

SUGGESTED 25¢ DONATION



THE WESTWORD

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER PUBLISHED BY THE CALGARY INTERGROUP OF AA

TO RECEIVE ELECTRONIC COPY OF THE WESTWORD PLEASE EMAIL westwordeditor@gmail.com

Calgary
Alcoholics Anonymous
Central Service Office

#2, 4015 – 1 Street S.E.
Calgary, AB, T2G 4X7

Office hours:

Mon–Fri, 8:30am–5:00pm
Closed for lunch 1-2pm
Saturday, 9:00am–1:00pm
Closed holiday weekends

Telephone: (403) 777-1212
Answering service is 7x24

Email:

centraloffice@telus.net

See www.calgaryaa.org for
up-to-date Information,
meetings and events
schedule.

Please email or call us for
any changes to the meeting
schedule or to post in the
online calendar of events.

**Check out the AA
bookstore at Central Office
for:**

AA & Grapevine books,
pamphlets, committee
information, CD's and
DVD's, chips/medallions,
etc



For more information contact
Dean @ 587-577-4933 or
Noelle @ 403-874-4647



BANFF ROUNDUP

Sponsored by Calgary Intergroup

March 3-5, 2017
Banff Park Lodge, Banff Alberta

SPEAKERS

Scott L., (AA) Counce, Tenn.
Jennifer H.-K., (AA) Plano, Texas
Jack C., (AI-Anon) Sylmar, California
Leslie C., (AA) Sylmar, California
Russell S., (AA) Miami, Florida

SPECIAL EVENTS

Friday night music jam & open mic
Saturday Night Dance
Workshops
AA and AI-Anon meetings

TICKETS

Registration only: \$37/person
Includes Friday Night Music Jam and
Saturday Night Dance
Banquet & Registration: \$103/person
Includes Registration + Saturday Night
Banquet dinner (no door sales)
**All tickets may be purchased from your
GSR or at the Calgary Central Office.**
Central Office accepts Visa and MasterCard
(over phone), Interac, cheques and cash.
Contact Central Office at 403-777-1212
or online at centraloffice@telus.net

ACCOMMODATIONS

Banff Park Lodge, 222 Lynx Street, Banff, Alberta
Phone 1-800-661-9266 or 1-403-762-4433, or online at www.banffparklodge.com
Special room rate of \$141/night, double occupancy, taxes not included
Accommodations can be booked online or by phone with the hotel.
Use Group ID #25392, Password #520
NATIONAL PARKS HAVE FREE ENTRY IN 2017. HAPPY 150th BIRTHDAY CANADA!

For further information, contact:
www.BanffRoundup.com – or – info@BanffRoundup.com

Intergroup Contacts:

Intergroup Alternate Chair	cgigalterchair@gmail.com	Intergroup Chairperson	cgigchair@gmail.com
Intergroup Archives Chair	cgigarchives@gmail.com	Telephone Monitoring Chair	cgigtelmonitorchair@gmail.com
Public Information Chair	pichair.calgary@gmail.com	12 Step Chair List	cgig12steplist@gmail.com
Westword Editor	westwordeditor@gmail.com	Intergroup Secretary	cgigsecretary@gmail.com
Calgary Central Office	centraloffice@telus.net	Intergroup Treasurer	cgigtreasurer@gmail.com
Banff Roundup Chair	info@banffroundup.com	Intergroup Special Events	cgigevents@gmail.com
Sunday Morning Breakfast Chair	cgigbrkfst@gmail.com		

Meeting Changes

NEW MEETINGS:

Garnet Block, new step/discussion meetings every Tuesday and Thursday at 1:30 pm at 1609 Centre St NW (Sept/16)

Okotoks Sunday Morning Breakfast Meeting: meets only on the last Sunday of every month at Denny's Restaurant (lounge) in Okotoks, 8:00am Breakfast, 9:00am speaker (Sept/16)

Regal Group has added a meeting: Mondays 7 pm, Closed Big Book discussion, Renfrew United Church, 956 Radnor Ave. NE, Calgary (Nov/16)

