOT Member) and Michael S. (PA-Non BOT Member). We welcome additional applicants for the BFC; finance and accounting experience is not necessary.

Jay G. – Treasurer and Chair of BFC

## Conference Committee Report Corner

### Conference Anorexia Committee (CAC)

**Mission Statement:** The S.L.A.A. Conference Anorexia Committee (CAC) carries the message to the S.L.A.A. community that sexual, social, and emotional anorexia can be an inherent part of sex and love addiction and encourages integrating this idea into all areas of the Fellowship and its literature.

**Chair:** Austin H., Austin, TX

**Vice Chair:** Kelly C., Houston, TX

**BOT Liaison:** PA K, TX

### Projects

- Workbook - *Anorexia 8 & 9: Working the Program and Not the Problem*
  - The ARS has received the IFD request submitted by the CLC on behalf of the CAC.
- Clean-up & Clarify Anorexia Literature.
  - This subcommittee is 95% complete reviewing the 1992 Anorexia pamphlet.
  - Meets every second Thursday via phone conference, 8pm EST, 7pm CST, 8pm MST, 5pm PST. Contact us through the [S.L.A.A. Anorexia Committee](https://slaafws.org/committee/cac) webpage (<https://slaafws.org/committee/cac>) for meeting number and passcode.
- Workbook – Anorexia 10-11-12: Working the Program and Not the Problem
  - Draft in progress. To join the writing group, or to submit stories, top-line actions, top-line self-talk, or meditations, visit <https://slaafws.org/anorexia10-12> or email [anorexia101112.slaa@gmail.com](mailto:anorexia101112.slaa@gmail.com).
- Anorexia Core Documents IFD
  - A small committee is drafting an IFD in support of designating as Core Documents the Anorexia 50 questions and “What is Anorexia” pamphlet excerpt.
- Requesting Anorexia recovery stories for the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Basic Text
  - To submit your story for consideration, email [anorexiastoriesSLAA@gmail.com](mailto:anorexiastoriesSLAA@gmail.com).

### CAC Meeting Info:

- 4th Sunday of the month, via Zoom 11:00 AM-PDT, 12:00MDT, 1:00 PM-CDT, 2:00 PM-EDT, 8:00 PM CEST
- Contact us through the [S.L.A.A. Anorexia Committee](https://slaafws.org/committee/cac) webpage (<https://slaafws.org/committee/cac>) for meeting ID and password.
- Keep up with committee news on the S.L.A.A. Service Forum: <https://service.slaa.network/c/anorexia/9>

## Conference Charter Committee (CCC)

**Conference Committee Name/Abbreviation** Conference Charter Committee (CCC)  
*Responsible for the planning and facilitation of the ABC/M in cooperation with the BOT and F.W.S. (In the absence of a CCC, the BOT and F.W.S. are responsible for running the ABC/M.) Creates the ABM Agenda, chairs the ABC/M, and is liaison for the entire Conference to the BOT and F.W.S. The Chair of the CCC is a voting member of the Conference.*

**Conference Committee Chair** Joe C.

**Conference Committee Vice-Chair** Nora B. and CCC/Chairs Calls record keeper

**Project Name** CCC facilitates ABC/M with BOT/F.W.S.; creates ABM Agenda, liaison for Conference to BOT/F.W.S.

**Projects with Leader Name(s)** – there are 10 active of approx. 10 voting members on the CCC with the BOT Chair – Seth S. also a voting member.

- Agenda Review Subcommittee (ARS) chair Jack S. – Began reviewing submissions for the 2021 ABM Agenda. The 2020 ABM Agenda was carried over and added to the beginning of the 2021 ABM Agenda.
- Conference Service Manual (CSM) Revision Work Group (RWG) – Meets weekly to review revisions for the 2021 CSM.
- ABM Minutes Reviewers Work Group – ARS, BOT and CCC Chairs – Minutes were reviewed and are now on the S.L.A.A. website.
- Conference Committees Chairs Call – facilitator Joe C., record keeper Nora B. Currently meets for three quarterly calls (Nov, Feb, & May) during the conference year and two face-to-face meetings at the ABM.
- ABM2021 Planning Committee (PC) – this is a board committee chaired by PA K. There are 9 members: 2 CCC, 1 CFC, 1 LPC, ED, webmaster, BOT treasurer and BOT Chair. Meets 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of the month. Next meeting is December 23<sup>rd</sup>.

## Discussions

- ARS is now accepting and processing Motions and IFDs for the 2021 ABM Agenda.
- Working with the ABM Planning Committee to plan the next ABM.
- Added non dated ABM Agenda submission forms to the F.W.S. website year-round.



## **Conference Steps, Traditions, and Concepts Committee (CSTCC) Questions from the Fellowship**

*The CSTCC welcomes Questions from the Fellowship concerning the Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions and Twelve Concepts. Our responses are individual, and neither binding nor authoritative. We do not speak for the whole of S.L.A.A.*

### Question from the Fellowship (Committee Reference #2020-2):

Our group would like F.W.S.'s guidance on issues we are having with one of our long-time members. It involves that member aggressively soliciting, manipulating, and pressuring newcomers, those struggling with sobriety, and others into paying for therapy with them or another person. The member also makes sponsorship contingent upon those services and isolates the people they prey upon from the group.

This has resulted in a considerable number of group members feeling preyed upon and unsafe when this person is present, and other members avoid the meeting. At least one former member has left the fellowship altogether. Additionally, we're not even sure that this member has any valid therapy licenses or credentials to provide such services.

Most group members like and care about the member we are having issues with. Many group members have benefited from this member's experience, strength, and hope, as expressed in their shares and personal conversations after meetings.

Around seven years ago, the group decided to put terminology about sponsorship in the format to help address the problem with this member. It states, "Sponsorship: A sponsor is neither a parent, a therapist, nor a confessor, but a fellow addict with sobriety who can help lead us through recovery. Sponsees do not pay sponsors, buy them meals, nor are obligated to do favors for them. Sponsors and all fellowship members may not offer product or professional services within the fellowship, including counseling and therapy." Tradition Eight supported the group's decision; S.L.A.A. should remain forever nonprofessional. The Tradition Eight chapter in the Alcoholics Anonymous Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions book clearly stated and explained the problems with paid for Twelve-step work.

At that time, the member cited Tradition Ten, that S.L.A.A. has no opinion on outside issues, and that this was an outside issue. Before that, several group members approached this member on their own but were met with denial and push back. The group voted overwhelmingly to put the new terminology into the format. The problem seemed to quiet down for a while.

Unfortunately, it has recently resurfaced in a significant way. Your insights and guidance on approaching this matter at this point would be much appreciated. Thank you.

### Response #1:

The questions we receive always only have one perspective. We never hear from the other side. In this question there are a number of emotional judgments expressed: "aggressively...manipulating...pressuring...members feeling preyed upon...etc." While all of these things may be true, it would be helpful to hear the voices of more members in the group.

Nevertheless, I have an opinion. I believe one of the threats to the health and future of S.L.A.A. is the sense many have that our Twelve Step recovery program is a supplement to therapy. Therapy and recovery are two different things and merging the two leaves less of each. Both are wonderful tools separately, but they are distinct. We have a spiritual program of recovery outlined by use of the Twelve Steps. Therapy is the process of "figuring things out." Therapy offers explanations; spiritual recovery offers forgiveness. But this is off topic. Sorry for the digression.

What the group did "around seven years ago" is perfect. I love the addition to the format about sponsorship, what it is and what it isn't. My suggestion would be to do more of this. Read the statement at the beginning and at the end of meetings to add emphasis. Continue to point the group members to readings about the Traditions. The *Twelve and Twelve* from Alcoholics Anonymous is a useful text. So is *Paths to Recovery* from Alanon which covers the Traditions. And there is a draft copy of S.L.A.A.'s Twelve Traditions circulating here and there. (Check out <https://service.slaa.network/c/literature/12>). Any of these texts could make for a good literature discussion meeting.

As far as Tradition Ten goes, therapy is an outside issue, but safety in our meetings is an issue inside our Fellowship. We can only suggest how our members might behave outside of our meetings, but inside of our meetings we demand safety. If someone in the meeting is preying upon others, there are actions that should be taken. The meeting has the responsibility to insure the safety of all members.

### Response #2:

From reading the Question it appears that there are a number of Traditions that could apply to the situation presented.

First, it seems like the actions of the individual requiring sponsees to pay them for therapy is against the spirit of Tradition Eight. That Tradition states that S.L.A.A. should remain forever non-professional, and the individual is apparently promoting themselves as an S.L.A.A. professional.

Second, the action appears to be in conflict with Tradition Five. That Tradition states that our group purpose is to carry the message to sex and love addicts. The message to be carried is found in the Steps. The Steps are not a therapeutic model, but a spiritual one.

Third, when an individual's actions cause that much dissension in the group, Tradition One can also be utilized. Our common welfare must come first, and resolving the situation is in the best interest of all members, whether everyone agrees with the resolution or not.

Lastly, I believe that Tradition Four gives all authority to the group to make the decision. Since this issue would not seem to affect other groups or the program as a whole, the group is free to set boundaries as they see fit.

Question from the Fellowship (Committee Reference #2020-3):

Our regional Intergroup is in the process of revising and updating its By-Laws. The current document contains the following provision regarding the qualifications for local groups to join Intergroup as member groups:

"To register as a group, the group must accept the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of S.L.A.A., read the S.L.A.A. Preamble at every meeting, and accept the bylaws of Intergroup."

- With respect to the last qualification, can we as Intergroup mandate that each group accept Intergroup's by-laws?
- If not, can we at least require the member groups to accept the by-laws as they apply to Intergroup?
- Can we as Intergroup mandate qualifications for the Intergroup reps sent by the member groups to Intergroup?
- Can we require minimum experience in program, minimum sobriety, etc.?
- Can we establish term limits for the Intergroup reps, for example requiring new reps every two years?
- What guidance can you provide to us from the Traditions and Concepts?

Response #1:

Very interesting question. Of course an Intergroup, like any group and like any individual member, can practice the program any way they would like. The Steps, the Traditions and the Concepts are points of light that provide guidance to steer us away from the darkness. They are not laws or regulations or commandments; they are suggestions.

From my perspective the very first sentence of these by-laws is in contradiction to the spirit of Tradition Three, "The only requirement for S.L.A.A. membership is the desire to stop living out a pattern of sex and love addiction. Any two or more persons gathered together for mutual aid in recovering from sex and love addiction may call themselves

an S.L.A.A. group...." It is contradictory to require adherence to guidance that says adherence is not a requirement. The only requirement is a desire to stop.

The beauty and success of the Twelve Steps, the Twelve Traditions and the Twelve Concepts are their openness and flexibility. That is why they work. It is our human tendency to harden our principles and enforce conformity. That tendency will eventually destroy our fellowship, the fellowship that saved our lives.

The Twelve Concepts, also suggestions, provide some relevant guidance to these questions. The warranties in Concept Twelve especially address the issue of by-laws, stating in the sixth warranty that we "never perform acts of government...." I would say that "mandating" groups to abide by the Intergroup's by-laws is an act of government. And of course Tradition Four provides for the autonomy of each group, autonomy to which these by-laws seem to be opposed.

Again, the Intergroup can do whatever it wants, but in my opinion, all of these questions are outside the spirit of the Steps, Traditions, and Concepts. They seem to be an attempt to control the behavior of our membership rather than focusing on our primary objective which is clearly stated in Tradition Five. In addition, rather than trusting the care of our program to a loving Higher Power, as stated in Tradition Two, these bylaws are contrary to the spirit of Step Three.

There's a wonderful piece of Alcoholics Anonymous history, a 1953 speech by Bill W., contained in the book *Our Great Responsibility*. The speech is entitled "Variations in the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions." At one point in the early years the first meetings in Sweden decided that rather than twelve Steps, seven steps were sufficient. The Swedish groups were allowed to register as official Alcoholics Anonymous groups. A few years later they adopted the Twelve Steps as written. Giving those Alcoholics Anonymous meetings the right to be wrong was an important step toward the success of our S.L.A.A. program as well as Alcoholics Anonymous. It would be wise for all of us, including this Intergroup, to follow that example of tolerance.

