

1st EDITION 2010

# NEWSLETTER



SURVIVORS OF INCEST ANONYMOUS  
WORLD SERVICE OFFICE  
P.O. Box 190  
Benson, MD 21018  
(410) 893-3322  
[www.siawso.org](http://www.siawso.org)  
<http://siawso.flyingcart.com>

**HAPPY 28<sup>th</sup> BIRTHDAY SIA**



**28 years helping survivors thrive!**

## HIGHER POWER

### MISSION STATEMENT:

We empower those who have survived child sexual abuse (who are not abusing any child), who want to become survivors and thrivers. Using our experience, strength and hope, we do this by:

- offering referrals to SIA, self-help, support groups
- providing information to start SIA groups, intergroups, and national service offices
- creating and distributing SIA information tools (literature, newsletter, electronic media)
- offering a speakers' bureau
- guiding SIA's public information efforts worldwide

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### RECOVERY WORK

### LINDA'S THOUGHTS

***As always, take what you like and leave the rest.***

### HAPPINESS

The United States is a pleasure-seeking culture. Many believe that "whoever has the most toys, wins". But, is this true? And does winning consist of having "things"?

Does happiness come from getting what we want or enjoying what we have? If it comes from getting what we want, it will always be elusive. I can always want more. And, what is sad is that our happiness would then be dependent on outside circumstances. We can't always control outside circumstances, but we can control our attitudes and what we do with the hand we've been dealt. Now, that's power!

Some equate happiness with lack of pain. Again, with this perspective outside circumstances dictate our levels of happiness. And no one gets out of this life without pain, yet some people are happy in spite of their pain. It's all about how we choose to think about the abuse. By controlling our attitude, our thoughts, we can put the abuse in its proper perspective, meaning that the abuser was 100% responsible for what s/he did. Thoughts produce feelings, so we will begin to feel what we know to be true – that children are innocent, and children don't cause pedophilia.

What does a loving Higher Power think about happiness? *I don't think S/He is as much interested in our comfort as S/He is interested in the growth of our character.* So, if happiness isn't dependent on our comfort or our circumstances, a loving Higher Power is more concerned about what we take from an experience. What does it mean about us that we were abused? Do we continue to carry the shame when we no longer have to carry it?

Does this mean that a loving Higher Power gave us horrific histories filled with trauma and betrayal to build character? Not my loving Higher Power! It means that my loving Higher Power put us in a world where everyone has free will for better or worse. Christine, my mother/perpetrator, carries the responsibility for what she did. But, I don't think God wastes anything. S/He can bring good out of any situation, even child sexual abuse. If we are willing to search for it and make ourselves ready for the goodness of God to work in us. In spite of our circumstances, we can be healthy, happy people.

### 12<sup>TH</sup> STEP WORK

When I do good, I feel good. By taking my pain and using it to help others, I have cooperated with my loving Higher Power and together, we can turn it around. There's no greater feeling to know that my pain wasn't useless. It didn't destroy me, and I have the ability to help others *because* I was abused.

\*\*\* SIA provides an opportunity to help others while we help ourselves.

I believe my Higher Power helps us to control our inside world. *Happiness is an inside job.* How? By concentrating on what we have to be grateful for. By asking a loving Higher Power to help us heal from what this did to our minds, our sense of safety in this world, our sense of worthiness.

Happiness isn't a destination it's a direction. It's not where we're going; it's how we get there. Although it isn't easy to take responsibility for our thoughts, our feelings and thereby our healing – it is the only way we will heal.

**Be gentle with yourself,**

Linda D.

Co-founder/Executive Director

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See you at the rescheduled SIA retreat!

Linda's Keynote speech can be ordered for \$20.00 plus \$2.00 S/H

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### LETTER TO A PERP

So many years seem to divide us. I feel as though I am still on that bed. You were supposed to be my safety, but you were a shadow in the night. How much did you ask of me? All of me? Just my soul? And I hope my rage gets a voice. I said "no more". You cringed. It was a blow to your pride. How could one of your passions escape! Had you not groomed me so perfectly in your delicious way? But I knew better. You were never my master. I could own my own fate. I could stand in nature as her blessed child. You would have me enfolded in those leaves you thought you grew around me; your precious one. But I knew better. You could not take the breath of life from me. You were not my wife, my girl, my woman—my equal. You were a ghost. And I hate you. I hate you with all the love in my heart. I despise what you have done. Yes, God loves you, but He makes no excuses for you. He pities your soul. He is the one with the final say. And I will move on, I am moving on. I can admire nature and all her sensual growth. I can grow into my own adulthood, unhindered by your snakeskin grasp. I loath your breasts, your skin, that awful vagina you thrust into my sun. My sun! My life! My own brilliance! Not Yours. Not Yours. Not Yours.

