



## Spiritual Recycling

Jim N.  
West Springfield, MA  
AA Grapevine  
July 1997

Step 7: Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.

I have never been able to identify with the way the "Twelve and Twelve" talks about character defects as things that need to be "removed." It just sounds so negative, like having your teeth out: what do you do when they're all gone? I'm not even entirely sure what a defect is.

So the problem for me is, How do I take Step Seven in a way that makes sense, and makes a difference in my life?

I've had to back off the idea of "Deadly Sins" and look at some of the other ways our literature describes character defects. I find it useful to identify ways in which personal change can bring my life into closer alignment with the bigger AA picture. In particular, I consider what changes in me would place me in a better position to be of maximum use to others. When I ask that question, then Bill W.'s use of the word "handicap" becomes more personally relevant. What handicaps get in the way of right relations and make it difficult for me to be of use?

Before I can "humbly ask" God to remove "defects," I must have some idea of what those words mean to me, based on my experience with them.

Step Seven shows me that the misuse of natural desires makes me useless and unhappy. I've never met a truly useful person who was genuinely unhappy. As I became useful in AA, began to move out of that awful isolation we AA's talk about. And being out of the isolation, I was exposed. It was a long overdue experience for a person who had lived in an emotional foxhole since childhood. My initial contact with the real world meant getting active with my group, and it was an emotional roller coaster. I'd never been able to be a member of anything, and my emotional handicaps came bursting forth. The resulting conflicts made me quickly and painfully aware of a lot of things I had been running and hiding from all my life.

When I look at how fear and self-seeking affect my desire for sex, society, and security, most of the mystery that used to surround the idea of "defects of character" goes away. For example, I think not so

much in terms of having just "removed" as in coming to a more conscious and responsible attitude regarding how I allow my sex drive to find expression. I don't ask God to take anger out of my life but to show me how best to express it or let it go.

You might think that surely anyone would want to be rid of something like envy. What possible good can come from desiring what others have? Well, when I was new, I was really envious of people who had long-term sobriety. I envied people who could be spontaneous and who were useful and well-liked. So it was how I responded to envy that mattered. What did I do with it? Did I just sit back and hate people who were useful and effective in AA? The willingness to change came when I was able to identify and own the cause of my discomfort. Then I could ask humbly. Without this willingness, I would have turned into a chronic and terminal bleeding deacon, running around trying to get people to see it my way. Of course I have tried that over the years, and the result was always that I ended up bored and alone.

Had I not learned to stop running around making things happen, I might have stayed with the old idea that getting active has to do only with what goes on around and outside me, instead of coming to see that it refers as well to what is going on inside. That calls for more calm, thoughtful reflection on human relations. Am I a worker among workers, a friend among friends? Maybe "active" means taking a night off from meetings to stay home with a good book or a friend. Maybe my group really will get along without me for one night. If my "busy-ness" is a defect, maybe it's also a part of who I am. It need not so much be removed as toned down and redirected. My defects are the boundaries of just what I am capable of and capable of becoming at any given moment. Boundaries that I am unconscious of become barriers.

Maybe I am overly concerned with how people see me. But if I didn't care what people thought at all, I would have nothing to shoot for, no spiritual objective. Maybe anger is a dubious luxury and maybe it's a real human emotion that I've always avoided because I was afraid of it. Maybe my anger needs not to be removed so much as brought into alignment with the new spiritual objective of right relations. Seen in that light I can ask for knowledge of whether to express it or let it go.

I have a more meaningful understanding of Step Seven today based on experience. I can freely and enthusiastically point others to this Step without that queasy feeling I used to have about it. I don't see Step Seven as being about removal so much as realization. I'm all God has to work with—I have to be enough. Nothing goes to waste in the spiritual recycling process we call Step Seven. ☺

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*I am responsible.*

When anyone, anywhere, reaches  
out for help, I want the  
hand of AA to always be there.  
For that, *I am responsible.*

### Calgary AA Central Service Office

#2, 4015 1st Street S.E.

Calgary, Alberta – T2G 4X7

Phone: (403) 777-1212 Fax: (403) 287-6540

Email: [centraloffice@telus.net](mailto:centraloffice@telus.net)

Office Hours:

Mon to Thr: 8:30am – 1:00pm, 2:00pm – 5:00pm

Fri: 8:30am – 5:30pm, Sat: 9:00am – 1:00pm

Closed Sundays and Stat Holiday Weekends

**CLOSED: Saturday, Aug. 2nd & Monday, Aug. 4th**

# NEW MEETINGS

**Northwest Calgary Group: New Meeting**  
(Open, Mixed, Step/Tradition)  
Thursday, 8:00pm  
Foothills Alliance Church  
333 Edgepark Blvd. N.W.

