

Christopher D., BOT Member.

I'm Chris and I'm recovering from sex and love addiction. I have been a grateful, sober member of S.L.A.A. since 1991 and of A.A. since 1978.

I am finishing my fourth and final year on the S.L.A.A. Board of Trustees, but service for me started as soon as I entered S.L.A.A. This service has included work at the group, Intergroup, and, as now, the international service levels. I learned in A.A. that the most effective, and perhaps only, way to stay sober was to be of service. I know that when I was new, part of me hoped that if I did service, somehow the pain of withdrawal would decrease. I did feel better after a period of time.

There are several reasons I do service now. First, I get to give back a bit and hopefully help another sick and suffering person become sane through the 12 Steps and 12 Traditions. More importantly, service helps to keep me connected to the program. If I have an upcoming service commitment, the idea of acting out seems further removed. That's been very helpful.

A question about service has been asked: what do the Conference, Conference Committees, Board of Trustees, and Fellowship-Wide Services do and what are their goals? A full answer is impossible in this article. However, in broad terms, these entities work together and individually to pass on the message of hope to the sick and suffering sex and love addict. Needless to say, it takes a lot of people to write and publish the S.L.A.A. Basic Text, pamphlets, F.W.S. Newsletter, and to create, produce, and sell merchandise such as tokens and CDs. Where this gets tricky is determining the responsibility of each of these entities and how they specifically fulfill the 12th Step and 5th Tradition.

The Conference consists of Conference members from around the world who attend and participate in the Annual Business Meeting (ABM). Decisions are made at the ABM that affects the Fellowship as a whole. Conference members include delegates representing specific S.L.A.A. groups, F.W.S. staff, the *Journal* editor, and Trustees. To make this system workable, each delegate is a member of Conference Committees. Conference Committees meet via conference calls throughout the year, working to achieve the goals set at the ABM.

Every non-profit organization like S.L.A.A. is required by law to have a Board of Trustees (BOT). The S.L.A.A. BOT is made up of S.L.A.A. members and non-members (who have a strong belief in and understanding of S.L.A.A.). There can be nine BOT members, but it is rare that all BOT spots are filled. In addition to attending the ABM, the BOT meets approximately eight times per year via conference calls for three hours to discuss and vote on the business of the Fellowship. Furthermore, each BOT member is a member of a BOT committee which meets separately by conference call once or twice a month. Lots of additional communication occurs between the eight teleconferences and BOT committee meetings.

Fellowship-Wide Services (F.W.S.) is an office located in San Antonio, TX (formerly Norwood, MA), which is where our General Manager and staff work. These are the only paid employees of the Fellowship. The office has many responsibilities, one of which is selling literature and merchandise. F.W.S. staff also help some Conference and BOT committees with their work, depending on the staff's availability.

As stated above, the broad goal of the Conference, Conference Committees, BOT, and F.W.S. is to bring the message of hope to the sick and suffering sex and love addict. That

message was brought to me and is being brought to others on a daily basis. How that can be best accomplished is through continued personal work on the Twelve Steps and continued following of the Twelve Traditions, to the best of all of our abilities.

My time on the BOT has included moving the F.W.S. office from Norwood, MA, to San Antonio, TX, several changes in staff, dealing with low contributions from members, and communication challenges. I have felt fear, shame, and resentment while working as a BOT member. I have also felt loved, respected, and extremely grateful. Although it has been stressful and very time-consuming, I have not acted out while on the BOT and I have learned a lot about myself. My career has even expanded a bit as a result of what I learned about myself while on the BOT.

I encourage anyone who is serious about getting through withdrawal and developing a sane life to consider service in S.L.A.A. Most important, if you have questions about the S.L.A.A. service structure, invest in your recovery enough to ASK THOSE QUESTIONS and get involved! Asking questions about the S.L.A.A. service structure is also a form of service. I'm not speaking as an expert. I just know that service has worked for me since I crawled through the doors of S.L.A.A.