You can not eat away at my soul. You will never ever devour the beauty I possess. And I can be my Romeo. I can sing MY Way and be my own Old Blue eyes. And I have eyes to shine. Eyes not for you, not blinded by your vacuum you called love. And so I hate you. I hate what you have taken. I have romance that is not about you. I am the hero in my tale—and I am strong. I am the stallion riding valiantly beneath the stars. And I have peace. I have courage. I am a gentle wave bringing love to shore. But I can crash, and I must break these stones scattered in my way. I am off to the heavens, off to the places I should be. I see my happiness, and it is not

with you! You are not in that picture. Will I ever forgive you? That does not matter. I forgive myself. It was never my fault. You were the villain. Children are as pure as crystal in the skylight—never to be shamed or killed by blame. And so I take my power back. Go away, you evil spirit. You piece of nothingness in flesh. You have no place in my home. This is my Haven, and these are my friends. And we don't trust you. All my children despise what you have done. My rage is raw and palpable. And I will not die beneath it. I will not kill myself for you. I put my hands in God. I let Him be my guide. Though He may Love you, he hates what you have done.

Phil G.

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### My Higher Power

Its been nearly 20 years since I first contacted SIA. I was fresh out of a cult that had abused me for 17 years. I was sexually abused by my mother from early childhood to nearly adolescence, but I had so buried the experience in shame and denial that I was easy prey for a destructive cult run by an elderly woman who went by the nickname "Ma". Her second-in-command went by the nickname "Pa". They came on like parents, but it was really a dysfunctional family which suppressed sexuality and demanded total obedience to their every whim. Over the years they became meaner and meaner. They tried to destroy every shred of individuality in me. It was horrible.

I still feel echoes of the cult, but the experience has faded over the years and now it is rare that I even have dreams about it. But the incest experience still bothers me. I have to remember to turn over my recovery to my Higher Power. But I still feel that I need to "fix" myself, to make myself "whole."

But I AM whole! Even now, though, sexuality is something that I cannot deal with. I don't want to share myself sexually with anyone. I have a lot of guilt that makes me a selfish person, but I can't help it. It's just the way I'm wired from the incest. I'm powerless over the incest, but it doesn't mean that I have to feel guilty about it. I turn over the guilt and the powerlessness to my Higher Power.

I was also sexually abused as a teenager by a dermatology nurse. So I get triggered in medical situations. It's still something I wrestle with, and it makes me feel dirty and second-class every time I go to the doctor. Again I have to turn over the guilt and shame to my Higher Power. Doing so allows me to get centered and able to go to medical appointments without feeling attacks of anxiety and shame. But it still feels weird in the doctor's or nurse's office. I was incested in private, so "private" itself is triggering. My Higher Power helps me over the triggers, but it is still hard.

Higher Power has become a tremendously important aspect of my recovery. For many years I couldn't even talk about Higher Power, since I had been religiously abused for so many years. The word "God" was toxic and made me angry. The word "Buddha", though, did not have the same effect on me, so I took Buddha as my Higher Power. It's not like I go to Buddhist meetings, burn incense, and bow before statues of the Buddha. I don't. To me, Buddha means an invisible but powerful presence in my life to which I can turn over all my feelings of guilt, shame, and inferiority, and to which I place my trust. It is something that is hard for me to explain, but Buddha means Compassion in a way that, for me, God does not. Where was God when I was

being abused in the cult in God's name? I was being abused and exploited in the NAME of God. I was even told by the cult leader that God hated me. I still can't think about God without feeling anger and betrayal. Thank God for Buddha! (I have to have a sense of humor about all this. If I take it all too seriously, it will be a disaster!) I've stopped fighting my Higher Power. I now surrender to my Higher Power, call it Buddha or whatever. Without my Higher Power I can't heal all by myself. So I've learned to trust my Higher Power, which I've come to define in terms that are very meaningful to me.