#### Response #2:

Those are some very interesting questions being posed. I believe that there are a few Traditions and a couple of Concepts that come into play with this situation.

Tradition Two tells us that our leaders are but trusted servants, they do not govern. It seems like the Intergroup might be trying to govern the individual groups with the mandates and requirements relating to the by-laws, representative qualifications, and service terms. It would typically be up to the individual meeting to make those decisions, not the Intergroup.

Concept One provides clarification as to our structure, and with the inverted pyramid model it is the meetings that have the authority. Using this Concept, the Intergroup should be asking the individual groups what they want.

Concept Four gives each individual authority to vote up to the level at which they are trusted servants. Assuming that the Intergroup is made up of meeting representatives and they are voting members, then the individual groups will have the authority to make the decision they feel is best.

Tradition Four indicates that each group is autonomous, and that includes the Intergroup. So, it would seem like the Intergroup could set those requirements if it is the group conscience.

Lastly, I believe that Tradition One can provide some sound guidance. Our common welfare should come first, personal recovery depends upon unity. Will setting stringent requirements be in the best interest of unity? It seems like it may cause dissension and a reluctance on the part of members to serve or meetings to join.

My experience having been on an Intergroup for about 15 years is that it was very hard to get people to be of service. We found it best to be as welcoming as possible, for their recovery and for ours!

Question from the Fellowship (Committee Reference #2020-4):

A member of our group recently confessed to his sponsor and during a meeting criminal behavior (sexual abuse of his child). That caused a lot of unrest in the group. Fortunately, the member went to the police himself, but we became aware of two important questions:

1. A part of the group do not like a fellow to share criminal behavior in the group. They want to include the following text in the format of our meeting: "We ask you not to share criminal activities for which you have not been convicted. It is advised to share these matters with your sponsor, another fellow or a spiritual counselor." Another part of the group thinks this is not good for the honesty in the group in this will not help to reach the addict who is still suffering. How do you feel about this, when you compare it with our Steps and Traditions?

2. Another big question is: what can a sponsor or group member do if a fellow does not want to go to the police with his criminal behavior? Can the sponsor or group member violate the anonymity of his fellow group member by reporting the criminal behavior to the police, to protect the victims?

Response #1:

In response to the Part 1, I don't believe the Steps, Traditions or Concepts address this directly. Indirectly, Tradition Four provides some guidance for the meeting as a whole. Since each group is autonomous, and because this issue would not seem to affect the fellowship as a whole, the meeting members can make a decision collectively on how they want to address the issue. They could also choose to address it individually as a legal matter.

In response to Part 2, there is nothing in the Steps, Traditions or Concepts that forbids or suggests against a meeting fellow going to the police / authorities and reporting the criminal behavior. Criminal behavior is not protected by anonymity, so there is no violation of Tradition that would occur.

The Board of Trustees and F.W.S. produced a very good document on this subject in 2013. It is titled "Anonymity, the Law and S.L.A.A." and I have included it below for reference. I believe it will help provide clarity and guidance on this issue.

### **ANONYMITY, THE LAW AND S.L.A.A.**

Reviewed, and amended by the Board of Trustees May 2013.

During the years of The Augustine Fellowship, S.L.A.A., Fellowship-Wide Services, Inc.'s existence, several inquiries have come to our attention regarding disclosure of illegal or dangerous acts by members or to members. As we are all governed by our own conscience, we do encourage members to study and understand the Traditions of our program to assist in group conscience/ individual decisions on matters associated with crimes/illegal activity. Various scenarios/hypothetical have been posed:

- A member tells us that s/he is HIV positive and having unprotected sex with people.
- A member reports that s/he has committed a sex crime against an adult.
- A member reports that s/he has committed a sex crime against a minor.
- A member reports that s/he is committing incest.
- A member reports that their spouse/partner/child is committing crimes or engaged in illegal activity.
- A member reports that s/he has committed a crime or is engaged in illegal activity.
- A member commits a crime or illegal act at a meeting or against another member of the program.
- A member tells their story, which involves an illegal act, to a sponsor/sponsee or at a meeting.
- A member reports that s/he is a recent or ongoing victim of a sex crime, incest/molestation, or illegal activity.
- A member is arrested due to a crime and the police are asking members outside of the meeting for details about the person/crime.

In all cases, the following is suggested:

- People must remember when they are sharing at a meeting, with their sponsor/sponsee, or fellow members, that anonymity does not exempt them from repercussions for their actions. Also they must understand that anonymity IS NOT the same thing as a legal privilege.
- Although, people at the meetings are attending for their own recovery, we are powerless over an individual's moral conscience and the choice of that person to report such acts to the legal authorities.

- Depending on the law of the country/state in which you are, meeting attendees/listeners may be found to be liable in a civil action for failure to act on information.
- Meetings should check with the laws of their state/country as to what the responsibility of each individual may be in reporting crimes or illegal activity.
- If a crime or illegal activity is happening currently, it is the policy of the F.W.S. office to advise the victim to contact the police or legal authorities accordingly.
- There is a distinction between the individual members, the groups, the Conference and F.W.S. They are all separate entities and are responsible only to themselves.
- Members should remember that there might be individuals attending the meeting who are mandated to report crimes/illegal activity including: social workers, teachers, and law enforcement personnel (this has recently been expanded in at least one U.S. States to include anyone, not just certain professionals – check your local laws to ascertain if you are under a duty to report).

Some groups have chosen to include a statement within their format to specifically address this issue. An example follows:

***“The Foundation of Anonymity***

*Anonymity is the foundation of our program. It is essential if we are to continue the 12 Step work of S.L.A.A. ... However even this basic principle may give way to the pressure of individual consciences or legal requirements. Therefore we, the members of this S.L.A.A. meeting, make clear to newcomers and old timers alike that speaking of any potentially illegal activity, especially relating to minors, endangers the speaker and lays a burden of knowledge on others that they may not be willing to assume. This includes statements made individually to members, including to your sponsor, which is not a legally protected relationship.”*

This represents the BOT and F.W.S.’s recommendations, considering the Traditions in conjunction with our attorney. The BOT does not discourage legal compliance or the reporting of criminal activity. Nothing in this Statement should be interpreted to imply otherwise.

**Question from the Fellowship (Committee Reference #2020-5):**

Due to a central location between two intergroups, we have two local Cities with multiple meetings in each that are listed on two different intergroup websites. Also, the meetings in those Cities send representatives to both intergroups (referenced as Intergroups “A” and “B”).

A few years ago, it came up that there might be an issue with meetings having double representation, but we never made anything out of it with the individual meetings. But now, due to curiosity and concern, we are looking at it again.

Can one meeting have a representative for two Intergroups? For example, if the Saturday meeting in a City sends a representative to Intergroup “A”, can they also send a representative to Intergroup “B”?

Please assist us in any way possible and keeping with the spirit of our Traditions. We are all interested in clarification and what we could do, should do, etc.

Response #1:

While there is nothing specific in the Steps, Traditions or Concepts that directly address this situation, I believe Concept Four could possibly provide some guidance. Concept Four details the “Right of Participation”. That Right is maintained by allowing members to cast one vote up to the level at which they are trusted servants. It could be argued that one meeting sending representatives to two different Intergroups might be giving the meeting an opportunity to “double” their vote.

But ultimately, I believe Tradition Four is the spiritual principle that could be most effective in making the determination on how to proceed. Since each Intergroup is autonomous, it is up to each one separately to decide if they believe it is appropriate to have voting representation of one meeting at two intergroups.

I also have some personal experience with a very similar situation. I was a member of a meeting that was located on the border of two intergroups (a county line). We wanted representation at both to get on both meeting lists, and to bring back ideas and events from both to our members. But we only voted at the intergroup of the county we were in. I was the representative who went to the intergroup of the adjacent county, and while I could speak there was no voting privilege. It was the decision of that intergroup, and we respected and honored it.

Response #2:

The legacy that comes to mind here is Step Twelve, to carry the message to the addict that still suffers.

If a meeting is on the borderline of two intergroups does that serve the addict in the locations that may be technically in the other intergroup’s area to participate in the second intergroup.

For our local situation a meeting in the Long Beach area may be closer to an addict in North Orange county than any other meeting so it would benefit them if the group was listed on the Orange county intergroup website, and for that group it might be beneficial for them to participate in both the OC and LA intergroup meetings (many meetings have trouble getting an intergroup rep at all – much less one that will cover two meetings).

The other issue I could see is that of donations to the intergroup, but I think that is a matter for each individual meeting to decide how to divide their contributions and should be left to the meeting to decide honoring our bottom up structure.



Response #3:

My opinions on this are as follows-- Each group is autonomous, per Tradition Four, so they can send a member to whichever Intergroup they wish, and donate to whichever Intergroup they wish. However, they should only be able to vote once at the Intergroup level, and in some sense this is supported by Concept Twelve which states that our "government" should operate in a "democratic" manner, thus one group having more than one vote would not be "democratic."

Response #4:

Having meetings listed on two different intergroup websites is fully consistent with Tradition Five. It is our obligation to provide our message to addicts, that includes meeting lists — especially meeting lists. The more sites where we list meetings the better.

Also, cross communication between intergroups is a positive. Having members that are not voting delegates at Intergroup meetings from other groups is a good way to cultivate a broader and deeper culture. It's an opportunity for a fertile exchange of ideas between groups and Intergroups. However, we are a democracy, which means each meeting has one delegate and one vote — at only one Intergroup.

So, each meeting has the responsibility to decide which Intergroup — and only one Intergroup — it will send its voting delegate to. But also, each meeting should be encouraged to attend multiple Intergroup meetings when possible.

Because our Intergroups, at this time, are not regionally based (that is they can overlap geographies) it is tempting for meetings to cherry pick the Intergroup that they feel best represents their needs. That sounds fine, but can lead to jumping back and forth between Intergroups and to a general amount of chaos. It is not truly democratic. One idea that is being discussed is to regionalize Intergroups rather than allow groups to pick one or another to join. This would mean that there would no longer be lone or unaffiliated meetings as well. The proposal to regionalize our service structure will be circulating over the next few years I hope. A regionalized service structure would eliminate the controversy expressed by this question.

Question from the Fellowship (Committee Reference #2020-6):

There is something I have never really understood about a Tradition, and I'd like to hear your take on this:

The Tradition that says "Each meeting is autonomous, except in matters that would affect S.L.A.A. as a whole" - my question is - what kinds of activity would be considered to affect S.L.A.A. as a whole? And what wouldn't?

Response #1:

Great question, but any answer will be very hypothetical.

Certainly a meeting that engaged in illegal activity could affect S.L.A.A. as a whole. Any activity contrary to other Traditions such as endorsements, financial arrangements, lending the S.L.A.A. name to a facility or enterprise could affect S.L.A.A. as a whole. Also expressing public opinions on political, religious, or medical issues could affect S.L.A.A. as a whole.

What wouldn't affect S.L.A.A. as a whole? What a meeting decides to read, what format a meeting uses, where a meeting decides to meet.

I suspect there would be trusted servants who would try to govern (in contradiction to the Traditions and the Concepts) and who would give this Tradition a very narrow interpretation. The point of Tradition Four however is that every meeting has the right to make mistakes, to try things that are different, and to be imaginative in how they carry out Tradition Five.

Response #2:

The Tradition being referred to is Tradition Four. I am not aware of any S.L.A.A. conference approved literature providing a definition of what activities would affect other groups or the fellowship as a whole. But there is guidance on the topic in the Alcoholics Anonymous literature.

The A.A. pamphlet titled "The Twelve Traditions, A Distillation of A.A. Experience" uses the example of one group taking over public information work for an area without consulting other local groups, and then aggressively promoting the program.

The A.A. Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions has two other examples in the chapter on Tradition Four. One is about the dangers of a group aligning themselves with a political or religious organization, and the other is about the potential problems of a group trying to create a business venture to help alcoholics.

While neither of those pieces of literature are S.L.A.A. conference approved, they are foundational documents for the A.A. program and can provide much insight into use of the spiritual tools in the Traditions.

Question from the Fellowship (Committee Reference #2020-7):

I have a question about voting on a BM. We had a motion that was seconded and we voted for.

