

# SOS International Newsletter



Jim Christopher

## Save Our Selves 21st Anniversary Conference Will Bring SOS Internet Friends Together

by Jim Christopher, SOS Founder

The past few months have been rife with challenges for yours truly; my mother died and I've undergone two cataract surgeries, among other things. My twenty-eighth year of freedom from alcohol/drugs swiftly approaches (sobriety date: April 24, 1978). In all this time I've not experienced what I refer to as the "Pavlovian Pull" or associations coupled with cravings. Why? Because I experienced personal April showers back in '78, or what I've come to call "Feel the Real." This cognitive-visceral synchronization, if you will, allowed me an eye-opener to top all my previous half-assed eye-openers in that my head and gut fused in an unimpeded moment of truth about my real life as an active addict and I became willing to *take any action necessary* in order to escape my painful addiction nightmare. I felt the pain of my horrific state and wanted no more of it, no matter what. Thus I reclaimed my natural, albeit damaged, survival system and have benefited from the unpickled core of my being ever since, come what may.

So in times of stress or sorrow, or any other feelings about my lot in life, I see my escape from booze and drugs, my primal life saving state—my sobriety priority—as a separate issue from all else in my life and times.

Mine is not the only anniversary at hand; the 21st century, 2006, marks 21 years of service by SOS. As Founder, I'm enthused about our forthcoming International Conference with a twist: SOS Internet Friends will meet face-to-face for the first time in a place where people dare to dream: Hollywood, California (see conference ad, page 3).

Duaine Metevia, SOS International Webmaster ([www.sossobriety.org](http://www.sossobriety.org)), will host our November 18th



Photo by ArchieTucker.com

Dr. Paul Kurtz (r) visits Jim Christopher, SOS Founder, at the weekly Hollywood, CA SOS meeting, Wednesday night, February 15, 2006, Center for Inquiry West, home of SOS International. Dr. Kurtz, a long-time supporter of SOS, Chairman, Center for Inquiry Transnational (Amherst, New York), recently celebrated his eightieth birthday (December 21, 2005) on which occasion Jim sent Paul Kurtz the following message:

Paul's continuing exuberant support of SOS throughout the years has allowed thousands of individuals to reclaim their lives in Secular Organizations for Sobriety when they were literally dying in Alcoholics Anonymous.

Dr. Paul Kurtz' initial support made the SOS movement a living reality. In accepting my article, "Sobriety Without Superstition" for publication in *FREE INQUIRY* in 1985, Paul introduced the world to a new, heretofore stifled, voice in addiction recovery.

Paul, it is with heartfelt gratitude that I wish you a very Happy Birthday, and thank you for making my dream a living reality!

Sincerely  
Jim Christopher  
Founder and Executive Director of SOS International

International Conference along with yours truly and representatives from numerous SOS e-support groups. Also, Duaine has authored a book and extensive excerpts appear in this issue of the SOS newsletter (see page 2). Enjoy!

# Building Recovery

## *A newcomer's guide to SOS*

by Duaine Metevia

Selected Excerpts

### **Importance of Recovery Plans**

Some kind of plan is important because it gives urgency to the process. It's all too easy to put it off until tomorrow, and tomorrow has a way of stretching out to weeks, months and years.

There are ready-made plans that some groups have to offer, and they do work for some people. They also don't fit many others.

A recovery plan that has a good chance of success is one tailored just for you. It can be adjusted to work when something unexpected happens. It also can be changed when it's not working.

A recovery plan should work. If it isn't working, then a new or modified plan needs to be formed.

In SOS we share what we have put in our recovery plans.

There is a strength that comes from sharing what you're planning on using as a recovery plan. By putting it into words you are able to sort out your plan's strengths and weakness. Often we find that we think we have a very concrete recovery plan, but when it comes time to talk about it or explain it, the words just aren't there.

Often it takes explaining it and putting it into words for it to truly take form.

A meeting can be a good starting point in putting together a plan.

The very nature of an SOS meeting brings out personal strengths and weaknesses. Letting you talk about where you are brings out your "Personal Recovery Plan."

### **What is a "Personal Recovery Plan"?**

It's something that you work out for yourself.

It's not something others have worked out for themselves and you took from them word for word.

This is SOS—Save Our Selves. You are in the driver's seat. You are the one who will become the master of your ship, and this is the first step in that direction.

Sitting back and letting others do it for you is temporary and only works as long as you have others willing to take on that job.

As soon as you are alone and things change, you may need a recovery program that is flexible enough that you can make changes as you go. You may not have the skills to adapt and change your own personal recovery plan, or you may be lost because you allowed yourself to become dependent on others to do the things for you. It's the goal of SOS to support you in becoming a self-sufficient, independent person.

### **How to Create a "Personal Recovery Plan"**

How do I go about telling you how to create your own personal recovery plan?

If it's your "Recovery Plan" then you will have to figure it out for yourself or it isn't yours.

Do we throw you out in the deep end of the pool?

Sink or swim?

Up the creek without a paddle?

Well it's almost like that but not to such an extreme. We do have support groups that you can use to find what's just right for you by interacting with others to fine tune your "Personal Recovery Plan."

### **SOS Face-to-Face Meetings:**

In an SOS support group you will be able to talk about your needs and where you want to go in your new life.

Sharing this with others will bring out your recovery plan naturally, it happens with very little effort in many cases. If it doesn't happen naturally and easily then you can ask the group for help to get you started.

That's the key to much of the help you get in forming your personal recovery plan, you only want help to get you started. You don't want the total plan laid out for you by the group.

It's your plan and the group should give you the opportunity to work out the details.

### **Internet Support:**

We have Internet support groups with members from around the world. What a great place to develop a personal recovery program!

You can post your thoughts and needs to the group and get feed back. These groups are familiar with SOS and how it works. They know you are here for support and looking for suggestions.

What other SOS members can do is tell you about their diverse personal recovery programs and you will see that there is nothing written in stone. They develop what's right for them and change their personal recovery plan as time and circumstances dictate.

### **Detox Center:**

If you're in a "Detox Center" there are people around you that you can bounce thoughts about your personal recovery program with.

A small warning about bouncing your ideas off people who don't understand the importance of helping you get started and "you" taking over building the momentum to come up with a program that's just right for you. Something you can be proud of:

People who don't understand the process of being personally involved in putting it together can sometimes get in the way.

They can be very caring people who just don't understand that this is something that is the most important thing you can do in reclaiming your life and living the rest of your life alcohol/drug free.

### **Friends and Family:**

Friends and family can be a positive place to get help and support in putting together your personal recovery plan because they have so much invested in you and want to see you succeed.

They can easily take a quick read of this chapter and support your need to do most of the work yourself.

