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# THE WESTWORD

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER PUBLISHED BY THE CALGARY INTERGROUP OF AA

TO RECEIVE ELECTRONIC COPY OF THE WESTWORD PLEASE EMAIL [westwordeditor@gmail.com](mailto: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 24-7

Email:

[centraloffice@calgaryaa.org](mailto:centraloffice@calgaryaa.org)

See [www.calgaryaa.org](http://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.



**A NEW  
FREEDOM**  
With Al-Anon Participation



6th ANNUAL DISTRICT 77 Round Up  
**SATURDAY JANUARY 27, 2018**  
EDGEMONT COMMUNITY CENTRE  
33 Edgevalley Circle NW Calgary

- |    |                               |
|----|-------------------------------|
| 9  | REGISTRATION OPENS            |
| 10 | Glen N - Esterhazy Sk (AA)    |
| 12 | LUNCH - Chili Cook-off        |
| 1  | Greg M - Calgary (Al-Anon)    |
| 3  | Irma V - Esterhazy Sk (AA)    |
| 5  | DINNER & COUNTDOWN            |
| 7  | Rio D - Prince George BC (AA) |



**COST : \$40 Registration, Lunch & Dinner**  
**\$20 Registration & Lunch**  
**Tickets from District 77 GSR's**  
**or Calgary Central Office Call 403-777-1212**

# BANFF ROUNDUP

Sponsored by Calgary Intergroup

**March 2-4, 2018**  
Banff Park Lodge, Banff Alberta

Alok S., (MC) Calgary, Alberta

## SPEAKERS

Rene E., (AA) Franklin, Maryland  
Bob D., (AA) Las Vegas, Nevada  
Richard J., (Al-Anon) Ontario  
Karl M., (AA) Covina, California  
Gemma B., (AA) Sherman Oaks, Calif.

## SPECIAL EVENTS

Friday Night Music Jam & Open Mic,  
Saturday Night Dance, Workshops,  
AA and Al-Anon meetings

## TICKETS

**Registration only: \$37/person**  
Includes Friday Night Music Jam and  
Saturday Night Dance  
**Banquet & Registration: \$104/person**  
Includes Registration + Saturday Night  
Banquet dinner (no door sales)  
**Tickets may be purchased from your  
General Service Rep, Intergroup Rep,  
online at [www.banffroundup.com](http://www.banffroundup.com) or  
from the Calgary Central Service Office  
at 403-777-1212.**

## 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](http://www.banffparklodge.com)  
**Special room rate of \$143/night, double occupancy, taxes not included**

Room availability guaranteed until January 15, 2018.  
Accommodations can be booked online or by phone with the hotel.  
Use Group ID # 25393, Password # 520

For further information, contact:

**[www.BanffRoundup.com](http://www.BanffRoundup.com) – or – [info@BanffRoundup.com](mailto:info@BanffRoundup.com)**

**Intergroup Contacts:**

Intergroup Chairperson	<a href="mailto:cgigchair@gmail.com">cgigchair@gmail.com</a>	Intergroup Alternate Chair	<a href="mailto:cgigalterchair@gmail.com">cgigalterchair@gmail.com</a>
Intergroup Archives Chair	<a href="mailto:cgigarchives@gmail.com">cgigarchives@gmail.com</a>	Telephone Monitoring Chair	<a href="mailto:cgigtelmonitorchair@gmail.com">cgigtelmonitorchair@gmail.com</a>
Public Information Chair	<a href="mailto:pichair.calgary@gmail.com">pichair.calgary@gmail.com</a>	12 Step Chair List	<a href="mailto:cgig12steplist@gmail.com">cgig12steplist@gmail.com</a>
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Calgary Central Office	<a href="mailto:centraloffice@calgaryaa.org">centraloffice@calgaryaa.org</a>	Intergroup Treasurer	<a href="mailto:cgigtreasurer@gmail.com">cgigtreasurer@gmail.com</a>
Banff Roundup Chair	<a href="mailto:info@banffroundup.com">info@banffroundup.com</a>	Intergroup Special Events	<a href="mailto:cgigevents@gmail.com">cgigevents@gmail.com</a>
Sunday Morning Breakfast Chair	<a href="mailto:cgigbrkfst@gmail.com">cgigbrkfst@gmail.com</a>	Intergroup/CGSC Liason	<a href="mailto:cgscintergroup@gmail.com">cgscintergroup@gmail.com</a>