4 For

1 Against

3 Abstained

The group interpreted this as a NO because they counted the abstained with the total so it was a tie. How are the exact rules to vote for and are there any documents available? Could you help us out?

Response #1:

This vote is contradictory to our basic principles. We are democratic, both our Fellowship and our Service Structure.

But we do not have any rules. We do follow the principles of our program. That is, we follow the Steps, the Traditions, and the Concepts. Also, there is a process for voting at the Annual Business Meeting that is consistent with the Concepts and is expected to be used by any Business Meeting in our Fellowship. It may be that the business meeting in question is confused by the three-vote process at the ABM. That process is described in the Conference Service Manual (available on our website: <https://slaafws.org/Conference/CSM.pdf>) on pages 39 through 45. It is clear in the CSM that "abstentions don't count."

I suspect that a meeting or two of this BM focused on reviewing the Twelve Concepts and even reviewing the CSM would be beneficial.

It would be worthwhile specially to review Concept Five and the idea of minority opinion and the Right of Appeal. It sounds like the business meeting in question needs to be open to an appeal.

Response #2:

Tradition Four states that each group is autonomous, so each one can decide how to vote in accordance with their own group conscience.

The Twelve Concepts, while written for World Service, can also provide guidance on this issue. The Sixth Warranty of Concept Twelve states: "...like the Fellowship it serves, it will always remain democratic in thought and action."

In my experience of voting in a democratic fashion, abstentions do not count as "no" votes. The individuals abstaining are specifically *not* choosing for or against, so including them in the against column would appear to be counter to their intention and the generally accepted practice of democratic voting.

Question from the Fellowship (Committee Reference #2020-8):

Situation: **Personal information on the F.W.S. website or not?** In the past, we used to allow this, and we had issues with angry, panicked people demanding the removal of personal contact information that they specifically asked us to publish. More difficult than it sounds with search engines archiving pages like they do. As a result, we began allowing only anonymous group email addresses on meeting listings such as [somecityslaa@gmail.com](mailto:somecityslaa@gmail.com) and no personal phone numbers or names, even if someone asks.

- **Problem 1:** So many groups save nothing from one officer to the next, so these anonymous email addresses are often dead within a month when the passwords are lost, or that member leaves.

- **Problem 2:** Members often simply leave the public contacts empty when they don't feel like creating another email address. This results in frustrated newcomers having no way to contact a group at all with questions.
- **Solution and Question:** I have created a way for people on the new system to provide their personal email addresses without them ever being seen on the website at all, via dynamic contact forms that populate the email address in the background for each listing. I can even make it so that the submitter of the question never actually sees the email address until the meeting contact emails them back.

But there is still the issue of personal phone numbers.

Phone numbers can be searched online, revealing someone's S.L.A.A. membership. Other Fellowships allow it (OA requires both a phone number and a first name).

- **What is the CSTCC's opinion on this? Convenience to the submitter and accessibility to the website user, vs the obligation(?) of F.W.S. to protect anonymity? Is this our obligation? Aren't people free to break their own anonymity if they so choose? Is it a violation of Tradition Twelve to permit people to voluntarily put their own information on our website?**

#### Response #1:

Tradition Twelve addresses Anonymity as a spiritual foundation. In this Tradition, Anonymity is about humility, so I'm not sure that Tradition Twelve is applicable to this issue. However, Tradition Eleven might be.

Tradition Eleven suggests that we maintain personal anonymity in the public media. Including an individual member's name and / or contact information on the publicly accessible portion of the F.W.S. website would seem to be in conflict with that Tradition.

The Twelve Recommended Guidelines for Dealing with the Media, while not directly applicable to this situation, can also provide some guidance. Guideline Eight states: "Any S.L.A.A. members involved in responding to media/public relations offers should utilize first name pseudonyms for this purpose." This suggests that avoiding the use of our real names is important in aligning with the intent of Tradition Eleven.

My personal opinion is that the F.W.S. office should set an example of how to follow the Traditions, and in this case, avoid using any personal information on the website. Since it appears that there is a solution for names and e-mails that maintains personal anonymity, I do believe it should be utilized. And, I don't see a need to include phone numbers in these situations. A person contacting the F.W.S. through the website will have an e-mail address, and can be contacted that way.

### Response #2:

Even though the author of this Question asks about Tradition Twelve, for me Tradition Eleven goes to the heart of the matter. It is of primary importance to “guard with special care the anonymity of all fellow S.L.A.A. members.” The use of the words “special care” means that anonymity comes before sharing personal information, even if it’s more convenient to do so. Today’s technological age provides solutions to using personal phone numbers. For example, Intergroups can easily create a Gmail account and get a free phone number to share on websites (which is something my Intergroup does and it works well). The question’s author provides a good solution for protecting email anonymity. Regarding phone numbers, even S.L.A.A. officers or committee chairs can choose to use a Google number to share with the fellowship, and any calls or texts can be set up to be forwarded to their personal phone numbers. We have to be creative to protect anonymity and it may take extra work, but it is always preferred, especially on public websites.

Tradition Five can also shed some light here. Since each group’s primary purpose is to carry the message to sex and love addicts who still suffer, each Intergroup needs to be thoughtful about maintaining and updating its contact information. Passing along passwords and other important information to the appropriate persons (e.g., new Intergroup webmasters and communication liaisons, the S.L.A.A. F.W.S. webmaster) is crucial to maintain continuity and allow new members to reach out for help.

### Response #3:

Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; *we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, TV, film, and other public media.* We need guard with special care the anonymity of all fellow S.L.A.A. members. 12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

Tradition Eleven states “*we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, TV, film, and other public media.*” In this day and age where Google Voice makes available an anonymous number that will forward even text messages, why should anyone compromise personal anonymity? As for continuity of the group info, it could be possible to include instructions in the meeting format as part of the co-chairs’ duty. “In order to serve the primary purpose, the group strives to maintain an email because....in the event it is lost...” That way the Co-Chair understands and agrees to the responsibility when being elected to the position.

### Question from the Fellowship (Committee Reference #2020-9):

A couple of times I’ve been in meetings where shares go off topic and become passionate about the current events happening in our world today. I have been asked by members of the meeting to inquire if there’s an Intergroup stance on the strictness, or if there is a ‘line’ that once crossed can warrant a halt to the share.

I expressed the idea of raising one's hand, just as one would if they found a share too triggering but again, I was asked if there is an official Intergroup stance on this issue. Is there anything in the Traditions that can provide guidance on this?

Response #1:

The official stance on this subject, is, like so much of our society, no stance at all. There is plenty of guidance in our principles, but no stance. There are some relevant Traditions and Concepts that may guide us:

- Tradition Five as always reminds us that we have one primary purpose.
- Tradition Six warns against outside enterprises
- Tradition Eight guides us to be non-professional
- Tradition Ten is specific about Outside Issues.
- Tradition Eleven suggests attraction rather than promotion
- Tradition Twelve guides us to put our principles first
- The Warranties, i.e., Concept Twelve, guides us to an understanding that we have no authority over other members, that we can never be personally punitive, and that we do not govern, we cannot make rules.

And of course, Tradition Four which points out that each group is autonomous and can if they wish make their own rules, although rules are something we frown on.

At the meetings I've attended lately there have been a lot of comments concerning outside issues. Often, they're political, but just as often they are religious or about therapy (I shudder when someone suggests we read *The Gentle Path*, which may be a fine book, but it's by a professional, non-conference approved, and an outside enterprise). At each one of these mentions I grimace. On occasion I talk to the person outside of the meeting. The only firm thing I've been able to do is to not return to that meeting and go to a different one instead.

I cannot tell anyone what to share or how to share their experience or their opinions. The best antidote to this kind of behavior is for the group to study the Traditions and the Concepts. I have heard of a group that suspended all other subject matter for twelve weeks while they read and discussed a Tradition each of those weeks. After those twelve weeks the nature of the meeting substantially changed for the better. Also a review of The Washingtonian Movement experiences, a nineteenth century precursor to Alcoholics Anonymous, is always beneficial ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Washingtonian\\_movement](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Washingtonian_movement)) although it too is an outside issue.

I do like the suggestion of raising one's hand when a share is an outside issue. It is a gentle marker that a line has been crossed.

Please let us know what your group conscience comes up with as a response to shares on outside issues.

### Response #2:

This question pertains to Tradition Four. Each meeting is autonomous, except in matters that affect other meetings or S.L.A.A. as a whole.

So that means the meeting can make its own decisions on these matters - have a business meeting, and take a vote.

Example solutions might be adding a line to the format.

That line in the format might mention Tradition Ten - S.L.A.A. has no opinion on outside issues.

Therefore, issues not relating to S.L.A.A. recovery have no place in our meetings.

If outside issues specifically pertain to the individual's recovery or addiction, they can be shared about in a general way, for example "What's going on in the world today" rather than the name of a specific movement, issue, or website.

### Response #3:

First – let me say I agree with Tradition Four that each group is autonomous so that anything we do is only a suggestion that any group is free to do what they like as long as it doesn't affect the fellowship as a whole (I think raising a hand like when triggered and stating "outside issue" might be a way to help the sharer redirect their share).

Second with Tradition Ten – I would be wary of bring up outside issues unless it can be discussed in a way that relates to their addiction. Also, as much as possible try to talk about the problem in general terms (i.e., because of the unrest I got worried and called a qualifier) (the vent reminded me of racism that I experienced and it made me feel less than – triggering my desired to act out).

In that way people whose sobriety is being affected by the events can be heard without it turning into a huge outside issue.

We aren't going to solve the world's issues in our meetings (no matter how much as an addict I want to become the stage manager and tell everyone what to do), but we can support each other in our reaction to these events and help others in the fellowship stay sober.

### Response #4:

There are two Traditions that would appear to provide guidance for this situation.

Tradition Four indicates that the decision on what is acceptable to talk about during a meeting is up to the group since discussion of outside issues would not seem to affect other groups or the program as a whole.

Tradition Five directs us to carry the message to the addict who still suffers. Since talking about outside issues would not seem to be carrying the message of recovery, it is in conflict with the spiritual intent of this Tradition.

So, while the group is free to allow this type of sharing / discussion, I do not believe it is in their best interest to do so. Finding a gentle, loving way to bring the focus back to recovery from Sex and Love Addiction would seem to be a better path forward. The suggestion made to raise a hand when a member gets into outside issues would serve that purpose well.

#### Response #5:

The idea of “outside issue” is very subjective, and a problematic thing to regulate particularly by a non-governing body. I LOVE that about our fellowship. In LA we utilize a timer in all meetings, and my opinion is that it’s your 3 minutes. We allow you the dignity to express what you need to express. The only thing we specifically ask is that you don’t get too graphic in your description of acting out behavior. The simplicity of that appeals to me—it seems reasonable to have ONE thing—otherwise when we start adding restrictions then we start to overstep and claim authority. While it compromises the principle of unity to talk about current events in the share, it is each member’s right to get it wrong, keep coming back to learn with us, and discover for yourself what comes of your share for you.

We lovingly hold space for you, just be mindful of our shared addiction. Everything else is an outside issue. This invites higher power to gently show anyone exactly what they need to see. The unifying concept here is least disruptive approach. I witnessed a whole meeting wait patiently through a super graphic newcomer share and after the sharer had finished, the secretary gently re-read the crosstalk statement for the meeting. It was so gentle and maintained the unity beautifully without calling out or interrupting or shaming a newcomer who is learning. So, anything that feels like that seems in keeping with our Traditions. I have heard people’s shares that were schizophrenic ravings, nonsensical hallucinations, and we all just lovingly and patiently waited and listened. That person got to feel heard, and be a part of, and after 3 minutes,

#### Response #6:

The S.L.A.A. meeting is a place where members can get current and share what is in their hearts. In that sense, it is important, in general, for S.L.A.A. meetings to provide a certain degree of latitude about what people share. If a meeting allows a member to interrupt someone else’s share just because they feel uncomfortable, other members and especially newcomers will not feel safe to share their personal sufferings from their addiction. Tradition One states our common welfare comes first, and that personal recovery depends on S.L.A.A. unity. In that regard, unity around not interrupting people’s shares is extremely important.