Rockyford Group, Tuesdays, 8 pm, Open Beginners, Rockyford United Church (across from school), Rockyford AB (Nov/16)

Tsui T'ina Tuesday Night Group, Tuesdays, 6:00 pm, Open, Step/topic discussion, Spirit Healing Lodge, Old Agency Road (off Bullhead Road, off Anderson Road), Tsui T'ina AB (Nov/16)

MEETING CHANGES:

Daily Reflections Ladies has changed their time and day from Sunday 1:30 pm to Saturday 8:00 pm. Same location at Scarboro United Church, 134 Scarboro Ave SW, Calgary (Jan/17)

Inglewood Group, beginning January 1, 2017, the Inglewood Group will change it's meeting format from a Step/Tradition to a Big Book Discussion format. Same time, same place! (Jan/17)

Langdon BYOC will be moving to #11 Center Street, Langdon, AB, across from Tim Hortons (Sept/16)

Nanton Monday Group has moved to the Nanton United Church (basement), 2121 – 21 Street, Nanton. Everything else the same. (Oct/16)

South Calgary Health Campus (hospital) meeting, Wednesdays, southeast, has changed their meeting time from 8:30 to 8:00 pm (Dec/16)

MEETING CANCELLATIONS:

Tsui T'ina Thursday Women's Group has been cancelled (Nov/16)

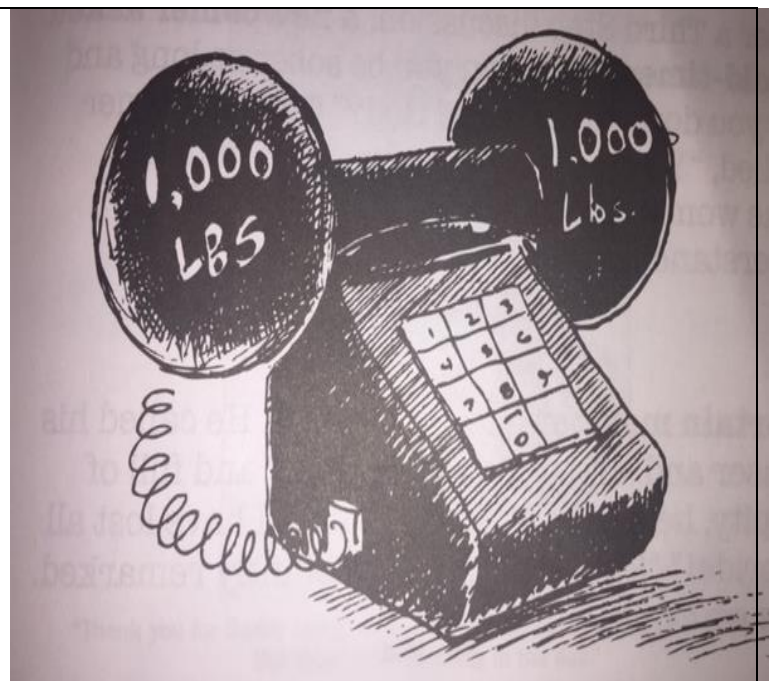
December 26 Daily Reflections

"ACCEPTING SUCCESS OR FAILURE"

Furthermore, how shall we come to terms with seeming failure or success? Can we now accept and adjust to either without despair or pride? Can we accept poverty, sickness, loneliness, and bereavement with courage and serenity? Can we steadfastly content ourselves with the humbler, yet sometimes more durable, satisfactions when the brighter, more glittering achievements are denied us?

Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, p.112

After I found A.A. and stopped drinking. It took awhile before I understood why the First Step contained two parts: my powerlessness over alcohol, and my life's unmanageability. In the same way, I believed for a long time that, in order to be in tune with the Twelve Steps, it was enough for me "to carry this message to alcoholics". That was rushing things. I was forgetting that there were a total of Twelve Steps and that the Twelfth Step also had more than one part. Eventually I learned that it was necessary for me to "practice these principles" in all areas of my life. In working all the Steps thoroughly, I not only stay sober and help someone else to achieve sobriety, but also I transform my difficulty with living into a joy of living.