*Building Recovery, cont'd. on p. 4*

**SOS International / Secular Organizations for Sobriety / Save Our Selves**

**“SOS 2006: 21 Years of Service in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century!”**

PRESENTS

**SOS INTERNET FRIENDS  
FACE-TO-FACE 2006  
INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE**



**Saturday, November 18 — 10 AM - 4 PM  
Steve Allen Theater, Center for Inquiry–West  
4773 Hollywood Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90027**

Hosted by **Duaine Metevia**, SOS International Webmaster ([www.sossobriety.org](http://www.sossobriety.org)) and **Jim Christopher**, Founder, SOS International; and SOS E-support Group Representatives

**REGISTRATION IS FREE!**

SOS Internet Friends from around the world will meet face-to-face in Hollywood! Registration is **FREE** for this exciting conference/workshop to be held one day only in the Steve Allen Theater, Center for Inquiry–West, home of SOS International. **There is NO CHARGE for this special event, registration is FREE.**

**ALL SOS FRIENDS ARE INVITED!**

SOS Internet Friends from across the globe will share from the podium, onstage, in the famed Steve Allen Theater, with folks they've conversed with online over the years and, of course, our SOS in-person group members, our friends from Women for Sobriety, SMART Recovery, and other support groups—who have a friendly working relationship with SOS International—will also actively participate. Supportive treatment professionals in the addictive disorders will attend and provide updates regarding their individual cutting-edge projects, including:

- DR. RANDOLPH ATKINS**, Ph.D., Research Scientist, The Walsh Group, Bethesda, MD
- DR. JOHN LANGROD**, Ph.D., ACSW, Director of Admissions and Evaluation, Albert Einstein College of Medicine of Yeshiva University, Bronx, NY; Member, SOS International Advisory Board
- BARRY SOLOF**, M.D., Fellow, American Society of Addiction Medicine; Regional Chief, Kaiser Permanente, Los Angeles, CA; Member, SOS International Advisory Board

**SOS Internet Friends Face-To-Face 2006 Agenda**

Registration and Mingle: 9:30 AM–10 AM • Conference/Workshops: 10 AM–12 NOON  
(Lunch on your own at popular area restaurants.) • Conference/Workshops, Wrap-up: 1 PM–4:30 PM

**NETWORK WITH FRIENDS IN RECOVERY FROM AROUND THE WORLD!**

- YES!! Sign me up for the FREE SOS INTERNET FRIENDS International Conference 2006!**
- Check here to receive a list of area restaurants and area lodging suggestions
- I'd like to help. Please accept my optional donation.** I prefer to pay by Mastercard Visa AMEX
- Check or money order to **SOS Conference** (payable in U.S. funds)

Account # \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_  
 Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Number Attending \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_ Daytime Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP/Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_ Country \_\_\_\_\_

Return to: **SOS Conference, 4773 Hollywood Blvd., Hollywood, CA 90027**  
 Phone: **(323) 666-4295** • Fax: **(323) 666-4271** • e-mail: [sos@cfiwest.org](mailto:sos@cfiwest.org)

### Getting Started on Your Personal Recovery Plan:

A personal recovery plan is about getting you strong.

It's a start in your becoming a whole, strong, self-sufficient person, who is able to leave the past harmful choices behind and make healthy, productive choices that will move you into a healthy, happy and productive life. Self-empowerment is you taking charge of yourself. Who better to have in charge than the person who wants the best for you?

Free of drugs/alcohol and the destructive thinking that comes with it, members now have what they need to reclaim their lives.

No one is more qualified than you to determine what the next step will be.

## Overview: Starting an SOS Meeting

### A Meeting in Action:

- The members of the group take their places. One moderator is used for most SOS meetings.
- A short reading, to set the mood that this is in fact an SOS meeting and the agenda is to focus on recovery, perhaps a reaffirmation of the SOS principles or something the group puts together. Perhaps this could be a group project?
- **For an SOS meeting to work it is essential that everyone must have an opportunity to speak.**

The size of the meeting determines how much time is given to each member. There must be enough time for each member to speak. If this first requirement isn't met, then changes need to be made.

If meetings are on a daily basis then the members who didn't get to talk at the last meeting will be the first to share at this meeting. If the meetings are held less than on a daily basis, then the issue of "everyone getting a chance to speak" needs to be addressed. This is a serious issue. A way needs to be found to make this work, and it's up to the group to find a way to make this happen.

- **To skip this important part of an SOS meeting is, in my opinion, to lose your SOS meeting before it ever gets a chance to get started.**
- Attention needs to be given to this very important issue of everyone having time to share.
- A group resolve should be put into action to make this a very important part of making the meeting work. Then and only then can we as a group move on to the next part of the meeting.

### Thoughts to Be Considered About Giving Each Person Time Are:

- Limiting the time each member has to speak even more.
- Splitting the group up into smaller units.
- Having more meetings.

Solutions have to be worked out to make this very important part of the meeting work before the meeting can move on to other issues.

Each person in the room is called on, and it would be preferable for that person to give a yes or no to the opportunity of sharing.

Your voicing that you don't want to share lets you hear your voice in an SOS meeting. In this small way it's easier for you to pull up a memory of something that was said at the meeting that may be of help to you in

the future.

- Members should share from where they are seated and not made to stand in front of the group to do their sharing. It should be made as easy and comfortable as possible for members to share.

As each member shares, one or more of the moderators will keep track of the time to make sure that everyone has a chance to share. If the group is large or the sharing by each member is too long, then you can address this early in the meeting.

A signal is given to let the member sharing know that he or she needs to wrap up. If there is time later, that person can expand on what he or she has to share. If this has to be done, then no one needs to be offended because everyone's time is limited. It's not personal; it's done for the group. We hope that each of you understands how important it is that this very important part of the meeting works within the time restraints that are in place.

- When a member of the group announces who he or she is, it's very tempting to chant a reply in unison.

In so many groups outside SOS this is the norm.

- This group is set apart, and it's my hope that an effort be made to not chant a reply at the beginning or the end of someone's sharing or to clap in support after someone shares.

It can be more respectful not to give a mindless reply.

- Is there a uniform introduction as each member takes his or her turn giving the same intro? I think that if this is happening then it needs to be looked at.
- This is a thinking group, not a group that gives a mindless reply or clapping after everyone speaks.
- Is the room focused on the person sharing?

If not then this needs to be addressed. Why move on with a meeting if each member isn't getting the respect of being heard? If side chatter is going on, the meeting may need to be stopped to address this issue.

- Is the person sharing using the first person, I—Me, or using—You—You Should—You need to?

I often catch myself doing this at a meeting, so it does and will happen. If it is brought to the attention of the person sharing in a caring and not a challenging way, then the person ought not to be offended.

## Group Etiquette

Everyone gets time to share. This is at the top of the list and the one thing that is never forgotten. Without this happening, a meeting must stop and find out what is causing this very important part of SOS from not happening. Then fix it so all the members get their time.

Treat each other with respect. Without respect, debate and crosstalk would not be possible, and SOS meetings need crosstalk and debate to work.

With respect for each other we can work through anything. It's the basis for debate and experimenting with new ideas.

What each of us does to get and stay alcohol/drug free belongs to us and may or may not work for others.

We share what works and refrain from judging other

members' thinking on recovery.

If it works for that person it should be applauded.

We have a great deal of debate and crosstalk in SOS, so members will have areas where they disagree. It's healthy to have disagreements because it's a part of being a freethinker. It's a part of growth and moving forward in life to take the time to learn to interact with people we don't completely agree with.

I believe SOS attracts people of diverse thinking and backgrounds who want a place to come where they don't have to sell out to groupthink or conform to some kind of group norm to fit in.

We may attack ideas and half-truths; we may not attack people. The people in an SOS meeting are treated with respect even if we are opposed to their ideas.

This is an Abstinence-support group with its focus on recovery.

No program is pushed on our members.

No members agenda is pushed on other members.

An example of an agenda is pushing a religious or nonreligious belief on others.

Another is pushing a political view on others in the group.

Another is trying to get the group to go along with some kind of moderation management program.

SOS is an Abstinence support group, and this message is repeated often.