**New Fellowship Group**  
(Open, Mixed)  
Monday & Friday, 7:00pm  
Hanna Hospital Cafeteria  
Hanna, AB

**Harvest Hills Big Book Study**  
(Open, Mixed)  
Monday, 7:30pm  
Harvest Hills Alliance Church  
10099 Harvest Hills Blvd. N.W.

**Chestermere Group**  
(Open, Mixed)  
Sunday, 7:00pm  
*Wheelchair Accessible*  
Chestermere Town Hall  
105 Marina Rd.

**Daily Reflections**  
(Open)  
Thursday, 8:30pm  
Scarborough United Church  
134 Scarborough Ave. S.W.

**Hussar Group**  
(Open, Mixed)  
Friday, 8:00pm  
Hussar School (downstairs)  
More Info: Gail G. 934-9819

**Ladies Living Sober**  
(Closed, Ladies, 12 x 12, Discussion)  
Thursday, 7:00pm  
Lutheran Church  
13811 Deer Ridge Dr. SE

# MEETING CHANGES

**New Beginnings**  
ALL meetings, ALL days, ALL times!  
New Address:  
#203 - 11625 Elbow Drive S.W.  
Canyon Meadows Shopping Centre

**272 Group**  
272 Group will not be holding their regular Friday night meeting **July 18, 2008**. Instead, they will be having their annual BBQ @ **7:00pm, Sam Livingston Fish Hatchery**.

**9th Tradition**  
Thursdays, 8:00pm  
Meeting time changed from  
Thur. 8:30pm TO Thur. 8:00pm

**Action Group**  
Wednesday, 8:00pm  
New Meeting location!!!  
First Mennonite Church  
2600 Richmond Rd. S.W.

**Get To The Point Group**  
Thursday, 7:45pm  
Meeting time changed from  
Thur. 7:00pm TO Thur. 7:45pm

**"Beginners Take 12"**  
(formerly "Back to Basics")  
Monday, 8:00pm meeting ONLY.  
Early meeting time cancelled.

**Knocking on Heaven's Door Group**  
(Open, Mixed, Discussion)  
Sunday, 2:30pm  
**\*NOTE: Music Jam following meeting on the 2nd and 4th Sunday's ONLY: 3:30pm - 6:00pm**

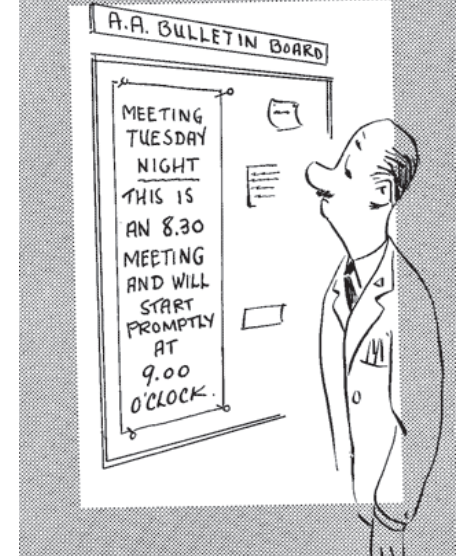
**Tsuu T'ina Reserve Meeting**  
Tuesday, 5:00pm  
Meeting time changed from  
Wed. 8:00pm TO Tues. 5:00pm

# CANCELLED MEETINGS

**Podium Group**  
Tuesdays, 8:00pm  
Calgary, AB

**Bonanza Group**  
Tuesdays  
Calgary, AB

# Rule 62:



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# Get Back to the AA Basics

**Lee H.**  
Calgary, AB  
*Calgary Gratitude Roundup*  
June 6-8, 2008

**S**tick with the fundamentals of the Alcoholics Anonymous program. That was the overall message several speakers brought to AA members attending the 2008 Gratitude Roundup in Calgary in early June.

Get back to the basics, and find and develop a deeper spiritual connection with your higher power, were emphasized by both Canadian and U.S. speakers addressing some 1000 AA members who attended the 27th annual Gratitude Roundup at the Glenmore Inn June 6 to 8.

"When I started out the power greater than me was the AA program and it still is," Len B. of Calgary, told a packed room to kick off the conference's Saturday morning session.

"God walks in these rooms, so I just have to listen."