Having said that, there are tools to help guide members about how/what to share in a meeting. Since Tradition Four affirms that each group is autonomous, an intergroup can



only share these tools with the groups that make up the intergroup, but cannot insist that individual meetings use them. The group running a meeting is autonomous and therefore responsible to discuss these issues at their monthly business meeting and incorporate those tools into their meeting. One tool in which guidelines can be offered is the meeting script. When it comes time for sharing, the script could include a statement that “group conscience requests that all present refrain from sharing outside influences such as religion, self-help programs, and politics in order to protect the integrity of the meeting.” Some meeting scripts specifically ask members not to share graphic behaviors of acting out. Other meetings focus on a topic and ask members to get current outside their meeting with a recovery partner or their sponsor. Another tool is for a group to ask the person who is chairing the meeting to address transgressions from the meeting topic. For example, if someone goes way off topic, after they finish their share, the chair can gently remind the group about sharing guidelines by repeating out loud any relevant statement in the meeting script. One thing to keep in mind though: the more restrictive the meeting’s guidelines, the more constrained fellows may feel at the meeting and even people who are not transgressing the guidelines may stop attending too.

Additionally, if these tools are in place and used, and someone keeps violating the group conscience, it is up to the group members to find a way to address it. Tradition Two reminds us that for our group purpose the ultimate authority is a loving Higher Power, as expressed through our group conscience. Triggered individuals are responsible for taking care of themselves; they have every right to get up and leave the room during a meeting if they feel uncomfortable and return later on if they so choose. The solution of interrupting people’s shares while they are speaking because an individual feels triggered should be a very last resort.

#### Response #6:

*For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority -- a loving God as this Power may be expressed through our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.*

I believe that the idea of raising the hand when a share is too triggering is the traditional way that groups deal with this sort of issue. I have noted however, that certain issues of today can reflect a person’s personal experience and thus impact them and their recovery. These are issues such as race, sexuality or finances. Thus, I look at a Tradition like One which states “ Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon S.L.A.A. unity” and wonder if sometimes people are more concerned with “governing a meeting’s content” than their fellow’s real experience and how it pertains to their SLA. Thus, this then becomes an issue that needs to “be expressed through our group conscience” in the form of a business meeting.

#### Question from the Fellowship (Committee Reference #2020-10):

One of the S.L.A.A. writing groups creating literature to be considered by the Conference for publication by S.L.A.A. has asked this question:

Can we quote or include references to outside, non-conference approved literature in work we're preparing for the Fellowship? The specific cases are: A book titled "DROP THE ROCK" and an article which explains the difference between submission and surrender found at this

link: <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/0738/9ca934fa2f9120a4cada57a142f2a50af197.pdf> " The article is titled "The Act of Surrender in the Therapeutic Process", and was written by Henry Tiebout MD in 1949.

Is there any guidance in the Steps, Traditions, or Concepts regarding the use of outside literature in our texts? What if the quotations were from a specific therapist, spiritual leader, social movement leader or even political leader?

Response #1:

Strictly speaking, Drop The Rock is outside literature. That being said, it is 100% relevant to Twelve Step recovery. Although it's not nearly as good as "A New Pair Of Glasses", it's a valuable resource written mindfully in keeping with the 12X12 tradition of passive, gentle language and the sharing of experience, strength, and hope—not from a place of clinical study or authority.

Each meeting is autonomous, and if the primary purpose of the meeting is the practice of the Twelve Steps to recover from sex and love addiction, it's a S.L.A.A. meeting. People who feel that it is not relevant to their recovery can go to a different meeting. It is self-governing in this way. But importantly, the Traditions are open-minded in a way that wisely invites us to try it and see what happens! Higher power will guide and sustain us! There is but one, gentle, loving authority who if you invite them, will ensure that your meeting serves well all who show up in earnest to receive the benefits of spiritual fellowship.

There are a lot of valuable self-help books about sex and love addiction, and for many of these, a way to study these together is to set up supplemental book clubs that are not a Twelve Step meeting to explore the available literature that falls outside this focus. Meetings will thrive and wane, they are organic, living beings made of mutable, changeable processes known as humans. No one has the authority to say that you can or can't use this or that text in a meeting, but make suggestions based on Primary Purpose and interpretation of our 12X12. You'll see and discover what works to keep a meeting in unity with our primary purpose.

It is OK to experiment and take group consciences on "how is this text serving our meeting and our individual recovery?" "Should we approach S.L.A.A. F.W.S. and ask that they adopt it as conference-approved? Would that benefit the S.L.A.A. community as a whole?" My opinion is that you have the right to give it a try!

### Response #2:

Tradition Four provides some guidance for this situation. The use of non-Conference Approved Literature (CAL) such as these at the group level would not seem to affect the fellowship as a whole. So, use of it would be in conformance with Tradition Four.

But, when this outside literature is proposed to become part of new CAL, then it definitely would affect the Fellowship as a whole. In this situation I think inclusion of it might create confusion on our message, and there could be potential copyright issues. The Concepts make it clear that it will be the Conference making the final decision on acceptability for CAL.

- Concept One tells us that the ultimate authority for S.L.A.A. world service lies in our collective conscience.
- Concept Two indicates that the Conference, by delegation, is the voice and conscience for our world service.
- Concept Six designates the trustee members, also known as the Board of Trustees (BOT), as the primarily individuals actively responsible for world service matters.
- Concept Eight lets us know that the BOT are the administrators for policy and finance.

In keeping with Concepts One and Two, the Conference can approve the proposed new literature as they wish. But, in keeping with Concepts Six and Eight, the BOT may choose (or be legally required) to edit out reference, or excerpts from, the outside literature.

### Response #3:

Concept One of the Twelve Concepts for World Service of S.L.A.A. says: "Ultimate responsibility and authority for S.L.A.A. world services always resides in the collective conscience of our whole Fellowship."

The literature created for the S.L.A.A. fellowship is based on the experience, strength, and hope of members working the S.L.A.A. program. It is created from the collective conscience of what works specifically for recovery from sex and love addiction. The Basic Text, the S.L.A.A. Twelve Steps, the pamphlets – our conference-approved literature provides guidelines based on the consensus of many members who have worked the program.

Including outside materials in our literature can both cause confusion and negatively affect the integrity of the S.L.A.A. program. While many professionals who work with addicts have developed specific models and tools that can help with recovery, S.L.A.A. members may not agree on the effectiveness or validity of these models and tools. Also, in S.L.A.A. we define our own bottom lines and develop our own understanding of how to recover, often with the help of a sponsor. Outside materials often create labels and categories to define addiction, or set forth prescriptions for recovery that may be at odds with what is written in our Basic Text and with our own understanding.

Many members draw from outside influences, such as treatment professionals, religion, self-help programs, and counseling to help with recovery. One forum to share non-conference approved materials that have worked for us is during S.L.A.A. fellowship and workshops. It is also true that one of our S.L.A.A. slogans is “take what you like and leave the rest.” However, when outside influences are shared in S.L.A.A. conference-approved literature, it is harder for members, especially new people in recovery, to apply that slogan in their own lives.

Response #4:

Tradition Six - An S.L.A.A. group or S.L.A.A. as a whole ought never endorse, finance, or lend the S.L.A.A. name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property, or prestige divert us from our primary purpose.

As much as I love “Drop the Rock”, referencing it or any other outside literature is “lending our name” and “endorsing” an outside enterprise. In mentioning it we are promoting it, and thus lending our name. S.L.A.A. becomes the “influencer” on social media (for example). We would of course not be taking money for doing so. It’s one thing to mention Drop the Rock in a share. It’s another to codify it in our literature.

It does say at the F.W.S. website that if F.W.S. does not have comparable literature to existing literature in another Twelve Step program, that literature may be used as a substitute in a meeting.

Question from the Fellowship (Committee Reference #2020-11):

On behalf of my group, I'm seeking some advice on a really sensitive situation that came up in a group conscience that most likely concerns Tradition Twelve, but Traditions One, Two and Three as well. Some context:

Person A announced an emergency Group Conscience at the beginning of the meeting. The GC was held where Person A spoke of feeling unsafe as a person who raped her (Person B) was now in S.L.A.A. and going to meetings (mainly online I believe). Person A was concerned that Person B would come to this meeting creating an understandably challenging situation.

Person A asked the people assembled for advice, and there were several suggestions:

- 1) That this could be solved under the Traditions.
- 2) That it is a person-to-person issue and should be taken up with Person B (with a sponsor or trusted S.L.A.A. member).
- 3) It was asked of Person A if they had approached Person B with the problem. Person A said they hadn't, which is understandable.
- 4) I was asked for my contribution and raised Traditions 3, 1 and that it was a person-to-person issue.

I have called for a second Group Conscience to discuss how these issues should be

managed as it does raise several issues:

- a) Guaranteeing a person's safety at S.L.A.A. meetings is unequivocal.
- b) However, discussing a person-to-person concern of this seriousness at a Group Conscience is either within the Traditions or not.
- c) If it were not within the Traditions, then how would S.L.A.A., as an organization, recommend we ensure the safety of people within the Traditions and appropriately support the person (or person's) under this situation?

I'm wondering if there is any precedent for this?

Response #1:

I don't believe the Steps, Traditions or Concepts address this directly. Indirectly, Tradition Four provides some guidance for the meeting as a whole. Since each group is autonomous, and because this issue would not seem to affect the fellowship as a whole, the meeting members can make a decision collectively on how they want to address the issue. They could choose to take any number of actions, from nothing at all to banning Person B from the meeting.

But, that does not address the legal aspect of this situation. There is nothing in the Steps, Traditions or Concepts that forbids or suggests against a meeting fellow going to the police / authorities and reporting criminal behavior they have knowledge of. It is not clear from the Question that anyone other than Person A has direct knowledge of the crime. But, I still want to point out that criminal behavior is *not* protected by anonymity, so there is no violation of Tradition if a crime is reported.

The Board of Trustees and F.W.S. produced a good document in 2013 on the "knowledge" aspect of this subject. It is titled "Anonymity, the Law and S.L.A.A" and I have included it below for reference. It may help provide some additional clarity and guidance on this issue.

### **ANONYMITY, THE LAW AND S.L.A.A.**

Reviewed, and amended by the Board of Trustees May 2013.

During the years of The Augustine Fellowship, S.L.A.A., Fellowship-Wide Services, Inc.'s existence, several inquiries have come to our attention regarding disclosure of illegal or dangerous acts by members or to members. As we are all governed by our own conscience, we do encourage members to study and understand the Traditions of our program to assist in group conscience/ individual decisions on matters associated with crimes/illegal activity. Various scenarios/hypothetical have been posed:

- A member tells us that s/he is HIV positive and having unprotected sex with people.
- A member reports that s/he has committed a sex crime against an adult.
- A member reports that s/he has committed a sex crime against a minor.
- A member reports that s/he is committing incest.

- A member reports that their spouse/partner/child is committing crimes or engaged in illegal activity.
- A member reports that s/he has committed a crime or is engaged in illegal activity.
- A member commits a crime or illegal act at a meeting or against another member of the program.
- A member tells their story, which involves an illegal act, to a sponsor/sponsee or at a meeting.
- A member reports that s/he is a recent or ongoing victim of a sex crime, incest/molestation, or illegal activity.
- A member is arrested due to a crime and the police are asking members outside of the meeting for details about the person/crime.

In all cases, the following is suggested:

- People must remember when they are sharing at a meeting, with their sponsor/sponsee, or fellow members, that anonymity does not exempt them from repercussions for their actions. Also they must understand that anonymity IS NOT the same thing as a legal privilege.
- Although, people at the meetings are attending for their own recovery, we are powerless over an individual's moral conscience and the choice of that person to report such acts to the legal authorities.
- Depending on the law of the country/state in which you are, meeting attendees/listeners may be found to be liable in a civil action for failure to act on information.
- Meetings should check with the laws of their state/country as to what the responsibility of each individual may be in reporting crimes or illegal activity.
- If a crime or illegal activity is happening currently, it is the policy of the F.W.S. office to advise the victim to contact the police or legal authorities accordingly.
- There is a distinction between the individual members, the groups, the Conference and F.W.S. They are all separate entities and are responsible only to themselves.
- Members should remember that there might be individuals attending the meeting who are mandated to report crimes/illegal activity including: social workers, teachers, and law enforcement personnel (this has recently been expanded in at least one U.S. States to include anyone, not just certain professionals – check your local laws to ascertain if you are under a duty to report).