## A Safe Place

### A Safe Place to Share:

How do I go about providing this safe place? I probably should start with myself. I realize that I am unique. I am one of a kind. No one has the same experiences or feelings that I do. If I share what I have done or would do if I were in another member's shoes and offer it in a sharing manner, then I probably am doing it the SOS way.

### A Safe Place to Escape From Those Who Want to Think for Us.

Maybe in the process I will go down a path that isn't healthy or right for me. I could also go down a path that's wrong for me by going down another's path. If I do something that is not helping in my recovery then I need to address it and make changes. This is how I learn. This is how I make living life drug/alcohol free a lifetime commitment. By having an active role in my recovery I will be in a better position to make changes as needed. My recovery will become stronger; it will gain in power and strength as time goes on. I will adapt and change as needed to maintain a lifelong commitment to sobriety.

Others do it differently. I'm the one who ultimately will take the responsibility of making it work so I feel I should be very active in the process of developing my working plan.

I need to look around and see if others in the group have the same safe feeling that I do. If I don't feel safe then I need to bring it to the attention of the group or moderators of the group. If I think others in the group don't feel safe then I need to bring it to the attention of the group or the moderators of the group. How can this work if other members or I don't feel safe?

It doesn't matter if I'm a moderator or not; it's still my responsibility as a member to make sure that each person is made to feel safe. By protecting other members from being criticized or attacked for the way they think, I will be insuring that, when it comes my turn, I will not stand alone in my beliefs that this must be a safe place for all of us.

In my recovery I will need to stand up for what I believe at some point, and there is no better place to do it, in my opinion, than in an SOS meeting.

Thank each and every one of you who has taken this course of action. SOS could not survive without you.

## Changing the Moderator—One Person Should Not Control the Group

One person should not control the group:

To safeguard our members from allowing a dictator to take over, we encourage in the strongest of terms that moderators be changed from time to time.

Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely.

Each SOS member will have a chance to moderate an SOS meeting.

A moderator doesn't have to pass a test or be certified. He or she only needs to understand SOS and care that each member gets his or her chance to share without criticism or fear.

We each get strength knowing our turn will be there if we want to take advantage of it and use it.

If one member doesn't let go of the title of moderator, then someone must step up and bring it up for debate. Why isn't the moderator letting go? Do mandatory time limits need to be put in place? If they do, these time limits shouldn't reward the current moderator and extend his or her time even more. We cannot let our group be taken over by any one person. This group belongs to each of us.

Great care must be taken not to have anyone in a place of power for an extended period of time.

## What to Expect (for the Newcomer)

The newcomer who visits an SOS meeting will find a slightly different experience depending on which group they visit.

Generally newcomers can expect to be given a choice of whether they want to share or not. Different groups do this in different ways.

One way of doing it is to have all the members tell a little about themselves to break the ice. This way the newcomer can get to know all the members.

This can become repetitive after a while for the regular members, so an alternative method would be to ask the newcomers if they want to share with the group what brought them to the SOS meeting and what they need from the group.

This method can get to the core of what the newcomer needs very quickly.

The group can then give input to the newcomer and help can be gotten very quickly.

After being at many meetings I prefer having the newcomer go first. I have seen a dramatic and fast connection using this approach.

The newcomer will usually be surprised by the amount of cross talk and focus that's put on them.

Then the newcomer will see a change in the meeting as the moderator explains that it's important for each person to get a chance to talk, share, and be heard.

The meeting changes and each person in the meeting takes time to talk about what's important at this time in his or her life.

Then after everyone has time, the focus returns to

the newcomer; and the remainder of the time is usually spent on that person.

Again different meetings may do their meetings in a different way than this.

The newcomer should at all meetings be given the choice to share or not and not be pressured to talk in the first few meetings. After a while if the newcomer still doesn't want to talk, then the group may become uncomfortable and a discussion of how to proceed will probably take place.

It's hard to hide in an SOS meeting for very long.

As time passes the newcomer is no longer the newcomer and the person's needs change.

This is where SOS has an advantage over other groups. We focus on planning and moving ahead with our lives. Because we are in the driver's seat we can grow and change and the group will still be a good fit.

It starts as a place to get support stopping a horrible choice we once made and becomes a place where we can share our vision for a life alcohol/drug free. A place to share our plans for that future. A place to grow beyond the day-to-day struggle with addiction and feel comfortable with who we are.

## Everyone In the Group Should Have a Chance to Share

This should be a very high priority. A signal can be decided in advance to enable every one the opportunity to talk by sometimes limiting the amount of time each member has to share. When the signal is given the person speaking should have a chance to wind up and conclude. The person can continue later if time allows. This is not a sign of disrespect. This is to make sure there is time for the entire group to have a chance to share. It's up to each member to use this time or not. It needs to be offered. This is very important. If this isn't done first it can get pushed into the background and other issues can take its place. It's easy to get sidetracked and because it does happen from time to time, extra efforts need to be put in place to ensure no one gets left out. This should be a place where not just the strong and powerful voices are heard, but all the voices have the same opportunity to be heard.

## Each Voice Will Be Given the Respect of Having the Group's Focus on the Person Speaking

Side chatter or other forms of disrespect will stop. I will help the group to protect the rights of each person at the meeting. I will give others the focus and respect that I hope to receive from the group. A meeting that doesn't give each person at the meeting a chance to share isn't working and something needs to change.

If the meeting is too large for everyone to share, then efforts need to be put in place to ensure that at the next meeting you start with those who didn't get a chance to share the last time. If some members of the group use all the group's time, then limits must be put in place on those members. If members don't feel safe in the group and have a fear about sharing, then the group must take a long, hard look at what needs to be done to make this a place where everyone in the group

can safely share.

## It Is of Great Importance That Each Person Have a Voice

After everyone speaks who wants to speak, then the floor can be opened up to discussion or other things the members have decided to use the time for, again using a signal to shorten each person's time in speaking. At your meeting you are free to use what works.

## Focus—Focus—Focus

I think this is how I see much of SOS. Focus, focus, and focus.

We have come together to focus on recovery and living a sober life.

We protect each other from the criticism of others who criticize our choices of how we each will make our recovery work and how each of us will live his or her life. I will not criticize another member's choice of recovery. I will do my best to stay out of running someone else's life.

## My Focus Is on My Life and My Recovery

If the focus of each member is on the main parts of SOS then the group can't go that far afield.

The group will be where it should be.

The problems seem to come about when other issues come into play, such as politics, religion, non-religion, moderation, quitting only one or two drugs at a time and promoting this idea at a meeting. Professionals—addiction specialists, addiction counselors and other professionals who deal with those who go to this type of meeting—who want to push their own agenda can be a problem. So can members of other groups who want to push their own agenda, members who want this group to fail for personal reasons, staff members in jails and prisons who want this to fail for personal reasons. The list can go on and on.

I know and now you know how an SOS meeting can go right. It goes right by staying focused on why we came together in the first place and not letting that focus get lost.

The focus is what matters.

The group and how a group is run will change with time.

The thing that won't change is that each member will have a chance to share.

Each member will have a safe place to develop his or her own plan of recovery.

Members will be free to develop their religious or nonreligious beliefs outside of the meetings without fear of other members turning the meeting into a recruiting ground to promote their religion or nonreligion at a meeting.

By keeping our focus our SOS group will evolve and we will learn as we go.

## There Is No Hidden Agenda

Our agenda is right up front, Support—Support—Support.

SOS is an Abstinence-Support group.

SOS is about *support*. We give *support* to members, family, friends, and anyone who can benefit from our

support group.

We're not about having a hidden *religious program*.