Len B. was one of six speakers, with more than 150 years of combined sobriety, to address the Roundup. Other speakers included Bob O. from the Happy Way Group, Inglewood, Colorado, Karen G. from Venice, California, Chris R. from Hunt, Texas and Don. C. from Colorado Springs, Colorado. Also sharing her experience at the conference was Tannis L. of Saskatoon, Sask. who described how the support of a co-worker who was involved in the AA program led her to discover the AI-Anon program and cope with an abusive alcoholic relationship.

Each speaker, in an open and frank manner, well

tempered with humor, gave an impassioned description of their life journey with alcoholism – disclosing what they used to be like, what happened and what they are like now.

Len B. who was born and raised in Saskatchewan got sober at the age of 28, which was more than 40 years ago. "People can philosophize and theorize all they want about turning their will and the their lives over to the care of God, but unless they take action they've got dick," he says.

Once into the program, Len B. accepted God as his higher power, he did a thorough Step 4, "as best as he could", found someone with experience and knowledge with which to do his Step 5, and prayed and meditated to have God remove his defects of character. Len B. says he realized in Step 6 that in the grand scheme of the universe "he was just a speck, but a unique speck – like a snowflake. As I found humility, I also realized that each of us has a special gift that we bring to this program and to society," says Len. B.

Chris R., a member of the Ingram Solution Group in Texas, got sober in the late '80s. Today he works at a hospital – a drug and alcohol treatment center. He says he has seen too many people struggle and die because they didn't get the help in AA they needed. He cautioned members to avoid middle of the road solutions.

"I am product of middle of the road solutions," says Chris R. "I know it when I see it and I don't approve of it. Middle of the road solution is anything that doesn't jibe with the Big Book. We have a fellowship that is chock-a-block full of people who feel they can say anything they want in a meeting because it sounded good, or some counselor told them this, or a sponsor who should have known better told them that. They share at a meeting like it is gospel. But the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous is the only gospel. That is the bottom line."

Karen G., 63, of Venice, California got sober in Lincoln, Nebraska in 1982. After many years of alcohol and drug abuse, which resulted in failed marriages and

finally cost her her job she found her way into AA and eventually connected the Clancy I. as her sponsor.

She too urged all in AA to strictly follow the program lined out in the Big Book. "I call it God's magnificent AA because AA is a miracle," she says. "The basic steps are to get the Big Book, get a sponsor, and get busy working the in the AA program."

Karen G. says she did what her sponsor told her, but it still took quite a while for her to discover the spirituality of the program. "Eventually I came to believe in a higher power but I firmly believe we see when we are ready to see, and hear when we are ready to hear and not before," says Karen G. "It has worked for me, because I came from an alcoholic hell and I have been given the keys to the Kingdom."

Bob O., 70, of Inglewood Colorado also urged AA members to follow the Big Book which sets out the directions for the program.

"The Fellowship of the spirit is the connection we have with other people who have followed the directions," he says. "It is not a bunch of scared people huddled together in a meeting. You can walk into and AA meeting see who has done the steps...and if you can't you probably haven't."

"People can run their BS and talk about all sorts of ethereal things that I don't understand, and I think 'what to hell are you doing here?' There are two choices here, if you come into AA and you don't do the steps and don't engage in a recovery program, then what are you here for? It is absurd. Don't you want to know who you are, who you can be? Don't you want to see where God can take you, see if this thing works?"

"Two things drive me nuts - people who come in and don't do anything and people who come in and stop too soon. They don't realize what doing this program over and over will do for them. ☺"

The Gratitude Roundup is held every June in Calgary, AB. To learn more about helping with next year's Gratitude Roundup, contact Central Office at 777-1212.

# VALUABLE 12 STEP OPPORTUNITIES

“Practical experience shows that nothing will so much insure immunity from drinking as intensive work with other alcoholics.”

- Big Book, Pg. 89

Members needed to carry the message to **Bowden Institution**.

(Please note: Security clearance is required)

More Information: email: [corrections@area78.org](mailto:corrections@area78.org)

Members needed to carry the message to the **Remand Centre, Spy Hill Jail and Calgary Youth Offenders Centre**.

(Please note: ALL THREE require security clearance & min. 1 yr. sobriety)

More Information: **Melissa R. (403) 264-5268**

Members needed at Central Service Office as **Telephone Monitors**.

One shift per week, Monday to Friday

9:00am to 1:00pm or 2:00pm to 5:00pm

More Information: **Axel (403) 355-5600 or Mathew (403) 777-1212**

Calgary AA would like members for the **12 Step List**.