Some groups have chosen to include a statement within their format to specifically address this issue. An example follows:

***“The Foundation of Anonymity***

*Anonymity is the foundation of our program. It is essential if we are to continue the 12 Step work of S.L.A.A. ... However even this basic principle may give way to the pressure of individual consciences or legal requirements. Therefore we, the members of this S.L.A.A. meeting, make clear to newcomers and old timers alike that speaking of any potentially illegal activity, especially relating to minors,*

*endangers the speaker and lays a burden of knowledge on others that they may not be willing to assume. This includes statements made individually to members, including to your sponsor, which is not a legally protected relationship.”*

This represents the BOT and F.W.S.’s recommendations, considering the Traditions in conjunction with our attorney. The BOT does not discourage legal compliance or the reporting of criminal activity. Nothing in this Statement should be interpreted to imply otherwise.

#### Response #2:

Tradition Three tells us that: “the only requirement for S.L.A.A. membership is a desire to stop living out a pattern of sex and love addiction.”

Tradition Ten tells us two additional important and relevant things. First that, “S.L.A.A. has no opinion on outside issues.” And secondly that, “the S.L.A.A. name ought never be drawn into public controversy.”

Tradition Twelve tells us that “anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions.”

Presumably, the incident described by Person A occurred outside the meeting. If the group were to take action directed at Person B based solely on the information provided by Person A, it would be getting involved in an “outside issue.” Likewise, such action toward Person B would put the group in the position of judging the credibility of the information of Person A and hence it would be taking a position on an issue of public controversy. If the group sought to be more judicious by collecting additional information about the alleged incident before taking action, it would be further violating the anonymity of Person A and Person B, and could slip even more deeply into public controversy.

That said, fortunately, there are many things that individual members might be able to do in keeping with our Steps, Traditions and Concepts to support Person A. For example, Person A’s sponsor or another member might ask her if it might be helpful for person A to seek the guidance of outside professionals, law enforcement, or legal assistance organizations. If Person B is not female, Person A’s sponsor and/or other female members of the group might also ask her if it would be helpful to start a women only meeting of S.L.A.A. in a place that feels safe and convenient for Person A. Female members of the group might also ask Person A if it would be helpful for them to go with her to other meetings.

We all certainly want our meetings to be as safe as possible. There are many things that groups can do to support this goal. In their introductory readings, many groups stipulate that sharing should not be graphic or detailed in describing acting out in ways that might trigger another member. Many groups also offer members the opportunity to raise their hand if someone’s sharing is triggering for them. Many meetings also specify in their introductions that the meeting is not a place to pick up partners. The group can

also state each week that members are encouraged to talk to another member if something someone is doing in the meeting is making them uncomfortable. And a group can certainly take concrete action if a member is acting in an inappropriate way in the meeting. The group can hold a group conscience and ask the person acting inappropriately to desist from this activity. The group can even ask a member acting inappropriately to no longer attend the meeting if it decides that that is the right course. The group can also decide to solicit assistance from local law enforcement if it decides that this is needed.

Unfortunately, it is not possible for a group to “unequivocally” guarantee anyone’s safety in any meeting. I have witnessed what can happen if a group sets about with all the best intentions to proactively attempt try to guarantee its’ members comfort and safety.

In my small town, many long-time residents feel especially vigilant about their anonymity and their safety. One person in one of the groups has expressed a fear that since our community is so small, people from the individual’s past might find out about the meeting and try to attend in order to harass this individual. Even though this was a fear rather than something that had actually occurred, the group, in an effort to take action guarantee the fearful member’s safety and comfort, set about to construct an elaborate system to, in the groups own words, “vet” potential attenders. The group removed the location of the meeting in all directories including the S.L.A.A. website. Those interested in attending must now call a telephone number maintained by the group. Whoever is assigned to monitor the phone number is directed to call back anyone seeking the location of the meeting and question them sufficiently to determine if the person is “legitimate.” So, despite Tradition Three’s stipulation that there is only one requirement for S.L.A.A. membership, the group has implemented a new requirement for membership, i.e., willingness to call a telephone number and successfully go through a “vetting” process.

When I was new to town, I called the listed telephone number to try to obtain the meeting’s location. It took two weeks to get a return call. This delay could certainly have impacted my ability to get or stay sober. If I had been visiting our small town from out of town for a business trip or short vacation, I could have been completely blocked from the benefit of an S.L.A.A. meeting. How many potential newcomers in our small city have been unwilling to go through this vetting process and been discouraged from obtaining the help S.L.A.A. can offer? We will never know.

### Response #3:

I think it is difficult to make any decision based on what could possibly happen. I am inclined to believe that a situation like this could become something that impacts S.L.A.A. as a whole as anonymity and defamation of character may be an issue. As such it has the potential to draw S.L.A.A. into public controversy. Safety at a meeting is important but I have always thought about this as it exists in terms of behavior/ communication during meetings or at meetings. It is then, that would indicate, that the responsibility of the group is to address it with action. However, the signs of recovery say that "We learn to avoid situations that may put us at risk physically, morally,



psychologically or spiritually." That is to say that although I cannot speak to the allegations or do not want to seem insensitive to a victim of abuse, we as individuals are responsible for avoiding spaces that we deem are no longer safe for us or our recovery. We all have choices. I don't think we can preemptively exclude people who have yet to show up to our meeting space.

#### Response #4:

This question gets at the heart of S.L.A.A. Tradition One: "Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends on S.L.A.A. unity." What is our common welfare? It is helpful to look at the long form of Tradition One in Alcoholics Anonymous. It reads: "Each member of Alcoholics Anonymous is but a small part of a great whole. A.A. must continue to live or most of us will surely die. Hence our common welfare comes first. But individual welfare follows close afterward."

My response in part draws on Alcoholics Anonymous service material related to safety and a focus on our common welfare first. It is important to remember that problems from the outside world are going to come into our meetings. To create trust in our meetings, we have to be able to provide a meaningful level of safety, a space where members can focus on getting and maintaining sobriety. At the same time, Tradition Nine says we ought never be organized. Since there is no central body that governs the behavior of our members, it is up to individual groups to keep disruptions and distractions to a minimum. At the same time, Tradition Three says the only requirement for S.L.A.A. membership is a desire to stop living out a pattern of sex and love addiction – S.L.A.A. doesn't prescribe a set of behavioral or moral standards, although we do encourage courtesy, kindness, and tolerance. However, some people do not understand what is acceptable at meetings and how to put the needs of the group first.

Groups have a lot of latitude on how to create an environment of safety and handle disruptive situations. For one, talking about safety issues before they happen can go a long way to raise awareness about and be prepared for difficulties that may arise. Some groups develop plans to address disruptive behavior or establish procedures through group conscience to protect the group's welfare. Some groups state up front in their meeting script that illegal and disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. Some groups discuss situations at their business meetings and reach group conscience on how to handle a situation. Some groups have individual members speak separately to a disruptive member. A last resort could be that a group asks a member not to attend the meeting for a certain period of time. Some groups develop guidelines for when to call authorities to handle a situation if a person's safety is in jeopardy or a situation breaches the law; calling the appropriate authorities does not go against the S.L.A.A. Traditions. In all discussions of safety, it is important to keep Traditions One and Twelve in mind: Keep the focus on our primary purpose, our common welfare, and place principles before personalities.

Victims of inappropriate behavior or predators can let the group know about the situation, often through a sponsor, a friend, or at the group's business meeting. Letting people know at the beginning of a regular S.L.A.A. meeting through group conscience is

probably not the best way to do this, as it may disrupt the meeting for all other people attending to get support. By informing the group, the group can help the member address the situation and prevent further problems. At the same time, while S.L.A.A. members can be caring and supportive, we are not professionals, and the victim might need to seek help from professionals and law enforcement. In other words, while we cannot guarantee individual safety, we can do our best to create a safe environment where all sex and love addicts can focus on sobriety and recovery.

Response #5:

Keeping with Tradition One, Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon S.L.A.A. unity.

Person B would be held to the same Traditions as anyone else. Any deviation from the norms of meeting such as *crosstalk, illicit chat box use, or following person A around the room* could be grounds for removal. However, in keeping with Tradition Three and Five.

3-The only requirement for S.L.A.A. membership is a desire to stop living out a pattern of sex and love addiction.

5-Each group has but one primary purpose -- to carry its message to the sex and love addict who still suffers.

Person B should be evaluated based solely on their behavior in the meeting and given every opportunity to seek recovery.

We cannot know Person B's intentions and tread into using magical thinking and fear in making any assumptions.

Lastly, Tradition Ten:

S.L.A.A. has no opinion on outside issues; hence the S.L.A.A. name ought never be drawn into public controversy.

Barring behavior during the meeting that breaks the Traditions, this is an outside issue. A group conscious should only be called to assess behavior during the meeting. Merely showing up is not breaking Traditions (even if it is breaking the law via restraining order).

Let me share my personal experience. The woman who introduced me to Twelve Step and I were good friends. Shortly after I came into S.L.A.A. we both displayed behavior that qualified us for this program.

- 1- After I told her our friendship had no future she showed up at my acting class and tried to speak to me while I was in no contact with women.
- 2- She signed up for my acting class.

- 3- I lashed out at her in writing.
- 4- I sent a barrage of emails begging forgiveness which were ignored.
- 5- I received a phone call from the Sheriff to leave her alone.
- 6- There were plenty of meetings I went to hoping to see her, but when I did, I didn't speak to her or sit near her.
- 7- I was actually becoming triggered by her presence. To this day, she terrifies me because of the feelings that come up.
- 8- She once purposely sat behind me at a meeting, and after 10 minutes left the meeting.
- 9- Despite a deal with our acting teacher as to who would show up in the teacher's classes on specific days, this woman showed up during my class on multiple occasions.
- 10- We spoke 10 months later, she approached me, we hugged and essentially said goodbye because she was leaving the city.

I share this story so that we can see there are always behaviors on both sides of the story that qualified both of us for this program. I am only responsible for mine. Thankfully, I was never denied access to a meeting. I always maintained the boundary she set when she involved the police. I believe we owe Person B the same. As my sponsor told me after the woman sat behind me in the meeting, "*You (i.e. Person A) have options.*"

Question from the Fellowship (Committee Reference #2020-12):

We have an online Homegroup. As the service structure in online meetings seems to be unstable and lacking in continuity, some of us (about 11 people) decided to call a meeting their Homegroup and dedicate themselves to committed service in the meeting.

In a recent business meeting a motion was made that anyone can attend the business meeting and talk, but only someone who defines themselves as a Homegroup member will have a voting right regarding motions.

The idea is that the people making the decisions will be the ones who come regularly and do service, so they can make an informed decision based on experience in service. This is so the group can better function and be stable and safe, and so we can better carry the message to the still suffering addict in accordance with the Fourth Tradition.

Some people who don't define themselves as Homegroup members opposed this change by saying that this kind of motion breaks Traditions in some way. Just for clarification: any S.L.A.A. member can join and have a voting right just by defining themselves as a Homegroup member.

We would like your experience and thoughts about this issue.

### Response #1:

While I understand the impulse, what comes to mind for me is two things: higher Power and Autonomy.

I think the Traditions support self-governing in this case.... people are autonomous and responsible for deciding their own level of participation in the group and in a vote, based on their own sense of investment in the group, and whether they feel moved (by Higher Power) to participate.

The principle of self-governing also surrenders every member to their own loving higher power and authority to be called to participate or not participate. It seems to be an assertion of authority to suggest that some members get to decide the criteria for eligibility to vote rather than leaving it up to each person (and their own HP and/or the higher power of the group) to determine for themselves. Nonetheless, these are Traditions, not rules, and Bill W. would say every group has a right to get it wrong. Does enforcing this homegroup claim support a sense of unity within the group? Or, does abandoning it support that sense of unity? Unity is a priority in the Traditions.