We're not about having a hidden *nonreligious program*.

We're not about having a hidden *political program*.

We're not about *moderation*.

We're not about having a *program*.

We are up-front with what we are. We are about encouraging you to find what works for you.

I find it refreshing to go to a support group and have the focus on recovery and not on other agendas that have to be accepted in order to be a part of the group.

You don't have to play mind games with yourself to try to fit in because we aren't asking you to change who you are or mold you into something you don't want to be. We are here to support you in getting and staying sober alcohol/drug-free. We are also here to support those with other addictions or problems and talk with family and friends.

## I Am Free to Use Other Support Groups

There is no "One Way."

Using other support groups will not in any way affect my standing in SOS. Many members use Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, SMART, Women for Sobriety and other support that's out there.

A great feature of SOS is that we don't have all the answers for our members. Because we don't have all the answers we encourage our members to explore for themselves other groups, to see if they can use a part of a group's philosophy to help them with their recovery. If they find something that works for them they can come back and share it.

I hope this search for things that work will always be a part of SOS.

I hope that we will always be a group in the making.

- a group that is always up front and never has anything to hide,
- a group that grows and evolves to meet the needs of its members,
- a group that never stands still.

## This Is an Abstinence-Support Group

**I will repeat, SOS is an abstinence-support group, not a group for cutting back on the number of drugs used:**

SOS supports those who want to change their lives by removing alcohol/drugs from their lives. It does not support cutting back from five or six drugs to only one or two.

**Sometimes there are exceptions.**

The exception would be someone who is cutting back because of withdrawal who has every intention of becoming abstinent. Exceptions are only temporary.

Another exception would be if drugs are needed for medical reasons.

This is a very serious issue.

It could be a life and death decision for the person who is in need of medical treatment.

Severe depression, if left untreated, could lead, at the very least, to a poor quality of life and at worst suicide.

Our SOS Support Group is here to help, not to cause harm.

Issues with depression, pain and other medical

issues are exceptions to our abstinence requirements. The health and well-being of our members has to override almost everything else.

## When Talking With Our Doctors We Should Be Asking Lots of Questions

- Is there more than one drug that I can use to help with this medical condition?
- Is one medication better or can I try different ones to see which one works best for me?
- Do I have choices of medications that will work but not get me high?
- Do I have a choice of medications that aren't addictive?
- Do I have any control of the dosage?

I'm sure you can think of other questions to ask. These are only a few that came off the top of my head. I'm sure I could come up with lots more and I hope you come up with lots more if you're in a situation where you need to ask your doctor's advice.

## There Will Be No Promotion of Drug Use

There will be no promotion of drug use except for medical reasons—not for getting high reasons. If you are in recovery from alcohol and had no problem with pot, don't start using pot.

## This Is Not a Single-Substance Support Group

If you are an addict who used, for example, heroin, and had no problem with beer, to say you plan to have a beer after you mow your lawn on a hot day would be, in an SOS group, to promote the use of a liquid drug, alcohol. Also, you would not be embracing what we are here for. We are here to give and get support in our choice to live a life alcohol/drug-free. This is the reason we come together as a group.

If for some reason you are not willing to stop all alcohol/drugs and still want to come to the group to listen, that's OK. I would ask that you not share with the group if I were there because you're promoting the use of the drug/alcohol you're using. If that's what you want to do I think it's best that you find another place to do it. This is an abstinence-support group.

If you are here for an eating disorder and want our support, we will ask for your support in our journey in living sober lives.

It matters that you make a choice:

- to embrace life,
- to live life alcohol/drug-free,
- to live in the real world,
- to make the decision to live a sober life,
- to take up the challenge of living life no matter where it takes us.

This is how I see SOS. My definition of sobriety is to live life alcohol/drug-free no matter where it takes me.

**Now a question: What's your definition of recovery from your addiction?**

I think the answer you give will help you find the best

possible recovery path for you. I hope you find the journey of searching for what works as easily as I did.

## Religious and Nonreligious Freedom

I know that in every recovery group there will be people with different views on religion. There will be people with different views on politics.

We keep our focus on recovery and that keeps our religious, political and social views intact, free from criticism.

To keep from having members trying to convert us to their religion or politics, it is in the best interest of the group and to each of us that our religious or nonreligious beliefs are expressed with like-minded people outside of our SOS meetings.

My religious or nonreligious beliefs are never challenged in the group because they are a private part of my recovery. With my mind clear, free of alcohol/drugs, I will be better equipped to follow my own belief system. I can expand and strengthen my belief system with like-minded people outside of SOS meetings.

Here individuals are encouraged to follow their own individual belief systems. We come together to support each other in finding what works for each of us in our recovery. Our focus is on recovery, and we will not be sidetracked by other issues like religion, nonreligion, or politics. Those issues will be addressed or not addressed by each of us in our own time frame outside of the SOS meeting.

We will not lose focus on the reason we come together.

## No One Preaches or Tries to Convert—or Subvert Another’s Belief System

Here, each of us is unique. We celebrate—and support—this uniqueness. From this celebration of just how different we are, strength and power grow. Clean and sober I learn to use the power I have within myself to change my life forever.

I will accept the challenge of living life alcohol/drug free.

No two people in the same church will agree on everything about their religious beliefs. If no two people of the same faith can agree on all the facets of their own religion, then how are we to deal with people of many different religious and nonreligious beliefs who come together to get and stay sober?

I think we will do it by keeping focused on the reason we’re here. We’re here to support each other to find what works for us in our journey to a sober life. We keep the focus on recovery and don’t lose it.

- No matter what
- No matter that we are of different sexes
- Different races
- Different backgrounds
- Different religions or nonreligions
- Different political beliefs
- Different whatever

These are side issues that can distract from our purpose for coming together as a group. We come together to support each other’s journey to a new life. We are united in one cause, to support each other in our quest

for a new life. When these side issues come into play, we must as a group come together and bring the focus back to recovery. It’s up to each of us to help in making this thing work.

As adults we have the right to form our beliefs on religion as we each think and feel is the right way for us.

Once sober and traveling in this “New World” of living sober we can each follow our beliefs with a clear head.

- Sober, I have the opportunity to put to practice my religious or nonreligious beliefs.
- Sober, I can join with like-minded people to further explore my religious or nonreligious beliefs.
- Sober, I can join with like-minded people to further explore my religious or nonreligious beliefs.
- Sober, I can join with like-minded people to talk, debate, exchange ideas and explore different fellowships.
- Sober, a whole “New World” has opened up for me with many new, exciting possibilities.

## I Learn to Say “I—Me—My”

And refrain from using “You—We—You Must—We Must—You Should—We Should—You Need To.”

I have found a recovery program that works very well for me. I can tell you what I do each day to stay sober, but I can’t tell you what to do in your recovery. I can tell you what I would do if I were in a similar place. I can tell you what I would or would not do, but I cannot tell you what you should or should not do if you are in that same place.

As long as I use the first person, “I—Me,” then I’m working on myself. I’m working on my recovery. I’m working on things I need to do to change my life, to make my recovery easier, stronger and stable. I hope I will learn to adapt and change in order to have a lasting, long-term life of sobriety.

This plan is not set in stone. This is not a plan that you must do what I did to find lasting recovery. This is not a program at all; it’s a support group with some procedural rules. When I speak from the first person of “I” or “me” then I’m in a fairly safe place. I am telling you about myself and what I did or am doing in my recovery. What I’m not doing is telling you what you should be doing in your recovery.