More Information: **Axel (403) 355-5660 or Mathew (403) 777-1212**

or email: [centraloffice@telus.net](mailto:centraloffice@telus.net)

**Bridging the Gap** is looking for members willing to work in **NE Calgary** as well **Centres Outside of Calgary**.

More Information: **Mathew (403) 777-1212 or email: [centraloffice@telus.net](mailto:centraloffice@telus.net)**

## Calgary & Area 78 Corrections Committees:

We are always in need of **any and all, current or old Grapevines**, for use in the jails of Southern Alberta. Drop them off in the special box at CSO and they will get read several more times & help inmates to find sobriety. You can also give them to your GSR to take to the CGSC meeting or Area Assembly.

## Join the Public Information Committee!:

There are many service opportunities available on this fun and exciting committee. The public information committee is dedicated to spreading word to the public about the **“solution on which we can absolutely agree and join in brotherly and harmonious action!”** (BB pg. 17)

Next meeting: **Central Office - Always the LAST Wednesday of the month.**

More information: [pichair.calgary@gmail.com](mailto:pichair.calgary@gmail.com)

“We are continuously being asked to speak at non-AA meetings. PI can always use more “informed” speakers for non-AA occasions. This is a very good opportunity to be of service to the still suffering alcoholic. Please join us!”

-Public Information Committee

## Lend your Help to District 75:

All current and past GSRs (General Service Representatives), whose groups reside in District 75, are invited to come help District 75 choose a new DCM (District Committee Member).

Come and join us, July 20th at 4:00pm at the Recovery Group, 4820 Macleod Tr. S.

## Notice of Gratitude:

On behalf of The 2008 Calgary Gratitude Roundup Committee, we wish to thank the Calgary A.A. Community as a whole for all their support in making this year's Roundup a great success!

Also, thank you for allowing us, the committee members, to have the privilege and opportunity to be of service.

## We're Moving!!!

“New Beginnings” has a new home!

“New Beginnings” will be moving effective **July 13th, 2008** to:

*Canyon Meadows Shopping Centre  
#203 - 11625 Elbow Drive, S.W.*

(Please note: This move effects all “New Beginnings” meetings - all days, all times!)

All submissions to be included in any upcoming editions of the Westword newsletter should be sent to [westwordeditor@gmail.com](mailto:westwordeditor@gmail.com) no later than the first Monday of each month. Anything sent past this deadline MAY NOT be received in time to be included in the edition.

Thank you - Westword Editor

# UPCOMING EVENTS

## Edson 48th Annual AA Roundup

July 18th - July 20th, 2008

Pinegrove Hall

Edson, AB

More Info: 780-723-3128

## Crowsnest Pass Camp-Out

July 25th - July 26th, 2008

West of Coleman, AB

Registration Fee is a 7th Tradition Donation

## District 86 Pig Roast

August 9th - August 10th, 2008

5 miles East of Balzac on Hwy. 566

Turn South on Range Rd. 290

Go 2.7 miles to site.

There will be signs to guide you!

Cost is a 7th Tradition donation

**Central Office has flyers with maps!**

## District 20's Annual AA Roundup

August 15th - August 17th, 2008

Riverdale Mini Park

20km North of Wainwright, AB

More Info: 780-842-4752

**Central Office has flyers with maps!**

## CORN ROAST!

August 22nd - August 24th, 2008

Writing on Stone Provincial Park

41km East of Milk River, AB

More Info: 403-362-4914

**Central Office has flyers for more info!**

## District 14's Annual AA Roundup

Saturday Oct. 4th, 2008

Rosedale Community Hall

Hussar, AB

More Info: 403-334-0246

## CSO NEWS

**JUST ARRIVED!**  
**4 HOT NEW GRAPEVINE CDs!**

Emotional Sobriety - vol. 1 & 2

Spiritual Awakenings - vol. 1 & 2

**\$14.50/ea.**

## 4 AWESOME AA DVDs!

Markings on the Journey - A history of AA

**\$22.50**

Bill tells his story - from Stepping Stones, NY

**\$22.50**

Bill discusses the 12 traditions

**\$14.00**

Alcoholics Anonymous - about AA in general

**\$14.00**

**Still Discounted!!!**

Big books are still only \$9.00!!!

Keep those contributions coming so they can remain that price!

# HAPPY AA BIRTHDAY!

## June

### 272:

Malcolm 1 yr.  
Sandra 2 yrs.

### Dalhousie Men's:

Greg L. 1 yr.

### Garnett Block:

Michelle 1 yr.  
Leane F. 2 yrs.  
Tammy 4 yrs.  
Joy 4 yrs.  
Bill E. 7 yrs.  
Monty 20 yrs.

