

What's in A Name: F.W.S. and S.L.A.A.?

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Approved by the CTS/WebTeam/BOT November 2009

Recently the Board of Trustees (BOT) in their fiduciary duties of The Augustine Fellowship, S.L.A.A., Fellowship-Wide Services, Inc non-profit corporation has begun the difficult task of reviewing and contacting members/groups/Intergroups about the use of copyrighted S.L.A.A. literature and trademark.

The BOT is grateful to all members, groups, Intergroups and Conference members in their public outreach efforts to carry the message to the suffering sex and love addict. We support these activities and yet we have the responsibility to speak as one voice in the name of unity from the official website of S.L.A.A. and the F.W.S. Office.

The Web Team has also been reviewing and updating documents such as the *Local Website Guidelines* and three others about copying, printing, distributing and translating copyrighted S.L.A.A. literature. These are now posted on the F.W.S. S.L.A.A. website under All Downloads. It is hoped these guidelines will help members as they form new websites, groups and Intergroups as well as use S.L.A.A. materials either on a website or in print.

In addition a Copyright-Translations Subcommittee of the Board Finance and Operating Committee was formed in September with two attorneys; one specializing in copyright/trademarks, to guide the BOT in the protection of the intellectual property of the organization. This property on the one hand carries the unified message of hope and recovery to the addict as well as represents the livelihood of the organization in terms of financial support.

We are encouraging all websites and groups/Intergroups to differentiate themselves from the F.W.S. S.L.A.A. website and corporate name by adding something to their name. This is in an effort to distinguish that name/group/Intergroup from the official S.L.A.A. site. The name could be as simple as the addition of group or meeting or initials of the Intergroup to the SLAA name; eg. slaanoi.org.

While it would be great to come up with a rule, trademarks are funny that way. No sooner do you articulate a rule than something pops up to challenge the rule. F.W.S. S.L.A.A. is the trademark owner, with limited prosecutorial resources, and the BOT has the responsibility to decide whose infringement is troublesome enough to do something about.

The attorney specializing in copyright/trademarks pointed out that trademark rights in this country arise from use, not registration. Registration provides "some legal protection" but use provides the most especially for small non-profit organizations like F.W.S.

The BOT requests your consideration, and consultation with F.W.S. when in doubt, about using the S.L.A.A. name as well as the use of a disclaimer indicating that the website does not speak on behalf of S.L.A.A. as a whole.

Finally, new groups/Intergroups are asked to fill out a Registration Form and submit to F.W.S. Office for listing on the F.W.S. website directory/list of meetings. These forms are also on the F.W.S. website.

For more information please contact <http://www.slaafws.org/contact/General+Questions>; or contact the F.W.S. Office at +1 210 828-7900 or fax +1 210 828-7922 or mail 1550 NE Loop 410 Ste 118 San Antonio TX 78209.