It’s very important that people in the group let other group members know when they are not using the first person “I” or “Me.” It’s also important that this be done in a caring way. It’s important that we show each other respect.

It’s also important that no member is allowed to preach about what others in the group should or should not do. When we let someone in the group tell others how to live their lives or their recovery, we are allowing that person to distract from his or her own recovery and the other person’s recovery.

If I try to fix other people in the meeting, I am distracted from my own life and recovery. To fix others or expose their weaknesses is not the reason we’re here. We’re here to inspire each other and to put into words where we are at this time in our lives.

Putting into words where I am in my life may help me understand where I need to go in my recovery. Hearing myself explain to others my feelings about my recovery may help me better understand my needs and myself. My recovery is in my own hands. I may need to learn as much about my true feelings as I can and about

what actions I need to take to ensure that I will have long-term sobriety.

As time moves on I will change; that is a part of life. Change is important in my recovery. I can change what isn't working well, or change what does work and make it work even better. I can choose to follow a rigid path or a flexible one. It's about me and my needs or insights into my recovery that matter. By sharing I focus on myself. The added bonus is that sharing my thoughts on what will work for me not only strengthens my recovery, it gives hope to other members of the group.

I did the work in developing the right plan for my personal needs; now I will watch others in the group develop their personal plan that will fill their own unique personal needs.

## I Stay Focused on the Reason I'm Here

**I'm here for "Me," for my recovery.**

I remember that if I try to "fix" someone else, then I'm distracted from my recovery. I do care about others in the group and because I care, I will offer my support not my criticism. I know that for each of us the way to sobriety is different. I will learn to accept that another

person's recovery is going to be different from mine.

Part of my learning to fit into this "New World" of sobriety is to help make this meeting as safe as possible. This will make me a stronger person and add power to my recovery. By not trying to fix other members but instead encouraging each other to find our own solutions we will see first-hand how this works. If it's given a fair chance in a safe and caring environment, it will happen. I will see first-hand what a powerful tool this is.

We watch as each member searches for and develops his or her unique recovery action plans, and we watch each other grow and develop the self-confidence and self-worth needed to take back our lives where we are sober and in control, not high and out of control.

Some members of the group may be shy and not want to expose themselves by sharing. To make the process of sharing as easy as possible we don't use a podium or ask members to stand in front of the group to share. I know some in the group would like to use this approach in sharing but we need to think of every member in the group and to make it as easy as possible for those who have a difficult time sharing. By sharing from where we are sitting we will be encouraging everyone to share, not just the strong and powerful members of the group but the entire group.



# CAR or VAN

## **Contribution Urgently Needed!!**

The New SOS Clearinghouse in Los Angeles has need of a car, station wagon, and/or van in great working condition. If you can help meet this need by making a **tax-deductible donation** of a vehicle to SOS, please contact:

**Jim Christopher • 4773 Hollywood Blvd. • Hollywood, CA 90027**  
**Phone: (323) 666-4295 • Fax: (323) 666-4271**  
**e-mail: [sos@cfiwest.org](mailto:sos@cfiwest.org)**

SOS will arrange for a pick-up of your donated vehicle from anywhere in the contiguous United States.



Valerie White, Esq.

## Wind Beneath My Wings

by Valerie White, Esq.

Today's Boston "Globe" contained, in the same section, on the same page, two alcohol-related articles which, read together, created a sad irony. The first article concerned the efforts of some law enforcement officials and legislators to ban machines designed to get people intoxicated by having them inhale alcohol mist. The \$300 devices are said to deliver alcohol in low-calorie, no-hangover doses.

The concern, according to state officials, is that the AWOL (Alcohol without Liquid) machine makes it too easy to use alcohol. The alcohol gets to the brain more quickly than by drinking, and the method does not have the built-in restraints of a full stomach, high calories and hangovers.

I imagine there are people reading this article who might not have stopped drinking when they did if they could have continued to drink without constant hangovers. (Although I must say that I can't understand why delivering alcohol to the bloodstream via the lungs would avoid hangovers. The manufacturer's website says because there would be no residual alcohol in the body and no dehydration. Doesn't make sense to me.)

I can certainly see why the Massachusetts Alcoholic Beverages Control Commission wants to ban this device.

The other article, which was illustrated by two wrenching photographs, describes the burial, with inmates as pallbearers, of an incarcerated, formerly homeless man. The deceased was being held for lack of \$500 bail on several moderately serious charges when he died of cancer. Described as a chronic alcoholic, the late defendant, known as "Red Dog," was mourned at the graveside by dozens homeless or for-

merly homeless acquaintances and by several siblings, one of whom hadn't seen him in almost 20 years.

What I found particularly heartrending was the report that one of his cronies knelt tearfully in front of the coffin and poured a bottle of beer into the snow, saying, "This one's for him." The description in the newspaper evoked for me the mingled smells of raw earth, unwashed bodies, smoke-impregnated clothes . . . and beer.

In mind's eye, I can see the irregular blotch of brownish yellow against the white, melting down into the snow, not so very unlike the many similar marks he himself probably made, when lack of shelter or lack of inhibition or merely beer-induced urgency caused him to unzip outdoors in the bitter New England weather. What an unlovely gesture.

How utterly, unutterably futile, wasteful, sad and banal . . . in the sense of Hannah Arendt's "banality of evil." The tribute paid by a grieving friend is to offer a libation of the very brew that, in all likelihood, killed Red Dog . . . or, at the very least, led to his imprisonment. If he had been poisoned by weed-killer, would someone have poured 2-4-D on his grave?

David "Red Dog" Tilton . . . committed to the ground in a ceremony organized by the sheriff who had him in custody, borne by six of his fellow inmates. Rest in peace, David, my brother. There, but for the grace of recovery, go I. There, but for the grace of recovery, go thousands upon thousands of your fellow substance abusers.

Red Dog, you probably drank cheap beer out of quart bottles, or Thunderbird out of brown-paper-shrouded flat pints. You never would have been able to shell out \$300 for an alcohol nebulizer.



SOS Dallas members welcome Jim Christopher to their weekly Sunday night meeting, held in a local Denny's Restaurant, January 29, 2006. Standing (L-R) Bob, Jim Christopher, Steve, John and Duaine Metevia, Webmaster, [www.sossobriety.org](http://www.sossobriety.org). Seated (L-R) Mac and Barbara. Mac recently celebrated 50 years of freedom from alcohol/drugs (Mac's sobriety date: December 10, 1955). Mac is co-founder, along with Duaine Metevia of SOS Dallas (<http://www.sosdallas.org>). Congratulations Mac!

## A 'Net Note' from Duaine

### Web Notes The Internet

The Internet has become an important part of the SOS recovery movement.

The Internet is here to stay. So we (SOS) had better use it or be left behind. Members, who have no contact with the Internet and no interest in learning how to use it, still are able to have a friend or family member locate SOS Web sites, print out articles written by Jim Christopher or SOS members, find meetings in their area, and keep up to date, etc.

SOS groups that want to promote their recovery groups, post times, dates and where a meeting is being held, can do it with a Web site. You can do this on your own if you know how or you can send the info to [SaveOurSelves@msn.com](mailto:SaveOurSelves@msn.com) and request a Web Site be put up for you—there are still good free Web Sites out there. Before it's promoted you will have a chance to check it out—make changes. It's your Web Site if you put it up yourself or have SOS do it. It's also easy for you to take over the Web Site at any time if SOS puts it up for you.