I feel a great load has lifted from me by doing so. I don't have to depend just on visits to my therapist. My therapist is great, but my Higher Power is greater, much greater and always there when I am alone and need help. I can't call my therapist in the middle of the night, but I can "call" my Higher Power any time, day or night. And the SIA program keeps me mindful of my need for my Higher Power. SIA was there for me when it seemed like the whole world was against me, when I had to "reach up to touch bottom." I'll never forget and always be thankful that SIA was there when I needed it most and when I was just at the beginning of this long road called recovery. Thank you, SIA!

Rick S.

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#### **DO YOU HAVE TALENT?**

The WSO is looking for poetry, artwork or recovery articles to include in the next Newsletter. Please send them to: SIA, PO Box 190, Benson, MD 21018.

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**ORDER YOUR LITERATURE TODAY!**

All literature orders are caught up every week, except when we have 2 blizzards in less than 2 weeks! So, if your groups needs to order literature, now is the time. Thanks Lee for working tirelessly so all can get their literature in a reasonable amount of time.

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**ACCESS LITERATE?**

The WSO needs volunteers to help with Access. If you have any knowledge, please email *Becky* at [hrrsgart@zoominternet.net](mailto:hrrsgart@zoominternet.net)

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**DID YOU GET THE 3<sup>RD</sup> & 4<sup>TH</sup> NEWSLETTER?**

Speaking of glitches in Access, if you or your group didn't receive the 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> Newsletter 2009, please call the office 410-893-3322. The # button by passes the long answering machine message. Leave A COMPLETE ADDRESS WHERE YOU'D LIKE IT SENT. Thanks and we apologize for the error.

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Do you want to be on the following World Service Committees?

- Literature**
- Finance**
- Outreach**
- Conference committee**  
(by-laws and planning 2010)
- Group Concerns**

*If so, please contact Elias at [ecolombotos@yahoo.com](mailto:ecolombotos@yahoo.com)*

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**MARK YOUR CALENDARS**

**NOTE: The Mid-Atlantic Retreat was cancelled because of bad weather. It was rescheduled:**

April 16 – 18, 2010  
CELEBRATE SPRING!!

New location: 30 mins. from Philadelphia, accessible from airport, public transportation. See enclosed flyer for details or call 215-925-4002.

**APRIL 17, 2010  
Woman's Enrichment Workshop**

Equine Assisted Learning  
Time: Registration (coffee, juice, and bagels)

8:30am to 9am  
Begins 9am - 12noon

Fee: \$65 per person

Location: Creative Growth Center  
9N755 Nesler Road Elgin IL 60124  
[www.creativegrowthcenter.com](http://www.creativegrowthcenter.com)

To Register please contact: Creative Growth Center

847.888.4347

[creativegrowthctr@sbcglobal.net](mailto:creativegrowthctr@sbcglobal.net)

Description: A self discover and enrichment workshop for women using equine (horse) assisted learning. NO HORSE EXPERIENCE NECESSARY.

Requirements: Closed toed shoes, jeans or pants, no dangling jewelry. Please dress in layers for weather.

**August 6 – 8, 2010**

**World Service Conference**

See enclosed flyer for more information.

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**WE CONTINUE TO GROW**

We would like to welcome the following new groups to our SIA family:

**ARKANSAS:**

Ash Flat, Thursday 6:30pm:

**CALIFORNIA:**

Beverly Hills-Survivors Becoming Thrivors,  
Saturday 1:00pm

Julian-Julian SIA

1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, & 4<sup>th</sup> Thursdays 7:00pm