### Glenmore:

Bonnie M. 1 yr.  
Mike R. 4 yrs.  
Roy G. 5 yrs.  
Pete 6 yrs.  
Mark M. 14 yrs.  
Tom R. 16 yrs.  
Leslee 20 yrs.

### Link Group:

Lorna G. 15 yrs.  
Geoff S. 23 yrs.

### Marlborough Park:

Carlene D. 2 yrs.  
Emilian D. 20 yrs.

### New Beginnings:

Danie N. 1 yr.  
Susan W. 1 yr.  
Jamie H. 1 yr.  
Joan M. 3 yrs.  
Margery K. 4 yrs.  
Tamara 4 yrs.  
Johanna A. 5 yrs.  
Cornelia H. 7 yrs.  
Anne H. 10 yrs.  
Ted S. 12 yrs.  
Jim B. 14 yrs.  
Jan H. 19 yrs.  
Bob R. 23 yrs.

### Northlanders Group:

Karen K. 1 yr.  
Garfield A. 13 yrs.

Ray M. 26 yrs.

### Ogden Group:

Brian J. 20 yrs.

### Recovery:

Tiro 1 yr.  
Joel T. 1 yr.  
Lacey O. 3 yrs.  
Ron L. 5 yrs.

### Sunday Morn. 11am:

Maryan Mc. 10 yrs.  
Bob N. 17 yrs.  
Wayne J. 24 yrs.

### Tues. Morn. Ladies:

Gail P. 4 yrs.  
Eileen G. 9 yrs.  
Susan M. 21 yrs.

### Unity:

Jim H. 7 yrs.

## July

### Airport Group:

Morgan 11 yrs.  
Gordon B. 19 yrs.  
Bev T. 20 yrs.  
Morris B. 28 yrs.  
Ray H. 31 yrs.

### Back to the Drawing

#### Board:

Rick B. 16 yrs.  
Ross T. 21 yrs.

### Crossroads:

Audrey C. 16 yrs.  
Steve M. 30 yrs.  
Flo J. N. 40 yrs.

### Dalhousie Men's:

James N. 1 yr.  
Bill C. 3 yrs.  
Keith M. 16 yrs.  
Moe R. 34 yrs.

### Highland Park:

Margaret L. 29 yrs.  
Amy M. 34 yrs.

Frank L. 34 yrs.

### Link Group:

Norm C. 11 yrs.  
Randy S. 16 yrs.  
Bill A. 16 yrs.  
Lorene S. 16 yrs.

### MAAT Group:

Ken R. 22 yrs.

### Recovery:

Carlos T. 1 yr.  
Adam B. 1 yr.

Tanner M. 1 yr.

Daryl Y. 1 yr.

David G. 2 yrs.

Rob W. 4 yrs.

### Northlanders Group:

Vera 4 yrs.  
Shannon F. 25 yrs.

### Ogden Group:

Al L. 9 yrs.  
Donna P. 11 yrs.  
Don C. 23 yrs.

If you would like to contribute a recovery related story to be published in the Westword, simply drop it off at Central Office or email it to:  
**westwordeditor@gmail.com**



## SUNDAY MORNING BREAKFAST

### Downtown Ramada Inn

708 - 8th Ave. SW

Breakfast - 9:00am

Speaker - 10:00am

### Come and join us for breakfast:

Buffet Breakfast . . . . . \$12.00

Healthy Start Breakfast . . . \$9.00

Toast & Coffee . . . . . \$4.00

Coffee . . . . . \$2.00

To inquire about speaking opportunities in the future, call Jacques at 714-5101.



## DOWNTOWN SATURDAY NIGHT SPEAKER MTG.

### Fortis Building

North Tower

801 - 7th Ave. SW

Speaker - 8:00pm

## KEY CONTACTS

Intergroup Chairperson .....calgaryintergroupchair@gmail.com

Public Information Chairperson ..... pichair.calgary@gmail.com

Telephone Monitoring Chairperson .....monitorchair@gmail.com

Intergroup Secretary .....CalgaryAA@shaw.com

Westword Editor ..... westwordeditor@gmail.com

Intergroup Archives..... calgaryintergrouparchives@gmail.com

Calgary Central Office.....centraloffice@telus.net

Area 78 website ..... http://www.area78.org



## TELEPHONE MONITORING

This is an experience you must not miss. We know you will not want to miss it. Frequent contact with newcomers and with each other is the bright spot of our lives.

- Big Book, Pg. 89

Thank you to all who signed up as late night monitors!

If you would like to serve in this capacity, please phone Axel at:

# 355-5600

monitorchair@gmail.com