### Real Time SOS Chat Meetings

Meetings at this time are on an as needed basis. We need volunteers to make this work. Join the SOS International E-Support list to help make this work.

## A Heading to Promote Local SOS Groups on the SOS Links Page

### SOS Groups E-Lists.

For the use of promoting the Group and giving Info to the local members. The idea being: The group can post meeting times and places. The group can post changes. The group members can post discussions of whatever the groups needs are at the time. The group members who couldn't make it to a meeting can still stay in contact with the group by posting. The group can send out reminders of meetings automatically. The E-Lists is easy to set up and will be promoted on the SOS Links page with the SOS family of Web sites.

#### SOS Australia E-support E-Group

[au.groups.yahoo.com/group/secular\\_sobriety\\_sos\\_au/](http://au.groups.yahoo.com/group/secular_sobriety_sos_au/)

#### SOS Netherlands E-Support Group

[groups.yahoo.com/group/sossaveourselves\\_Netherlands/](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/sossaveourselves_Netherlands/)

#### SOS Chicago E-Support Group

[groups.yahoo.com/group/SOSChicago](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/SOSChicago)

#### \_SOS Western New York E-Support Group

[groups.yahoo.com/group/soswny](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/soswny)

#### SOS Central Texas Temple E-Support Group

[groups.yahoo.com/group/cen\\_tex\\_SOS](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/cen_tex_SOS)

#### SOS Dallas E-support Group

[groups.yahoo.com/group/sosdallas](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/sosdallas)

#### \_SOS Austin E-Support Group

[groups.yahoo.com/group/sossaveourselves](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/sossaveourselves)

#### SOS Daytona E-Support Group

[groups.yahoo.com/group/SOSatDaytona](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/SOSatDaytona)

#### NYS-wide SOS E-Support Group

[health.groups.yahoo.com/group/SOSNYS/](http://health.groups.yahoo.com/group/SOSNYS/)

#### SOS Tampa Florida E-Support Group

[health.groups.yahoo.com/group/sostampa/](http://health.groups.yahoo.com/group/sostampa/)

Your group or group in the making can be added to this list easily, just go into Yahoo and set up an E-Support Group, let

me know at [SaveOurSelves@msn.com](mailto:SaveOurSelves@msn.com) and it will be promoted worldwide.

## New Group

**SOS Friends and Families**—Set up to meet the needs of friends and families of those who are or have been addicted.

[groups.yahoo.com/group/SOS\\_Friends\\_and\\_Families](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/SOS_Friends_and_Families)

SOS Friends and Families is a welcome addition to the SOS Family of support.

It is held by some very caring people.

## The Place to be on the Web?

Where do I go to get the most from SOS on the Web?

A place where I can benefit the most as far as getting info and support from SOS?

A place where SOS members from around the world meet?

A place where new ideas are being tried?

A place where I can be heard?

A place where people will listen to what I have to say?

The answer?

## SOS Save Our Selves E-Support Group

[groups.yahoo.com/group/sossaveourselves](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/sossaveourselves)

This is an important part of SOS on the Web. This is the place where a lot of new ideas are tried and members give feed back. Become a part of the movement that never stands still, SOS. You may have something that works for you and want a place to share it. Here is that place.

This is a place to come for support in your recovery. It's also a place to give back or make the journey a little easier for the next person.

New to SOS—Long Time Sober—Promoting an SOS Meeting—Thinking of Starting a Meeting—Looking for On-Line Support—Promoting a Web Site.

### Also

## SOS Women

[groups.yahoo.com/group/soswomen](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/soswomen)

This SOS E-support group is set up to meet the needs of women in SOS with lots of support.

### And

## SOS Friends and Families—

[groups.yahoo.com/group/SOS\\_Friends\\_and\\_Families](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/SOS_Friends_and_Families)

This E-support group is set up to meet the needs of friends and families of those who are or have been addicted.

## Recovery Connections

[www.cfiwest.org/sos/find.htm](http://www.cfiwest.org/sos/find.htm)

Find a meeting in your area.

Looking at the Web site isn't enough. The Web site only tells part of the story. It lists meetings and gives contacts.



Duaine Metevia

The rest of the story is behind the scenes. It's the people who want to be a part of SOS but don't want to start a meeting at this time, people who don't want to have their contact info on the web page or just want to be there for local people, people in the area to give a supportive ear. Maybe they will meet you for coffee. They could be waiting for one more person in their area to start a meeting.

Help or a friend in recovery could be a phone call away. If you don't leave your contact info you could miss out.

## The Way "Recovery Connections" Works

### SOS@CFIWest.org

You leave your contact info with Jim Christopher. If there is someone in your area, Jim will link you up with him or her. If there is no one in your area today, someone could do what you have just done and tomorrow they will be linked up with you. It works if you become a part of it and make it work. To make it work you need to give Jim Christopher your contact info.

Watch our Face to Face meetings grow!  
SOS@CFIWest.org

## Green Wall of Growth

[www.sossobriety.org/greenwall.htm](http://www.sossobriety.org/greenwall.htm)

A place where SOS Members can sign in using their first name and initial or full name, country, state or province and date of their discussion to live their life alcohol/drug free

Check it out and see how much it has grown.

Thanks Norm for the great idea of the Green Wall of Growth.

## CFI-West

[www.cfiwest.org/sos](http://www.cfiwest.org/sos)

CFI-West, the home site of Jim Christopher; it's always up to date. It's a great place to start your search to find what's going on with SOS.

## SOS International

[www.sossobriety.org](http://www.sossobriety.org)

This Web site is filled with diversity. It has some writings by James Christopher and some by SOS Members from around the world. You will find lots of information on SOS and you will also find, printed thoughts of SOS Members. Many SOS Web sites have contributed to its making. By going through it you will find links to many of the SOS Web Family and get a flavor of other SOS Web sites. I encourage you visit all of the SOS Web Family.

## Secular Sobriety

[www.secularsobriety.org](http://www.secularsobriety.org)

Filled with info on SOS, up to date web links, lots to read.

## SOS Behind Bars

[www.sosbehindbars.org](http://www.sosbehindbars.org)

With over 150 SOS Behind Bars meetings in Texas.

SOS Behind Bars was set up to meet the needs of SOS Members behind bars holding SOS Meetings and to help jail an prison staff better understand SOS. There are posts

# Subscribe to the *SOS International Newsletter* Today!

**Exclusive Offer!**

Subscribe to 3 YEARS of the *SOS NEWSLETTER* and **RECEIVE ONE FREE COPY** of your choice of any of the books offered on our "SOS Recovery Marketplace" (see page 14 for book descriptions)!

Please check one:  *How to Stay Sober*  *Unhooked: Staying Sober and Drug Free*  
 *SOS Sobriety: The Proven Alternative to 12-Step Programs*  
 *Escape from Nicotine Country*

Subscription rates are noted below, and extra donations are always gratefully welcome. **SOS relies on you!**

1 year: \$18.00  2 years: \$32.00  3 years: \$45.00  I would also like to make a donation of: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Check or money order enclosed

Charge my  MasterCard  Visa  AMEX # \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. \_\_\_\_\_ Sig. \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Daytime phone number \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Return to: **SOS, BOX 5, BUFFALO, NY 14215-0005**

V18/N3

by SOS members. Print outs of suggestions on How to Hold an SOS Meeting Behind Bars.

Lots of SOS info!

## Recovery Happens On Line

Recovery is valid wherever it comes from; on line, as well as face to face or alone. Recovery is valid no matter where it happens.