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

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!



All birthdays are entered as received. Birthdays are posted for the month past, and the current month of issue.

Deadline for submissions is the last Thursday of the month. Please submit to westwordeditor@gmail.com

December			January		
ABC Group	MAAT Group	Ogden Group	Action Group	Langdon BYOC	Recovery Group
Glenn B 8 years	Ron W 13 years	Cecelia PJ 21 years	Kevin O 9 years	Adam N 2 years	Prasad G 1 year
Darmody M 14 years	McKenzie Towne	Eric P 26 years	Tim M 10 years	Midnapore Group	Marie CU 28 years
Mel S 52 years	Ryan B 1 year	Daryl D 28 years	Dellas Z 15 years	Murray JM 1 year	Roy S 31 years
Awakenings Group	Susan O 1 year	Recovery Group	Jerry S 36 years	Mike M 2 years	SMOG Group
Don B 6 years	Brad I 4 years	Clyde LS 1 year	Back From Hell	Ryan P 3 years	Tia S 4 years
Rudy N 22 years	Margaret S 5 years	Marie M 40 years	Tammy G 3 years	Al M 7 years	Brian H 11 years
Back From Hell	Ward N 5 years	Rule 62 Group	Ben K 10 years	Dan W 8 years	Laurie B 12 years
Clint P 2 years	Henry J 15 years	Randy M 1 year	Jack J 14 years	Wes W 39 years	Robin H 13 years
Rod L 30 years	Colleen Mc 27 years	Steps Stories & Beyond	Rene R 36 years	Old Time Group	South View By the Book
Deer Ridge Group	Dennis G 32 years	Steps Stories & Beyond	Deer Ridge Group	Patrick S 6 years	James T 4 years
Dawn 4 years	Jon G 34 years	Alva 6 years	Aaron L 1 year	Heather W 17 years	Steps Stories & Beyond
Delia E 26 years	Midnapore Group	Tony B 9 years	Dustin 5 years	Sandra M 27 years	Whitesheep Group
Edgemont Group	Adora W 1 year	Walking Eagle	Jen J 8 years	Ogden Group	Reid M 3 years
Derek T 2 years	Janis C 1 year	Kathy B 4 years	Sally A 8 years	Chris C 1 year	Brad G 2 years
Janice C 6 years	Kristy M 2 years	Wednesday Morning Eye Opener	Bill D 22 years	Mike A 1 year	Dan F 24 years
Anima K 8 years	Kim K 5 years	Shelda F 12 years	Marilynn 22 years	Tyler C 1 year	
Garnet Block	Dave G 9 years	West End Step & Tradition	Pam S 25 years	Jason O 2 years	
Ron W 43 years	New Beginnings	Whitesheep Group	Edgemont Group	Denise D 3 years	
Glenmore Group	Brandy A 1 year	Derrick S 3 years	Lisa D 1 year	Savannah M 3 years	
Oliver 1 year	Joan B 5 years	Scott T 3 years	Eric B 6 years	Crystal H 4 years	
Doug D 1 year	Darren 5 years	Dave F 5 years	Judy McC 18 years	Derek F 4 years	
Gaye DL 6 years	Aie R 7 years	Jeff D 26 years	John G 21 years	Tom D 5 years	
Mitch HF 8 years	Kelly C 7 years	Roger P 38 years	Kim W 41 years	Jen A 8 years	
Carol B 12 years	Carol L 19 years	Ian M 45 years	Inglewood Group	Brock L 12 years	
Gail N 13 years	Nancy R 24 years		Bill W 7 years	Sherry F 12 years	
Lucinda 18 years	Ogden Group		Kincora Group	Jesse D 16 years	
Dallon 26 years	Gavin 6 years		Phil 2 years	Bayne H 24 years	
Barry D 27 years	Jimmy 6 years		Charlotte 3 years	Vince C 24 years	
David 36 years	Marty R 6 years		Rick R 5 years	Open Door Group	
Lakeside Serenity	Amber K 9 years		Jon B 6 years	Jo-Lynn H 7 years	
Nick M 2 years			Mike O 9 years		
Kyler B 4 years					

A First Step Prayer

Dear Lord,
 Help me to see and admit that I am powerless over my alcoholism.
 Help me to understand how my alcoholism has led to unmanageability in my life.
 Help me to understand the true meaning of powerlessness.
 Remove from me all denial of my alcoholism.