### Response #2:

There are quite a few Traditions and Concepts that appear to be applicable to this situation. First and foremost, Tradition Four informs us that each group is autonomous (unless it affects another group or the fellowship as a whole). Since this new policy would not seem to affect any other group or the fellowship, the meeting has the right to make the change and only allow “homegroup” members to vote in a business meeting. But, just because the group can make this decision to exclude some members from voting does not mean it is in keeping with the spiritual guidance found in other Traditions and Concepts.

There is a reference to Tradition Four in the Question, but I believe the individual actually meant Tradition Five. That Tradition tells us our primary purpose is to help the suffering addict. However, I do not believe this new policy is in keeping with Tradition Five. By excluding members from voting, a “clique” atmosphere could be created. When people see a clique in control, they tend to feel unwelcome and leave.

This new policy also seems to conflict with Tradition One. For personal recovery, our group unity must come first. With the two-tier system of voting members and non-voting members, it will be very difficult to have unity in the group. From the information provided in the Question, it appears this new policy has already created internal strife.

I would also suggest that Tradition Three is applicable to this situation. The only requirement for membership in S.L.A.A. is a desire to stop living out a pattern of sex and love addiction. There is no requirement to be part of a “homegroup”.

Concept Four provides some guidance as well. This Concept stipulates that each member has the “Right of Participation” to cast one vote up to the level of which they are a trusted servant. While generally meant for World Service, this spiritual principle

can also be applied to individual groups. At the group level, each member has an equal right to participate in a vote.

Lastly, Concept Twelve (Warranty “f”) provides clarification as to our structure. Warranty “f” states: “...like the Fellowship it serves, it will always remain democratic in thought and action.” As stated previously, the Concepts are written for World Service. This one clearly indicates that the Fellowship is democratic in thought and action. The group policy allowing only “homegroup” members to vote in a business meeting is not in alignment with those democratic principles.

#### Response #3:

My thoughts here are based on Tradition Two, "For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority -- a loving God as this Power may be expressed through our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern." It seems that any group that takes it upon themselves to silence newcomers by taking away the right to use their voice in the fellowship, does that group and the newcomer/fellow a disservice. While the newcomer may not have the "experience in service", attending the business meeting (a commitment in itself as some of us know that people often leave during business meetings), listening to the "informed" at said meeting should give them the right to use democratic voice afforded by S.L.A.A. business meeting formats.

Furthermore, keeping the "authority" to vote "in house" will create a cycle of "nepotism" where only those who are supposed to be trusted servants are taking on authority positions that don't allow for new servants to enter. If I could not vote at a business meeting, I would stop going to that group, it would not serve the primary purpose and then be counterproductive, the membership would stay small and exclusive.

Our common welfare depends on unity, and if the common welfare comes first, then they should have confidence that the regular attendees will vote for the common good. Higher Power and democratic processes will work itself out without "government" interference. Should a meeting be unstable and lacking in continuity, the solution should not be to exclude newcomers or visitors. We cannot "own" a homegroup and call it S.L.A.A. We may all have homegroups, but we are all unified under this fellowship under the third Tradition.

#### Response #4:

I can see the intention behind this, but these kinds of motions seem to be popping up in the virtual space. There are a number of factors in play here.

- 1) People from all over the world show up in the virtual space.
- 2) The night meetings are large 50+ people, many are newcomers, retreads and fellows who may be just passing through because they needed a meeting.

I think not letting all present vote violates the Traditions. It violates Tradition Twelve “to place principles over personalities.” No one in the meeting has more power than another unless elected.

That said, the meeting can elect a steering committee. Another option is to make a motion to move the business meeting to the end of the meeting. This will narrow attendance down to those with a vested interest in the function of the meeting. They can also vote to remove the meeting from the S.L.A.A. virtual list.

Question from the Fellowship (Committee Reference #2020-13):

I went to a meeting and they wanted to not have any S.L.A.A. members except those that committed to having that specific meeting as their Homegroup and do commitments and service there be able to vote in the business meetings.

I know it breaks certain Traditions like One, Three, and Nine to name a few because it's limited to those who have committed to be Homegroup personnel of that meeting.

What does the F.W.S. have to say about this?

Response #1:

I would ask, what is the reason that you want that? I'm sure there is something you are after that you feel is in service of the group. Maybe the health and maintenance of the group is important to you, and it seems that transitory members do not match your investment in the group's destiny. Maybe you had an experience where something was important to you and it wasn't taken seriously. Every group has a right to be wrong. It's a worthy experiment!

Maybe vote on it at the group level, INCLUDING any transitory visitors to your meeting, to see if it passes. That is allowing but one authority, a loving god, to preside over the group's wellbeing. If it passes, try it out for a while. Observe the impact that it has on the unity of the group and the group's ability to sustain itself. Who knows? Maybe it's a good idea and even if this group doesn't want to try that, maybe another group will.

Response #2:

There are quite a few Traditions and Concepts that appear to be applicable to this situation. First and foremost, Tradition Four informs us that each group is autonomous (unless it affects another group or the fellowship as a whole). Since this new policy would not seem to affect any other group or the fellowship, the meeting has the right to make the change and only allow "homegroup" members to vote in a business meeting. But, just because the group can make this decision to exclude some members from voting does not mean it is in keeping with the spiritual guidance found in other Traditions and Concepts.

Tradition Five is applicable as well. That Tradition tells us our primary purpose is to help the suffering addict. I do not believe this new policy is in keeping with Tradition Five. By excluding members from voting, a "clique" atmosphere could be created. When people see a clique in control, they tend to feel unwelcome and leave.

This new policy also seems to conflict with Tradition One. For personal recovery, our group unity must come first. With the two-tier system of voting members and non-voting members, it will very difficult to have unity in the group.

I would also suggest that Tradition Three is applicable to this situation. The only requirement for membership in S.L.A.A. is a desire to stop living out a pattern of sex and love addiction. There is no requirement to be part of a "homegroup".

Concept Four provides some guidance as well. This Concept stipulates that each member has the "Right of Participation" to cast one vote up to the level of which they are a trusted servant. While generally meant for World Service, this spiritual principle can also be applied to individual groups. At the group level, each member has an equal right to participate in a vote.

Lastly, Concept Twelve (Warranty "f") provides clarification as to our structure. Warranty "f" states: "...like the Fellowship it serves, it will always remain democratic in thought and action." As stated previously, the Concepts are written for World Service. This one clearly indicates that the Fellowship is democratic in thought and action. The group policy allowing only "homegroup" members to vote in a business meeting is not in alignment with those democratic principles.

Question from the Fellowship (Committee Reference #2020-14):

I'm struggling with a situation in the S.L.A.A. meetings I attend on zoom and would like to present a motion for consideration. I want to do this at the next intergroup.

Here is the proposed motion:

"If a person whom a member of S.L.A.A. has a restraining order against attends a Zoom meeting where that member is, the secretary or host of the zoom meeting is responsible for removing that person from the Zoom room with the support of proper documentation (i.e.: a copy of the restraining order)."

This motion is very important to me and if passed I hope would set a precedent that could ensure the safety of members in the rooms going forward.

What are your thoughts on this?

Response #1:

Each Group should be autonomous (Tradition Four) and there is but one authority, a loving God as expressed through group conscience (Tradition Two) so I have confidence a well-informed business meeting can prayerfully consider this difficult situation and reach a decision that puts the group's common welfare first (Tradition One). Safety within meetings is an important element of our common welfare.

However, the primary purpose of the Group is to carry the message to the sex and love addict who *still* suffers (Tradition Five) and the only requirement for membership is a desire to stop living out a pattern of sex and love addiction (Tradition Three).

In my experience, it is the sex and love addict who is the subject of the restraining order most in need of the supportive fellowship within S.L.A.A. (Resource Two, Preamble). They have been so powerless to stop acting out, another has sought orders. Indeed, in our local Fellowship, some women have been so desperate to achieve no contact that they have asked their Qualifiers to please take out a restraining order and/or renew the order before expiry.

The gender identity of the parties in question is not relevant (preamble). S.L.A.A. has no opinion on outside issues such as the necessity of the restraining order (Tradition Ten). That is a matter for the local courts.

Each of us is responsible for our own safety. We learn to avoid situations that put us at risk (Sign of Recovery).

We are very fortunate that in Zoom Meetings it is possible to mute our microphones and switch off video. We can join under an alias if more anonymity is required for safety reasons. It is also possible to decline to share and to turn off audio or leave the room while someone triggering shares. It can also be helpful to outreach and read the S.L.A.A. Booklet *Triggers as a Resource* with your Sponsor and other supportive members.

If that is not enough, there are more alternative meetings than ever accessible by Zoom due to the Covid-19 pandemic. It is also possible to start a new men's only or women's only meeting if that would successfully exclude the other Member the subject of the restraining order. There are excellent resources on the S.L.A.A. F.W.S. Website how to start a new meeting in your area.

Finally, it is also possible to return to Court asking that the restraining order be extended to include your online communities. Compliance with legal requirements under the local law will always override the suggested Traditions. However, you would most likely have to persuade the Court that you not only must attend S.L.A.A. meetings, but also that you cannot attend any of the other 1000+ S.L.A.A. online meetings.

#### Response #2:

First, I believe it is important to clarify the relationship between an intergroup and individual meetings. Per Concept One, it is the intergroup that takes direction from the meetings. This is referred to in the Alcoholics Anonymous illustrated Twelve Concepts booklet as the "inverted pyramid". It means that the intergroup does not have the authority to direct meetings how to conduct their affairs. Attempting to have intergroup pass a motion directing individual meetings on this issue would be in conflict with this Concept.



Tradition Four also states that each meeting is autonomous, unless affecting other meetings or the fellowship as a whole. A meeting level decision on this issue would not appear to affect any other meetings or the fellowship. Each meeting is free to address this issue as they feel best for their members.

I have been in meetings where very similar issues came up. In each case, meeting members discussed the issue and attempted to reach a resolution that created a safe space for all members. Barring an individual was always a last resort, but there have been two times that groups I am in made that decision. In each case we were clear to the individual being banned that it was specific to that meeting only, and that they were free to attend other ones.

Question from the Fellowship (Committee Reference #2020-15):

Hello, I am the GSR for an S.L.A.A. meeting. Since going on Zoom in March, we had a major security breach - a member's ex-partner has been stalking her in the meeting. He seems to have compromised her computer and phone and to have gone so far as to hire someone to impersonate a newcomer to join the meeting so he could listen in and possibly record the meeting and the chat, where we had unfortunately been posting contact info. This came to light in a chaotic way during a meeting. As a result, we made the meeting private and changed all the meeting login info.

Several of us recommended our member get help from a domestic violence organization. However, we are still concerned about the security of our member's devices, as she has not yet done the work needed to secure them. We have asked her not to join the meeting until she has a secure phone.

I am writing for advice on this as I don't want to deny our member the opportunity to come to the meeting but it seems that our Traditions recommend taking action for the safety of the greatest number of people, and their anonymity. Could you please advise us on best practices for online security and how to deal with this situation?

Response #1:

First and foremost, in most jurisdictions, stalking is a very serious crime that should be reported by the target of stalking to your local Police and, if not reported by the member his or herself, can be reported by anyone at the meeting. Our spiritual foundation, Anonymity (Tradition Twelve) never takes precedence over local laws. That point is made well elsewhere in S.L.A.A. materials.

Secondly, many members come to S.L.A.A. because they have difficult relationships. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop living out a pattern of sex and love addiction (Tradition Three). Stalking is not uncommon in romantic obsession. Both persons involved in this situation would be equally welcomed in S.L.A.A.

Codependency is also a trait shared by many sex and love addicts. In Service, I need to watch my desire to judge others members' relationships and "leap to the rescue" of the victim and "punish" the perpetrator. Although an outside issue (Tradition Six), understanding the dynamics of toxic relationships described by Karpann as the Drama Triangle has been very helpful to my own recovery in S.L.A.A.

I see little difference between online and face to face meetings. Online is arguably safer. Anyone determined to stalk them can follow him or her to a meeting, eavesdrop, bug the room or hire someone to attend the meeting to secretly record and take a photograph of the phone list.

It is extremely important we empower members to take responsibility for their own safety in a way that works well for them. Attending a different Zoom meeting under a pseudonym is one immediate solution.