**SOS Save Our Selves E-Support Group**  
groups.yahoo.com/group/sossaveourselves

This was built as a safe place to come and share. This is the Home Group of SOS E-Support Groups.

**SOS Women E-Support Group**  
groups.yahoo.com/group/soswomen

This group is set up to meet the needs of women in SOS. It was set up to have a safe place to share. To give and get support. To talk about the special needs of women in recovery.

**SOS Friends and Families—**  
groups.yahoo.com/group/SOS\_Friends\_and\_Families

This E-support group is set up to meet the needs of friends and families of those who are or have been addicted.

## One Person

One person can build a meeting. Give your contact info to Jim Christopher at [SOS@CFIWest.org](mailto:SOS@CFIWest.org). Become a contact person for your area. Become a group in the making. Build a Web site. Build it yourself or have Duaine M help at [SaveOurSelves@msn.com](mailto:SaveOurSelves@msn.com) Promote your group or group-in-the-making with a Web page. Promote your group or group-in-the-making at

**SOS Save Our Selves E-Support Group**  
groups.yahoo.com/group/sossaveourselves

Share what you're doing in SOS or want to do. You can make a change. You can make a difference. I'm looking forward to getting to know you.

## New to Recovery? Some Thoughts from SOS Members

[www.sossobriety.org/easy.htm](http://www.sossobriety.org/easy.htm)

I found that early in my recovery I was missing lots of information. I went to a detox treatment center where I assumed I would be given all the info I needed. I found it difficult to sleep and went several nights with very little sleep. I thought there was something wrong with me. There was I was going through a very natural process of relearning how to sleep.

So why wasn't I told about it sooner? Why did I have to go through it and then find out it was a natural part of the recovery process? So I decided to put together a web page to address things that most of us already know or should know. This web page is still under construction. We are getting lots of input from SOS members but need lots more. Your input is welcome. Please check it out and send your thoughts to [SaveOurSelves@msn.com](mailto:SaveOurSelves@msn.com) Duaine Metevia.

## New Up to Date Search for SOS Meetings

[www.sossobriety.org/meetings](http://www.sossobriety.org/meetings)

A new Search page for finding SOS Meetings and SOS Contacts is the most up to date meeting and contact finder

of any recovery support group on the Internet.

Updates are posted as they happen.

[www.sossobriety.org/meetings](http://www.sossobriety.org/meetings)

## SOS Web Sites

**SOS Clearing House**  
[www.cfiwest.org/sos](http://www.cfiwest.org/sos)  
**SOS International**  
[www.sossobriety.com](http://www.sossobriety.com)  
**SOS Humanist Page**  
[www.secularhumanism.org/sos](http://www.secularhumanism.org/sos)  
**SOS Secular Sobriety**  
[www.secularsobriety.org](http://www.secularsobriety.org)  
**SOS Behind Bars**  
[www.sosbehindbars.org](http://www.sosbehindbars.org)  
**SOS Women**  
[www.sos-women.org](http://www.sos-women.org)  
**SOS Dallas**  
[www.sosdallas.org](http://www.sosdallas.org)  
**SOS Rochester-NY**  
[www.sos-rochester.org](http://www.sos-rochester.org)  
**SOS Western New York**  
[soscanada.org/soswny/](http://soscanada.org/soswny/)  
**Madtown Secular Recovery**  
[madtownsecular.tripod.com](http://madtownsecular.tripod.com)  
**SOS Sarasota-Florida**  
[sossarasota.tripod.com](http://sossarasota.tripod.com)  
**SOS Tulsa**  
[www.sostulsa.org](http://www.sostulsa.org)  
**SOS Belgium**  
[www.SOSNuchterheid.org](http://www.SOSNuchterheid.org)  
**SOS Austin**  
[sosaustin.tripod.com](http://sosaustin.tripod.com)  
**SOS Belgium**  
[www.soszelfhulpgroepen.be/](http://www.soszelfhulpgroepen.be/)  
**SOS London**  
[sos\\_london.tripod.com](http://sos_london.tripod.com)  
**Brighton SOS**  
[www.brightonsos.org/](http://www.brightonsos.org/)  
**SOS Norway**  
[www.sossobriety.org/SOSNorway](http://www.sossobriety.org/SOSNorway)  
**SOS Australia**  
[sosaustralia.tripod.com/index.htm](http://sosaustralia.tripod.com/index.htm)  
**SOS Western Australia**  
[b.1asphost.com/SecularSobrietyAU/](http://b.1asphost.com/SecularSobrietyAU/)  
**SOS Iceland E-mail only**  
[Petur-tyrf@isholf.is](mailto:Petur-tyrf@isholf.is)

## SOS E-Groups

**Home E-Group of SOS**  
**SOS Save Our Selves E-Support Group—Support and Information:**  
[groups.yahoo.com/group/sossaveourselves](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/sossaveourselves)

**SOS Women E-Support Group—Set up to meet the needs of women in SOS.**  
[groups.yahoo.com/group/SOSWomen](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/SOSWomen)

**SOS Friends and Families—**  
[groups.yahoo.com/group/SOS\\_Friends\\_and\\_Families](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/SOS_Friends_and_Families)

This E-support group is set up to meet the needs of friends and families of those who are or have been addicted.

**SOS International Journal E-group**  
[health.groups.yahoo.com/group/sosjournal](http://health.groups.yahoo.com/group/sosjournal)

The purpose of this site is not to obtain feedback from others. It is, rather, a forum where people can write their thoughts and feelings as an alternative to pen and paper; can share their writing with others for the purpose of

A Net Note, *continued on p. 15*

# The SOS Marketplace: Tools for Recovery

## Brochures New Expanded and Revised Editions



### “An Overview of SOS”

The basic overview brochure of the SOS movement. Includes the principles and the history of the Secular Organizations for Sobriety.

### “The Sobriety Priority”

Excerpted from *How to Stay Sober*, this brochure explains the “Sobriety Priority” of the SOS program.

### “Your First Thirty Days”

Information and advice for the newly sober alcoholic or addict. Includes list of suggested books to read.

### “Your Sobriety Toolkit”

Based on Larry B.’s presentations at the SOS National Workshop series in San Diego and Los Angeles in 1992.

### “Family and Friends Recovery”

A brochure offering recovery guidelines for families and friends of alcoholics and addicts.

**All Brochures—50 copies for \$5.00**

## Books New Expanded and Revised Edition!

### SOS Group Leader’s Guidebook

All the information you need to start an SOS group in your community—all in one little booklet. Ideas on how to get started, where to meet, and how to promote your group. Plus tips on how to deal with problem people, a complete suggested meeting format, and much, much more. — \$2.95

### How To Stay Sober: Recovery without Religion

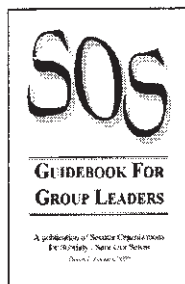
The book that started an international grassroots movement! SOS founder James Christopher describes his own “recovery without religion,” focuses on the practical aspects of his triumph over alcoholism, and includes guidelines for the formation of secular support groups. — 191 pages, paper, \$15.95

### Unhooked: Staying Sober and Drug Free

James Christopher recounts the evolution of SOS and details cases of recovery through the program. He invites the reader to sit in on a fictionalized SOS meeting and offers further strategies for achieving and maintaining sobriety and self-respect. — 184 pages, paper, \$15.95