Developed from the book Alcoholics Anonymous
 (chapter "More About Alcoholism")

Thanks to all the people who helped out and attended the Steps, Stories & Beyond New Year's Dinner and Dance. It was another successful year!

Would you like to be of service?

We are looking for motivated people to be a part of a short-term subcommittee for the Sunday Morning Breakfast meeting. The meeting has experienced some recent setbacks, so the subcommittee will evaluate the current meeting setup. This would involve a few hours of your time for a month or two. For more information, please contact Kavery at cqigbrkfst@gmail.com.

LIST OF EVENTS

DATE	EVENT	More Info
January 20-21, 2017 (Friday-Saturday) Foothills Community Centre 204 Community Way, Okotoks, AB	<u>Area 78 Committee Meeting</u>	Registration 4-9pm Friday, DCMs, table officers and Committee Chairs \$15, members and visitors free
January 21, 2017 (Saturday) McKenzie Towne Church 7 McKenzie Towne Gate S.E., Calgary, AB	<u>McKenzie Towne Anniversary</u>	3:00 -6:00 pm, No tickets required, Cost 7 th Tradition, food, fellowship, 3 speakers to share experience on Unity, Recovery and Service.
January 28, 2017 (Saturday) Parkdale Community Centre 3512 – 5 Ave SW, Calgary, AB	<u>District 77 Roundup</u>	Registration at 9:00am. Tickets: Registration only \$15/person; Registration + Banquet \$35/person, tickets at Central Office or District 77 GSR's.
February 10–12, 2017 (Friday – Sunday) Viscount Gort Hotel 1670 Portage Ave., Winnipeg, Manitoba	<u>Western Regional AA Service Assembly 2017 (WRAASA)</u>	Starts Feb 10 at 8:00am. Ends Feb 12 at 5:00pm. For more information, talk to your GSR or call Central Office at 403-777-1212.
March 3-5, 2017 (Friday – Sunday) Banff Park Lodge 222 Lynx Street, Banff, AB	<u>Banff Roundup 2017</u>	Registration: \$37/person, Registration + Banquet: \$103/person, tickets can be purchased from your GSR or Central Office
March 3-5, 2017 (Friday-Sunday) Whitefish Mountain Resort Whitefish, Montana, US	<u>30th Annual Whitefish Sober Ski</u>	Call Jake H. 406-250-8757 or email jakehows@gmail.com for more info. Lodging discounts available at Cheap Sleep Motel – 406-862-5515. (Mention Sober Ski for \$60 a night per room - one or two beds)
March 17-19, 2017 (Friday-Sunday) Sheraton Hotel, 3310 – 50 Ave, Red Deer, AB	<u>Area 78 Preconference Assembly</u>	More info to come.

A Year-end Message from the Intergroup Steering Committee

Dear Calgary & Area AA membership:

Your Calgary Intergroup Steering Committee would like to say a big THANK YOU from the bottom of our hearts for your individual and group contributions since we put out that SOS in the Westward!

We asked for your help to support your Calgary Central Service Office and as well as the Intergroup Committee's to continue to be active in performing our vital service work in Calgary and you responded overwhelmingly.

We have had two consecutive record months of donations to Central Office, and we are now beginning to recover financially. This is entirely due to you and your responsibility to your service structure!

You and your group contributions are used to keep your Central Service office in Calgary open to purchase and distribute your AA literature in a cost-effective manner. As well contributions support the important service committee's like Public Information, Monitoring, the 12 Step list, the meeting list both in paper and on web page to name just a few.

Again, we would like to express our sincere gratitude. Thank YOU.