Determining whether allegations of stalking are true or not is an outside matter. It is important our trusted servants remain neutral and objective. Applying the Traditions instead of my own (often uninformed!) opinions really helps me. Therefore, deciding who is the "victim" is an outside issue in which we should not get involved (Tradition 5).

In my area, this would be an urgent police matter. The complainant would make a report to the local police station and the police - not the complainant - would obtain an interim restraining order within one day or so. Sex and love addiction is a progressive disease that kills. Domestic violence including stalking is a matter taken very seriously.

Often in chaotic situations like this, the police (and court) decide on the facts that both parties should be subject to a restraining order blocking all contact with the other. Their addictive relationship poses a risk to both sex and love addicts and third parties (tragically, often children of one or both). The Court can order which meetings each is permitted to attend to keep them apart.

The good news is that S.L.A.A. has a solution that works and eventually, in my experience, it can be safe for the Court to lift restraining orders.

We can support our members to go No Contact, including helping them secure their phones, but in my experience, love addicts will only later unblock their Qualifier. They are not ready to withdraw from the drama and intensity of the addictive relationship, no matter how destructive. All we can do is love them and encourage them to keep coming back.

Of course, if there is a genuine threat of violence against any other member, the Group must take urgent action in group conscience to bring in the Police. For example, the police have powers to retrieve the list of member contact details, if that privacy breach is of real concern to the persons on that list.

I wish your Group well in determining the safest course of action.

Response #2:

Many of the questions we've received lately are about outside issues. We have no opinion on outside issues.

As urgent as it may seem, as frightening, as threatening, and as important as it may seem, we have no opinion. We have only one purpose — to carry the message of recovery. Anything else, everything else, is an outside issue.

The Traditions are suggestions that can guide us out of the darkness. They do not recommend action regarding group safety, group security, or even violent situations.

The group itself is autonomous and responsible. The group itself has the authority to govern its own affairs (even if it decides to ignore the Traditions). The group has every right to take action to address the safety and unity of the group. They have the right, the responsibility, the authority, and the duty. Whether we approve or disapprove is inconsequential.

I hope the group takes time to study the Traditions and the Concepts. I hope too they take appropriate action by calling the civil authorities when that's called for. There are useful documents about safety from Alcoholics Anonymous that are well worth reading.

I am aware of a similar situation that took place at a face to face meeting not long ago. One of the member's partners hired a private detective to attend the meeting and record it. When it was revealed that this had happened, many were shocked and angry. The event was destructive to the meeting causing a number of members to stop attending. And yet the meeting has survived. I am reminded to be grateful for the meeting and my recovery rather than nurse my resentment over bad behavior.

I trust the Traditions and the Concepts to provide the guidance I need to live with others. And to guide our meetings as well. We can easily be distracted from our primary purpose. Outside issues are especially tempting. Let's keep our focus on recovery. Let's do our best to carry the message and not the mess.

Response #3:

This is a very difficult situation and I completely understand the strong response that the group has taken to finding out a stalker has been attending. And, I understand the group is trying to protect member anonymity, which is generally in keeping with Tradition Eleven.

However, by making the meeting private only and denying an active member access, it would seem to be in conflict with Tradition Five. Tradition Five states that our primary purpose is to help the suffering addict. Limiting and / or denying access would not appear to help the addict.

But, since Tradition Four indicates that each group is autonomous, it is very much a group level decision on how best to proceed.

My only suggestion is to consider utilizing Step Twelve when making the group decisions. Practicing the spiritual principles in all areas of our lives can be especially helpful in an emotionally charged situation such as this.

# ***To Change or Not to Change***

We would like your opinion on whether or not to change the Basic Text prior to creating a 50th Anniversary or a Second Edition. Please let us know what types of changes, if any, you would like to see.

Just go to [bit.ly/BasicTextChangeSurvey](https://bit.ly/BasicTextChangeSurvey)  
By January 31, 2021



The Mandate Work Group of the 50th Anniversary Basic Text Subcommittee of the Conference Literature Committee

## Call for 2021 (and Beyond!) Articles

We are a global fellowship with a world of stories. Each story told has the potential to strengthen recovery for all of us.

We are looking for articles from members outside the United States that share your service experiences, as well as your strength and hope. Some information to include in the article might be answers to the following questions:

- When did you first begin to realize you could be of service?
- What was your first service experience? How did you feel about it?
- When did you begin sponsoring others?
- What has service done for you?
- What types of service work have you done and what types are you doing now?

Articles are in English and your native language. Suggested article length varies from 250-500 English words on a single-spaced typewritten page.

### **Deadlines for Submissions are Sundays:**

**2021 February 21 – March Issue**

**2021 May 16 – June Issue**

**2021 August 22 – September Issue**

**2021 November 21 – December Issue**

However, feel free to submit articles sooner if you are moved to serve the fellowship in this way. Below are additional guidelines to help you.

- Make submissions in a .doc or .docx file, except for flyers created for specific events or requests.
- Remember to maintain anonymity by using first name and last initial.
- Place periods between the initials in the fellowship name in written material that is made public: **S.L.A.A.**
- The newsletter is not a recovery-oriented publication per se and not to be confused with the *Journal*, which publishes articles of recovery.
- Use this email address for submissions: <https://slaafws.org/FWSnews-submit>.

You are also welcome to submit flyers created for specific S.L.A.A. events, which should be submitted in English as a .pdf file.

Questions? Contact the editor at <https://slaafws.org/FWSnews-submit>.

## DID YOU KNOW THAT THE FELLOWSHIP-WIDE SERVICES (F.W.S.) OFFICE...

...provides worldwide meeting information to newcomers, to members moving or traveling to other locations, as well as to other interested parties via the website, telephone, mail and email.

...maintains a database of worldwide Groups, Intergroups, Lone Groups, group contacts, meeting times and dates via the F.W.S. website. In addition keeps separate databases for Conference members, Committee members and F.W.S. Newsletter subscribers.

...gives free information to potential newcomers as well as to professionals who may be interested in further information about S.L.A.A.

...provides/updates Group/Intergroup Starter Kits and assists new Groups in getting started.

...with the help of volunteers and committees publishes the F.W.S. Newsletter quarterly with a distribution list of 1600 members worldwide. The F.W.S. Newsletter is distributed via email or at cost for hard copies plus postage to anyone that does not have access to email.

...provides a place for Groups and Intergroups to turn to for feedback and information on group related issues.

...works with Intergroups, Groups and other S.L.A.A. "offices" to provide information to members and those seeking help.

...supports Conference Committees in their work such as helping provide prison outreach to correctional institutions, assisting with production of *the Journal* and creating new recovery products/tools and new literature.

...generates more than 2,500 invoices, publishes and ships more than 80,000 pieces of S.L.A.A. literature and recovery tools a year including 20 pamphlets; booklets such as Triggers as a Resource, Anorexia, and a Companion to Chapter Four of the Basic Text; 8 *Journal focus* booklets; the S.L.A.A. Basic Text in softbound and e-book format, as well as on audio CD; and a bi-monthly magazine, *the Journal*, with approximately 250 digital and print subscribers.

...responds to national and international media and the professional community inquiries via the Board Outreach Committee and the F.W.S. staff.

...sponsors the Annual Business Conference and Meeting (ABC/M). This involves securing a site, handling logistics, securing housing, food and audio/visual equipment, handling all aspects of pre- and onsite registration, administering the Travel Equalization Fund, obtaining local volunteer help, running the auction, processing all monies, and attending to anything that may arise when preparing for the Conference.

...has to be maintained so that all of the above can happen. Employees and volunteer Board members handle all facets of the office operations including: purchasing of supplies, equipment and merchandise, production of merchandise, creating a budget and monitoring it, all accounting and tax functions, and adherence to government guidelines regarding administration of a non-profit organization.

...does all of the above solely to help fulfill the primary purpose as stated in Tradition Five, to carry the S.L.A.A. message to the sex and love addict who still suffers.

...is fully self-supporting according to Tradition Seven. The F.W.S. Office does not accept any contributions from outside sources. It relies entirely on contributions from groups and their members to support its functioning as well as the sales of S.L.A.A. Conference-approved literature

If you have questions or would like more information on S.L.A.A.

- Call 210-828-7900
- Fax 210-828-7922
- Email: <http://www.slaafws.org/contact>
- Mail:

**The Augustine Fellowship  
1550 NE Loop 410, Ste 118  
San Antonio TX 78209**

**Office Hours:  
Monday-Friday 9:00am-5:00pm CT.**

Introducing the New S.L.A.A.

# LifeSaver Program

To Encourage Automatic Monthly Giving

Now more than ever, F.W.S. needs your 7th Tradition support.

Individuals, Groups, and Intergroups can sign up to make automatic monthly contributions.

## DOUBLE YOUR MONTHLY CONTRIBUTION BY GIVING NOW

DUE TO THE EXTRAORDINARY GENEROSITY OF MEMBERS LIKE YOU, IF YOU JOIN NOW,  
CONTRIBUTIONS WILL BE MATCHED DOLLAR FOR DOLLAR UP TO:

**\$101,000 TOTAL**

THIS IS AN UNPRECEDENTED OPPORTUNITY TO ENSURE THE LONG-TERM FINANCIAL SECURITY OF S.L.A.A.

### YOUR LIFESAVER MONTHLY CONTRIBUTIONS:

- ⇒ Expand outreach materials and programs for the addicts still suffering
- ⇒ Fund new S.L.A.A. technology initiatives
- ⇒ Create and fund new benefits for F.W.S. Employees

Our S.L.A.A. lifesaver logo has long been the beacon of hope for our recovery. Today, it becomes a 7th Tradition call for help.

Members are encouraged to give any amount they can.

thank you!

**PLEASE BECOME A LIFESAVER TODAY**

<https://tinyurl.com/slaalifesaver>

This means that only people who consider themselves members of S.L.A.A. can make a contribution.

F.W.S. Board of Trustees Approved - April 2020

The Augustine Fellowship, S.L.A.A., Fellowship-Wide Services, Inc.

**Our 7th Tradition states:** " Every S.L.A.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions."





**S.L.A.A.'s New Conference-approved Meditation Book:**

# **A State of Grace**

## **Daily Meditations**

**NOW OVER 80% SOLD OUT!**

Limit of 10 Books Per Order

Gift-Quality Limited Edition 5"x 8" Hard Cover

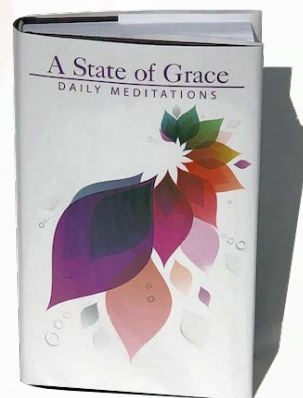
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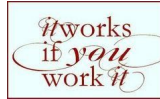
**<https://store.slaafws.org/prod/BO-005.html>**

Soft Cover Edition is also available at \$12.95 each

**<https://store.slaafws.org/prod/BO-006.html>**



## Conference Service Committees; What they do and when they meet!



*Check out the current projects or request information by completing the contact form on their link.  
We'd love to have you share your thoughts, support and strengths.*

---

**CAC** – Conference Anorexia Committee is to carry the message to the S.L.A.A. community that sexual, social, and emotional anorexia can be an inherent part of sex and love addiction and encourages integrating this idea into all areas of the Fellowship and its literature. For more info and call-in number contact:

<https://slaafws.org/committee/cac>

**Meeting: 1hr 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday @ 11:00am PT, 12:00pm MT, 1:00pm CT, 2:00pm ET**

**CBC** – Conference By-Laws Committee is responsible for maintaining and updating the current S.L.A.A. By-Laws. It acts in an advisory capacity to the BOT and Fellowship-Wide Services and the Conference with regard to potential or requested By-Law changes. The committee also works with the BOT to facilitate changes to the by-Laws passed in accordance with Article XIV of the By-Laws. For more info and call-in number contact: <https://slaafws.org/committee/cbc>