### SOS Sobriety: The Proven Alternative to 12-Step Programs

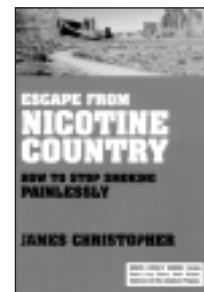
Sure to be controversial, SOS Sobriety lays bare the limitations of Alcoholics Anonymous while describing the proven methods of alcohol and drug abstinence advocated by James Christopher, founder of Secular Organizations for Sobriety (or “Save Our Selves”), the world’s largest non-12-step addiction recovery program. After answering basic questions about the nature and purpose of SOS, the success of the “sobriety priority” approach is documented through two scientific studies. Included are moving in-depth individual recovery stories, interviews



with addiction experts and legal professionals as well as a critique of “controlled drinking” programs and the insistence by AA and the liquor industry that alcoholism is a problem of behavior rather than one rooted in physiology and genetics. — 240 pages, paper, \$15.95

### Escape from Nicotine Country: How to Stop Smoking Painlessly by James Christopher

“The prospect of stopping smoking is scary as hell. I know — I’ve been there.” So opens *Escape from Nicotine Country*, James Christopher’s unique and uplifting guide to quitting smoking without pain or weight gain. A thirty-year smoker, Christopher gave up cigarettes in 1993, after a gradual period of individual withdrawal, exercise, and proper diet. Now he offers his remarkable and simple self-help program to all those who want to kick the habit.



While not weighed down with “just say no” rhetoric, overused shock statistics, or religious undertones, *Escape from Nicotine Country* goes against the grain of stop-smoking polemics by empowering the individual through motivational chapters. Christopher tells his own story of addiction and success in quitting. At the same time he promotes understanding of nicotine addiction and offers a simple solution to breaking the habit through reduction.

Christopher’s program addresses many different types of nicotine addiction, the hunger that haunts those trying to quit, and the need for a healthy routine of exercise. The latter half of the book is an encouraging diary, which allows the reader to record the progress that will lead to a healthier, smoke-free life. — 360 pages, paper, \$16.95

## Audiotapes

### “Avoiding the Relapse Mode”

Powerful strategies are offered in this straightforward life saving approach to staying clean and sober “no matter what.” Jim Christopher shares his own recovery/relapse prevention techniques and relates anonymous case histories of triumph over potential relapse and achievement of a comfortable sobriety. — (30 min.) \$7.95, including postage and handling.

### “Empowerment Sobriety”

A candid, in-depth look at the Sobriety Priority/Separate Issue method in action. SOS founder Jim Christopher offers powerful strategies for achieving and maintaining ones sobriety through self-empowerment. Christopher relates his own recovery in this dynamic presentation. — (30 min.) \$7.95, including postage and handling.

## Videotapes

### SOS Group Leader’s Guide—The Video

The video based on our popular guidebook for new convertors. How to launch an SOS group, where to meet, how to promote your meetings, how to poise your group for growth. Plus complete suggested meeting format and special techniques for handling problem people, structuring group leadership, and more. Demonstrated on camera by experienced SOS convertors, role-playing a typical meeting for you! — (45 min.) \$39.95

### The Sobriety Priority

This fast-moving, professionally produced video gives newcomers, outsiders, and professionals their first compelling look at SOS. Ideal for presentation to the general public or cable TV. The Sobriety Priority presents the purpose and methods of dynamic, fast-growing SOS. Includes simulated meeting footage and interviews with group leaders, SOS board member William London, and founder Jim Christopher. — (14 min.) \$24.95

See **SOS MARKETPLACE ORDER FORM**, page 15.

**A Net Note, continued from p. 13**

assisting those who are still struggling, or just to vent feelings around urges, possibly preventing slips and relapses.

**SOS Posting Board**

forums.delphiforums.com/sosdiscussion

SOS Posting Board—Discussion Board allows us to open a topic & follow it through in some detail.

**SOS Groups E-Lists for Face to Face Meetings**

For promoting an SOS Face to Face Group or Group in the making and giving Info to the local SOS members.

**SOS Australia E-support E-Group**

au.groups.yahoo.com/group/secular\_sobriety\_sos\_au/

**SOS Netherlands E-Support Group**

groups.yahoo.com/group/sossaveourselves\_Netherlands/

**SOS Chicago E-Support Group**

groups.yahoo.com/group/SOSChicago

**SOS Western New York E-Support Group**

groups.yahoo.com/group/soswny

**SOS Central Texas Temple E-Support Group**

groups.yahoo.com/group/cen\_tex\_SOS

**SOS Dallas E-support Group**

groups.yahoo.com/group/sosdallas

**SOS Austin E-Support Group**

groups.yahoo.com/group/sossaveourselves

**SOS Daytona E-Support Group**

groups.yahoo.com/group/SOSatDaytona

**NYS-wide SOS E-Support Group**

health.groups.yahoo.com/group/SOSNYS/

**SOS Meetings and Contacts to Start a Meeting**

www.sossobriety.org/meetings

If there isn't a meeting in your area leave your contact info with James Christopher. This is how many of our meetings start. It's hard to start a meeting if no one knows you're out there. Not all cites have an SOS Meeting. Some have phone contacts, where you can talk with an SOS member over the phone in your area. In some cites SOS members meet as needed for coffee. This is why it's so important that you leave contact information with James Christopher. There may be some one in your area who wants to lend an ear and a voice, a caring person who cares and wants to help . . . a meeting being formed. Please don't miss out.

www.sossobriety.org/meetings

**Contact Jim Christopher**

Jim Christopher (323) 666-4295

Save Our Selves (SOS)

4773 Hollywood Blvd

Hollywood, CA 90027

E-mail: SOS@CFIWest.org Attn.: Jim Christopher

Let Jim know you are out there. This is how we grow.

**SOS MARKETPLACE**  
**Merchandise Order Form**

- |   |                         |   |                                |
|---|-------------------------|---|--------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> "Avoiding the Relapse Mode"                  | audiotape <b>\$7.95</b> | <input type="checkbox"/> "Your Sobriety Toolkit"                  |                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> "Empowerment Sobriety"                       | audiotape <b>\$7.95</b> | <input type="checkbox"/> English <input type="checkbox"/> Spanish | brochure <b>\$5.00</b> per 50  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SOS Group Leader's Guide                     | video <b>\$39.95</b>    | <input type="checkbox"/> "Family and Friends"                     |                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The Sobriety Priority                        | video <b>\$24.95</b>    | <input type="checkbox"/> English <input type="checkbox"/> Spanish | brochure <b>\$5.00</b> per 50  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SOS Sobriety                                 | <b>\$15.95</b>          | <input type="checkbox"/> "An Overview of SOS"                     |                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> How to Stay Sober                            | <b>\$15.95</b>          | <input type="checkbox"/> English <input type="checkbox"/> Spanish | brochure <b>\$5.00</b> per 50  |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> Escape from Nicotine Country                 | <b>\$16.95</b>          | <input type="checkbox"/> English <input type="checkbox"/> Spanish | brochure <b>\$5.00</b> per 50  |
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Add \$2.00 per item for postage and handling (except audiotapes and brochures). All brochures sold in bulk only. Minimum order: 50 copies.

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Return to: **SOS, Box 5, Buffalo, NY 14215-0005**  
**See SOS Marketplace: Tools for Recovery, page 14.**

The SOS International Newsletter is published by Secular Organizations for Sobriety/Save Our Selves (SOS), a nonprofit, educational organization.

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JN1108

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