Your Intergroup Steering Committee

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

Service Opportunities

Upcoming CGSC Service Commitments

Treatment Facility	AA Group - Jan
Renfrew Tuesday	Southwest Serenity
Renfrew Wednesday (Bridging the Gap)	
Renfrew Thursday	Deer Ridge
Renfrew Sunday	Back From Hell
Sunrise	Southview By the Book
Alpha House	ODAT Group
Dream Centre	Daily Reflections

Upcoming Intergroup Service Commitments

Sunday Breakfast at Ramada **served till 9:30**	AA Group
January 1	ABC
January 8	Thursday Night Ladies
January 15	Back From Hell
January 22	
January 29	

Telephone Monitoring Dates	AA Group
January 2 - 8	SMOG
January 9 - 15	Airdrie Reflections
January 16 - 22	Primary Purpose
January 23 - 29	Rule 62
Jan 30 - Feb 5	NW Step & Tradition

Calls for Service

Service Opportunity ***Chairpersons needed for Corrections***

Calgary Corrections Committee aims to provide chairpersons to conduct more than 30 AA meetings per month at the three Corrections facilities in Calgary — Calgary Young Offenders Centre (CYOC); Calgary Corrections Centre (Spyhill); and Calgary Remand Centre. CYOC and Remand each have separate mens' and womens' meetings.

While there is a dedicated core of chairpersons, there is need for more names on the chair roster at various facilities to chair one hour-long AA meeting per month.

Immediate needs:

- two male chairpersons for Thursday evening men's meetings at CYOC
- eight female chair persons for Sunday evening women's meetings at CYOC

Requirements:

- Minimum one year of sobriety
- Security clearance from Calgary Police Service, required for any facility. In addition volunteers at CYOC need an "Intervention Records Check" available from family services. (clearances may take four to six weeks).
- Once clearances are received, all facilities require volunteers to attend an orientation session — learn about jail protocol, receive visitor ID.
- Hopefully the ability to commit to chair one meeting per month for at least one year.

If you are interested in a rewarding service opportunity — may sound intimidating, but meetings are a non-threatening environment — contact Calgary Corrections chair at: cgscrcorrections@gmail.com for forms and details.

These are opportunities to "carry the message" and you never know when something said at that meeting may make all the difference.

Service Opportunity ***Big Books Needed***

Members of the Corrections Committee of Calgary General Services Committee (CGSC) chair several AA meetings at the various corrections facilities in Calgary each month. At many meetings there is often a request or opportunity to provide inmates, who appear serious about recovery, with a copy of a Big Book they can read while in jail and take with them when they leave. There is an ongoing demand for books.

To offset the cost of this literature, the Corrections Committee is proposing a service opportunity to all AA groups or individual members.

- Corrections Committee is asking all groups to consider donating a copy of a Big Book specifically for meetings at the jails. A group could donate one book, or pledge to provide two books every three months, or three books per year etc. — what ever they feel they can afford, hopefully on an ongoing basis.
- Corrections Committee needs the actual books and not the cash equivalent.
- To meet security protocol, the Big Books need to be the soft covered, full (576 pg.) version — not hard covered nor the pocket size version.
- Easy drop off — Group literature chairs or other members picking up supplies at Calgary Central Office, could buy a book for Corrections and leave it in "Corrections Box" at central office.

The Corrections Committee considers this a "carry the message" service opportunity, that hopefully helps some of these men and women find the solution. Any help you can provide is greatly appreciated.

For further information contact Calgary Corrections Committee at: cgscrcorrections@gmail.com

The January 2017 Issue of GRAPEVINE is Coming!

This month's special section, AA members share stories of emotional sobriety.

The rewards of seeking emotional sobriety are serenity, emotional balance and an increased joy of living. As we gain time in AA, use the Steps and tools, and stay close to our Higher Power, we learn to let go of fear, find solutions rather than stay stuck in problems, put aside selfish demands and practice outgoing love. This month's special section features stories about emotional sobriety.

In the article "[Making It Easy for Others to Love Us](#)," a man with more than 40 years in the program shares how AA has given him sobriety, acceptance and a life with compassion and wonder. Although, at 32 years sober, a member lost his home and his love, he did the right thing and went where he was needed most in "[Coming Home](#)." In "[Back to the Surface](#)," a woman shares how feelings and events may sometimes take her down, but she now has the tools to come right back up. And in the story "[What Is Happiness?](#)," a son's question on an autumn day reminds a sober dad just how far he's come.