**Meeting: 1hr 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday @ 1:00pm PT, 2:00pm MT, 3:00pm CT, 4:00pm ET**

**CCC** – Conference Charter Committee - Responsible for the planning and facilitation of the ABC/M in cooperation with the BOT and F.W.S. (In the absence of a CCC, the BOT and F.W.S. are responsible for running the ABC/M.) Creates the ABM Agenda, chairs the ABC/M, and is liaison for the entire Conference to the BOT and F.W.S. The Chair of the CCC is a voting member of the Conference. For more info and call-in number contact: <https://slaafws.org/committee/ccc>

**Meeting: 1 1/2 hr 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday @ 3:00PM ET, 2:00PM CT, 1:00PM MT, 12:00PM PT**

**CDC** – Devoted to fostering an inclusive environment within our Fellowship that ensures that we are welcoming to the full diversity that exists across those who are in the Fellowship, and those who still suffer. For more info and call-in number contact: <https://slaafws.org/committee/cdc>

**Meeting: 1hr 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday 8:00AM PST, 9:00 MST, 10:00 CST, and 11:00 EST**

**CFC** – Conference Finance Committee is responsible for the allocation of funds to the various Conference committees based on their requests and the available funds provided by the BOT/F.W.S. Works with the BOT/F.W.S. to help increase financial support from the individual groups, Intergroups, and other sources that are available to The Augustine Fellowship within the guidelines of the Twelve Traditions of S.L.A.A. For more info and call-in number contact: <https://slaafws.org/committee/cfc>

**Meeting: 1hr 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday @ 08:00am PT, 9:00am MT, 10:00am CT, 11:00am ET**

**CHRC** – The Conference Healthy Relationships Committee is responsible for the development and implementation of resources and tools that enhance our recovery as sex and love addicts by increasing our capacity for building and sustaining healthy relationships of all types. For more info and call-in number contact: <https://slaafws.org/committee/chrc>

**Meeting: Temporarily Inactive as of 09/2020**

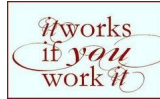
**CICC** – Conference Intergroup Communications Committee is responsible for the ongoing open communication between the existing and new groups and Intergroups of S.L.A.A. It focuses on sharing information and working together to make the Fellowship more accessible and effective.

For more info and call-in number contact: <https://slaafws.org/committee/cicc>

**Meeting: 1hr 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday Noon PT, 1:00PM MT, 2:00PM CT, 3:00pm ET, 8:00 pm UK (Saturday), 7:00am (Sunday) AET**



## Conference Service Committees; What they do and when they meet!



*Check out the current projects or request information by completing the contact form on their link.  
We'd love to have you share your thoughts, support and strengths.*

---

**CJC** – Conference Journal Committee is responsible for the creation of the monthly/bi-monthly "meeting in print" magazine focusing on S.L.A.A. recovery and related issues. The committee works with the BOT and F.W.S. to ensure publication and to address Journal policies and budget needs.

For more info and call-in number contact: <https://slaafws.org/committee/cjc>

**Meeting: 1hr 1<sup>st</sup> Saturday @ 10:00am PT, 11:00am MT, 12:00pm CT, 1:00pm ET**

**CLC** – Conference Literature Committee creates quality literature in support of SLAA recovery; guides the planning, writing, and editing of literature from writers, writing groups or service bodies within S.L.A.A.; and approves draft literature prior to submission for full Conference approval. For more info and call-in number contact: <https://slaafws.org/committee/clc>

**Meeting: 1 1/2 hr 4<sup>th</sup> Saturday @ 9:00am PT, 10:00am MT, 11:00am CT, 12:00pm ET**

**CMRC** – Conference Member Retention Committee is responsible for the development and implementation of tools and methods to retain members, as well as accessing the wisdom, experience, strength, and hope of long time members. For more info and call-in number contact: <https://slaafws.org/committee/cmrc>

**Meeting: 1hr 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday @ 10:00am PT, 1pm ET**

**CPIC (merged with CHIC)** – The primary purpose of the Conference Public Information Committee is to carry the S.L.A.A. message to the sex and love addict who still suffers. This is accomplished through the following means (a) The C.P.I.C. works with international service entities, intergroups, and local groups to convey S.L.A.A. information to the general public (b) The C.P.I.C. provides materials to help members carry the S.L.A.A. message. (c) The C.P.I.C. encourages the creation of public information entities at regional and local levels. For more info and call-in number contact: <https://slaafws.org/committee/cpic>

**Meeting: 1hr 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday @ 5:00pm PT, 7:00pm CT, 8:00pm EST**

**CSC** – Conference Service Committee is responsible for educating and increasing members' commitment to service. For more info and call-in number contact: <https://slaafws.org/committee/csc>

**Meeting: Temporarily Inactive as of 07/2020**

**CSPC** – Conference Sponsorship Committee is to support and strengthen all forms of S.L.A.A. Sponsorship.

For more info and call-in number contact: <https://slaafws.org/committee/cspc>

**Meeting: 1hr 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday @ 6:00pm EST, 5:00pm CT, 3:00pm PT**

**CSTCC** – Conference Steps, Traditions and Concepts Committee is to promote the study, understanding and application of the Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions and Twelve Concepts throughout the S.L.A.A. fellowship.

For more info and call-in number contact: <https://slaafws.org/committee/cstcc>

**Meeting: 1hr 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday @ 2:00pm PT, 3:00pm MT, 4:00pm CT, 5:00pm ET, 9:00pm GMT**

**CTIOC** – Conference Translation and International Outreach Committee is responsible for providing support to International S.L.A.A. Intergroups and/or groups to carry the message of recovery to the suffering sex and love addict in their own language. For more info and call-in number contact: <https://slaafws.org/committee/ctioc>

**Meeting: 1hr Last Sunday of the month, at 10AM Pacific, 1PM Eastern, 5:00PM Central European Time**

# S.L.A.A. Service Forum

is a new way for people doing service in S.L.A.A. to connect with each other and share their struggles and solutions:

- questions and answers
- best practices
- new ideas and suggestions
- how to deal with problems



**The forum was created and is maintained by the S.L.A.A. Conference Intergroup Communications Committee (CICC) which has the mission to:**

- enable ongoing open communication between the existing and new groups and Intergroups of S.L.A.A.
- share information and work together to make the Fellowship more accessible and effective.

**The forum is divided into discussion categories:**

- |                                       |  |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| • Public information                  | • Diversity                              |
| • Sponsorship                         | • Finance                                |
| • Websites                            | • Steps, Traditions and Concepts         |
| • Anorexia                            | • Translation and International Outreach |
| • Conventions                         | • Service                                |
| • Retreats                            | • Member Retention                       |
| • Literature                          | • Hospitals and Institutions             |
| • Procedures and Guidelines / By-Laws | • Healthy Relationships                  |
| • Inspiration line                    | • Legal Issues                           |
| • Meetings                            | • Intergroup Communications              |
| • Annual Business Meeting             |  |
| • Journals / Newsletters              |  |
| • Safety                              |  |

The F.W.S. Newsletter

## Instructions to access S.L.A.A. Service forum

To participate or even see any of the forum you will need to create an account.

**Just go to <https://service.slaa.network>, or you can scan the QR Code below.**

Go to the “Sign Up” button, and create an account with an anonymous username. So if you are Anton Petrowski, you might put your first name and initial and maybe some numbers (eg. anton85p). You will need to use a password with at least 8 characters (more secure passwords use letters, numbers and special characters, eg. 1up#\*~@8). You will also be asked for the Intergroup (or group) you are associated with.

Please remember that use of this forum is limited to members of S.L.A.A., and we endeavor to treat the forum as a closed meeting. We welcome your contributions, as long as they are considerate, respectful and collaborative in nature.

If you have any issues, contact us at [admin@slaa.network](mailto:admin@slaa.network)







## **CONFERENCE TRANSLATION AND INTERNATIONAL OUTREACH COMMITTEE**



**Are you a member of S.L.A.A. who speaks another language?  
Are you willing to translate S.L.A.A. Conference-approved literature?**

**We are looking for bilingual S.L.A.A. members who are fluent in the following languages:  
Hindi, Urdu, Chinese, Finnish, Japanese, Korean, Russian, Arabic, Romanian, Vietnamese,  
Thai, Greek, Turkish, Bengali, Persian, Mandarin, Indonesian etc...**

**If you are interested in carrying the message of recovery to the suffering sex  
and love addict in their own language, please contact the Conference Translation and  
International Outreach Committee at:**

**<https://slaafws.org/committee/ctioc>  
or e-mail [slaa.ctioc@gmail.com](mailto:slaa.ctioc@gmail.com)**

# Subscribe to the Quarterly F.W.S. Newsletter



Augustine Fellowship 1550 NE Loop 410 Suite 118 San Antonio, TX 78209  
Phone: 1-210-828-7900 Fax: 1-210-828-7922

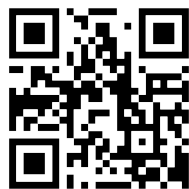
***FELLOWSHIP-WIDE SERVICES has a quarterly online newsletter.***

Find out about new literature, new tools for recovery on the F.W.S. website, what happened at the Annual Business Meeting, what is going on with F.W.S. finances, and more. There are 4 issues plus a special ABM Edition, totaling 5 issues per year.

***Subscribing is easy.***

Text FWSNEWS to 42828

Or Visit <https://slaafws.org/fwsnewsinfo>



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Please Consider Joining the  
**Board of Trustees (BOT)**  
Or nominate someone you know



### **Board Candidate Requirement per the By-Laws**

- ✓ Have three years of continuous, self-defined sobriety in S.L.A.A.  
(Non-S.L.A.A. members can be on the Board of Trustees; see below\*)

### **Board Candidate Ideally...**

- ✓ Served as a Conference Delegate for at least one year
- ✓ Works well in a group dynamic
- ✓ Have a functional understanding of group conscience
- ✓ Have skills and abilities valuable to the organization
- ✓ Have a working knowledge of the 12 Steps and the 12 Traditions of S.L.A.A.
- ✓ Have worked through at least Step Seven
- ✓ Have experience in S.L.A.A. service at the Intergroup or Conference level

### **Expectations of Trustees**

- ✓ Travel to the Annual Business Conference/Meeting (ABC/M) (approximately seven days) each summer during their term to participate in Board meetings, three days before and one day after the ABC/M (expenses paid)
- ✓ Are willing to participate in a minimum of six 3-hour regular Board Conference calls and six 2-hour interim Conference calls, plus BOT Committee meetings, many email discussions, and liaise with several Conference committees
- ✓ Have at least 20-30 hours per month available for BOT service
- ✓ Are willing to commit to a three-year term

### **\*Non-S.L.A.A. Board Candidate Ideally...**

- ✓ Knows and loves the S.L.A.A. Fellowship as it has helped family, friends, or clients
- ✓ Have a specialized skill in areas such as legal, financial, or business
- ✓ Bring an added perspective being outside the S.L.A.A. Program

### **Please Let Us Know**

If you are interested in serving or know anyone who might, please contact the S.L.A.A. Board Development Committee (BDC) at [slaafws.org/bdc](http://slaafws.org/bdc).

## Guidelines and Deadlines for Submissions

The following guidelines are helpful when submitting service articles, reports and flyers to the **F.W.S. Newsletter**:

- The mission of the **F.W.S. Newsletter** is to publish items related to S.L.A.A. service and business, the Conference and the Conference Committees, the F.W.S. Office, and the Board of Trustees news; and, to share this information as widely as possible in order to keep members around the world up-to-date with the Fellowship.
- Make submissions in a .doc or .docx file, with the exception of flyers created for specific events or requests.
- Remember to maintain anonymity by using first name and last initial.
- Place periods between the initials in the fellowship name in written material that is made public: **S.L.A.A.**
- The newsletter is not a recovery-oriented publication per se and not to be confused with the *Journal*, which publishes articles of recovery.
- Use the following email address for submissions: <https://slaafws.org/fwsnews-submit>

### **Deadlines for Submissions are Sundays:**

**2021 February 21 – March Issue**

**2021 May 16 – June Issue**

**2021 August 22 – September Issue**

**2021 November 21 – December Issue**

Please feel free to ask questions, make suggestions and become part of the international community of S.L.A.A. You can contact the editor at: <https://slaafws.org/fwsnews-submit>.