Pasadena-Monday Night Meeting

Monday 7:30pm

**ILLINOISE:**

Downer's Grove, Tuesday 7:00pm

Elgin, Wednesday 7:30pm

**MASSACHUSETTS:**

Brookline-Friday Night Healers

Friday 7:00pm

**MICHIGAN:**

Ann Arbor-Step Study

Thursday 7:00pm

**NEW HAMPSHIRE:**

Effingham-Lakes Region SIA

Saturday 3:00pm

**NEW YORK:**

Montgomery, Monday 7:00 pm

Riverhead-East End SIA

Sunday 6:30pm

**OHIO:**  
*Orwell-There is Hope*  
Tuesday 5:30

**TENNESSEE:**  
*Nashville-Healing Sisters*  
Thursday 7:00pm  
Nashville, Thursday 6:00pm

**THE NETHERLANDS:**  
Amsterdam, Thursday 8:00pm

**TEXAS:**  
*Dallas-SIADFW*  
Monday 7:00pm

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**DID YOU KNOW?**

New groups can be added and old groups updated online? There are many more meetings in the hardcopy directory than the online directory? Does your meeting want to be listed online? Have you checked lately to see what your online listing says? Your meeting may be listed online but was never listed in the hardcopy directory or vice versa. You may have registered your meeting initially online but never followed through and set your privacy settings; therefore survivors looking for a meeting online cannot see your listing. All of this can be accomplished quite efficiently by going to [SIASO.org](http://SIASO.org) and following the steps. If you have any questions please email Becky at [hrgart@zoominternet.net](mailto:hrgart@zoominternet.net)

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**FREE via EMAIL!!**  
**QUARTERLY NEWSLETTERS**  
**RETREAT INFO**  
**NEW LITERATURE**

The SIA World Service Office has created a low-volume, announcement-only mailing list to share news within the fellowship. Items sent out over this list will include retreat information, notification of events, the quarterly newsletter, and more. Your email address will be kept strictly confidential, and you may unsubscribe at any time.

To be added to SIA's mailing list, please send an email to:  
[siawso+subscribe@googlegroups.com](mailto:siawso+subscribe@googlegroups.com)

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**FROM THE TREASURER**  
**SPECIAL THANKS to the donors who financed a booklet maker! With it, we're getting a free**

older photocopier. It's used but the price is a good one! Our printing costs have been one of our biggest expenses so this will help the World Service Office function more efficiently.

When was the last time your **group or intergroups** donated to the World Service Office? If every **individual in each group**, sent in a \$10.00 tax deductible donation, we'd probably be able to pay the rent for an entire year!! **Any amount**, large or small, will be greatly appreciated!!

Your group may consider **passing the basket a second time** or have a **special container** for donations to the WSO.

**SPECIAL THANKS** to the following groups that donated in the last 3 months. The WSO is extremely grateful for their financial support:

**CALIFORNIA:** \* *San Jose CA-087*;

**ENGLAND:** \*\*\**London*

**MARYLAND:** Fallston Thursday; Fallston Thursday

**NEW YORK:** White Plains; Rochester; Brooklyn; NY City #151;

**PHONE MEETING:** 2 donations

**PENNSYLVANIA:** Philadelphia Tues. PA Hospital; Thursday Philadelphia Charter Fairmont;

**TEXAS:** Corsicana; Houston;

- \* \$100 or more
- \*\* \$200 or more
- \*\*\* \$300 or more

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**THANKS FOR TAKING THE TIME**

We've gotten lots of responses to our question about changing the SIA name, and the letter concerning the decision by the board to officially state that all meetings are "no perpetrator", past or present, meetings for legal and safety reasons. There's still time to make comments by sending an email to:

[edleparr01@comcast.net](mailto:edleparr01@comcast.net)

We'll include a synopsis of your comments in the next Newsletter.

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**RECOVERY MEDALLIONS AND LITERATURE  
ON SALE**

Visit <http://siawso.flyingcart.com> for more details!

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**VOLUNTEERS – MOST APPRECIATED**

**We love volunteers** at the World Service Office. General office work is needed. If you can get to Exit 74 off of I-95, we would love to have you help out. **If you can volunteer once**, we can use the help! Please call 410.893.3322 and leave a message for Linda. (The # button by-passes the long answering machine message.)

**Thank you!**

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**Looking for Help Chairing a Meeting?**

Why not use SIA literature to start the meeting? There's a wealth of wonderful, healing information in our literature.

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**DID YOU MOVE? DID YOUR AREA CODE OR  
PHONE NUMBER CHANGE?**

If so, please notify us so we can save on postage, and survivors will be able to find your group.

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**MATCHING GIFT?  
AUTOMATIC DEDUCTION?  
DONATIONS FOR YOUR TIME?**

Does your employer have a matching gift policy? When you send in \$50.00, your employer will match it. So, **your \$50.00 donation becomes \$100.00!** Please check it out.

Does your employer have automatic deductions for non-profits? If so, please consider **designating SIA World Service Office as the beneficiary.**

☺**Thank you** for anything you can do to help!

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