To view the Table of Contents, click here.

Listen or download the recorded version here.

Big Book Studies

"Mondays At Sheldon Chumir Centre"

There is a weekly Big Book study currently running at Sheldon Chumir Centre, 1213 - 4 Street SW on Monday nights 7:00pm – 9:00pm on the 3rd floor in room 3122.

"The Cowboy Ray Way At Haddon Road"

There is a weekly Big Book study at Haddon Road on Sundays from 2:00pm–4:00pm, beginning January 15 and running until April 16. Please bring a Big Book, a highlighter, a note book and an open mind. Big books can be purchased at the meeting or from Central Office. For any questions, please contact Steve at 403-889-5240.

"Joe and Charlie BB Study At ODAT"

There is a weekly Big Book study running Mondays 7:30pm at ODAT, 1840 38 St SE, Calgary in the Eastside Victory Outreach Centre (upstairs room). Please bring a Big Book, Pen, Highlighter, & notebook or writing pad. For more information, directions, etc, please contact Peter L. at 587-707-1464 or email odatmeeting@gmail.com.

"Ladies Big Book Study At New Beginnings"

There is a ladies weekly Big Book study Tuesdays from 1:30pm-3:30pm at New Beginnings, 11625 Elbow Drive SW (Canyon Meadows Shopping Centre) upstairs in room 203. It is run by Maggie B and Sally R. Please bring an unmarked Big Book, Pen, Highlighter, & notebook or writing pad. Additional support materials are provided.

"Joe and Charlie BB Study At Haddon Road"

There is a weekly Big Book study running on Tuesdays at Haddon Road from 7:30pm–9:00pm. For any questions, contact Chris H at 403-860-5313.



A NEW FREEDOM 5th ANNUAL DISTRICT 77 ROUND UP

With Al-Anon Participation

SATURDAY JANUARY 28, 2017

PARKDALE COMMUNITY CENTRE

3512 - 5th Ave NW Calgary

- 9:00 AM REGISTRATION OPENS
- 10:00-11:30 AA SPEAKER Lindsey M (Edmonton)
- 12:00-1:00 LUNCH (7th Tradition)
- 1:00-2:30 AL-ANON SPEAKER Lorna V (Sherwood Park)
- 3:00-4:30 AA SPEAKER Larry V (Sherwood Park)
- 5:00-6:30 DINNER AND COUNTDOWN
- 7:00-8:30 AA BANQUET SPEAKER Marty C (Hamilton Ont)

COST: \$35 Registration & Dinner \$15 Registration

Tickets may be purchased from your G.S.R., Intergroup Rep or from
Central Office (Credit Card accepted)

Ticket Information: Marilyn L. 403-239-4923



Welcome to
Okotoks, Alberta

January 20-21
2017



We're so happy you're coming
to Okotoks in District 18 for the ACM

All members of Alcoholics Anonymous are
encouraged to attend the Area Committee Meeting.

Friday, January 20, 2017

registration: 4:00pm - 9pm
Area Committee Meeting: 5:00 - 9:00pm

Saturday, January 21, 2017 (daytime)

registration: 8:00am to when you get there
Area Committee Meeting: 8:30am - 5:00pm

Saturday, January 21, 2017 (evening)

District Hosted Roast Beef potluck dinner: 6:00pm
Speaker Meeting: 7:30pm - 8:30pm (OPEN)
with guest speaker Becky P. (alternate delegate Area 78)

Foothills Community Centre

204 Community Way, Okotoks, Alberta

registration fees:

for DCMs: \$15
for Table Officers & Committee Chairs: \$15
for members & visitors: FREE



WINNIPEG 2017



Western Regional Alcoholics Anonymous Service Assembly

"Supporting Our Future"

February 10 - 11 - 12, 2017 | Winnipeg | Manitoba

Viscount Gort Hotel
1670 Portage Avenue

More information to follow in upcoming months or...

Ask your GSR!

EMAIL: wraasa2017@gmail.com

WEBSITE: <http://www.wraasa.wix.com/2017>

BRIDGING THE GAP – TWELVE STEP WORK

"Bridging the Gap" is a temporary Contact Program
for the newcomer coming out of a treatment
facility and into Alcoholics Anonymous.

We need Volunteers and Committee Members to
help with Bridging the Gap. We are especially in
need of females from NE & SE Calgary.

Committee Members – help with recruiting
volunteers and speakers as well as spreading BTG
(Bridging the Gap) information.

Volunteers – AA's volunteer to meet with
individuals who are fresh out of a treatment facility
and go with them to their first meeting.

You can contact Bridging the Gap at:

BTGCalgary@gmail.com

Step 1 & Tradition 1

Step 1 – We admitted we were powerless over alcohol – that our lives had become unmanageable.

Who cares to admit complete defeat? Practically no one, of course. Every natural instinct cries out against the idea of personal powerlessness. It is truly awful to admit that, glass in hand, we have warped our minds into such an obsession for destructive drinking that only an act of Providence can remove it from us.

No other kind of bankruptcy is like this one. Alcohol, now become the rapacious creditor, bleeds us of all self-sufficiency and all will to resist its demands. Once this stark fact is accepted, our bankruptcy as going human concerns is complete.

But upon entering A.A. we soon take quite another view of this absolute humiliation. We perceive that only through utter defeat are we able to take our first steps toward liberation and strength. Our admissions of personal powerlessness finally turn out to be firm bedrock upon which happy and purposeful lives may be built.

We know that little good can come to any alcoholic who joins A.A. unless he has first accepted his devastating weakness and all its consequences. Until he so humbles himself, his sobriety – if any – will be precarious. Of real happiness he will find none at all. Proved beyond doubt by an immense experience, this is one of the facts of A.A. life. The principle that we shall find no enduring strength until we first admit complete defeat is the main taproot from which our whole Society has sprung and flowered.

When first challenged to admit defeat, most of us revolted. We had approached A.A. expecting to be taught self-confidence. Then we had been told that so far as alcohol is concerned, self-confidence was no good whatever; in fact, it was a total liability...

Under the lash of alcoholism, we are driven to A.A., and there we discover the fatal nature of our situation. Then, and only then, do we become as open-minded to conviction and as willing to listen as the dying can be. We stand ready to do anything which will lift the merciless obsession from us.

From Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, Chapter on Step 1.

Tradition 1 – Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon A.A. unity.

The unity of Alcoholics Anonymous is the most cherished quality our Society has. Our lives, the lives of all to come, depend squarely upon it. We stay whole, or A.A. dies. Without unity, the heart of A.A. would cease to beat; our world arteries would no longer carry the life-giving grace of God; His gift to us would be spent aimlessly. Back again in the caves, alcoholics would reproach us and say, "What a great thing A.A. might have been!"

"Does this mean," some will anxiously ask, "that in A.A. the individual doesn't count for much? Is he to be dominated by his group and swallowed up in it?"

We may certainly answer this question with a loud "No!" We believe there isn't a fellowship on earth which lavishes more devoted care upon its individual members; surely there is none which more jealously guards the individual's right to think, talk and act as he wishes. No A.A. can compel another to do anything; nobody can be punished or expelled. Our Twelve Steps to recovery are suggestions; the Twelve Traditions which guarantee A.A.'s unity contain not a single "Don't." They repeatedly say "We ought..." but never "You must!"

To many minds all this liberty for the individual spells sheer anarchy. Every newcomer, every friend who looks at A.A. for the first time is greatly puzzled. They see liberty verging on license, yet they recognize at once that A.A. has an irresistible strength of purpose and action...

Those who look closely soon have the key to this strange paradox. The A.A. member has to conform to the principles of recovery. His life actually depends upon obedience to spiritual principles. If he deviates too far, the penalty is sure and swift; he sickens and dies. At first he goes along because he must, but later he discovers a way of life he really wants to live. Moreover, he finds he cannot keep this priceless gift unless he gives it away...

From Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, chapter on Tradition 1.