**CGSC Contacts:**

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Treatment Chair	<a href="mailto:cgsc treatment@gmail.com">cgsc treatment@gmail.com</a>	Corrections Chair	<a href="mailto:cgsc corrections@gmail.com">cgsc corrections@gmail.com</a>
Cooperation with the Professional Community Chair	<a href="mailto:cgsc cpc@gmail.com">cgsc cpc@gmail.com</a>	Grapevine Chair	<a href="mailto:cgsc grapevine@gmail.com">cgsc grapevine@gmail.com</a>
Records & Registration Chair	<a href="mailto:cgsc records@gmail.com">cgsc records@gmail.com</a>	Introduction to Service Chair	<a href="mailto:cgsc intro@gmail.com">cgsc intro@gmail.com</a>
Bridging the Gap Chair	<a href="mailto:cgsc btg@gmail.com">cgsc btg@gmail.com</a>	Intergroup/CGSC Liason	<a href="mailto:cgsc intergroup@gmail.com">cgsc intergroup@gmail.com</a>

# Meeting Changes

## NEW MEETINGS

Garnet Block, 1609 Centre St. NW, is adding a new meeting, Fridays at midnight, beginning Sept 29 (Sep/17)

Garnet Block, 1609 Centre St. NW, is adding a new meeting, every day at 5:30 pm, beginning Feb 1 (Feb/18)

Happy, Joyous & Free Group, Tuesdays 6:00 pm, open, Step/Tradition, Eastside Victory Outreach Centre, back door, 1840 – 38 St. SE, Calgary (Jul/17)

## MEETING CHANGES:

Back to the Drawing Board, Sundays southeast has moved. New address: Eastside Victory Outreach Centre, back door, [1840 – 38 St. SE](#).

Everything else is the same – Sundays 7:30 pm, open. (Oct/17)

Beacon's Refugees, Saturdays northwest, have moved. New address: Highwood Lutheran Church, [419 Northmount Dr. NW](#), "Church Office" building & door (across from Colonel Irvine School). All else remains the same. (Nov/17)

Candlelight Group, Thursdays, southeast, will be moving to St. Luke's Anglican Church, [2951 – 26 Ave. SE](#). Last meeting at Southview Com. Centre Nov. 30. First meeting at new location is Dec 7<sup>th</sup>. All else the same. (Dec/17)

Glenmore Group in the southwest will be moving (AS OF SEPT 1<sup>st</sup>) from Hochwald Court to 2509 Dieppe Ave. SW, Building B-6, Room 103 downstairs.

All 24 meetings per week will be moving to the new location, everything else remains the same. (Sept/17)

Glenmore Group Thursday night's Tradition meeting at 8:30 pm is changing to a big book study format as of Jan/18.

Grupo Nuevo Horizonte (Spanish), northeast, Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays at 7 PM & Saturdays at 5 PM has moved to Bay 6, 3850 – 19 St. NE, Calgary, AB (Jul/17)

Haddon Road Conscious Contact Sundays 7:00 pm (1½ hours), open, meditation/discussion, 200 Haddon Road, upstairs. (Jan/18)

Open Door Group, Tuesdays southeast, has moved to the Eastside Victory Outreach Centre, back door, [1840 – 38 St. SE](#), and changed their time from 8:30 to 7:30. (Sept/17)

## MEETING CANCELLATIONS:

Glenmore Group, southwest, has cancelled their Friday midnight meeting (Sep/17)

Midnapore Group, southeast, is cancelling its Saturday and Sunday 8:00 pm meetings. The weekday meetings remain. (Jul/17)

ODAT Group, southeast, is cancelled as of October (Thanksgiving) 2017. Thank you all who have attended & supported the numerous Big Book Studies held by this group. (Oct/17)

Recovery Group, southwest, is cancelling its Friday 8:00 pm meeting, last meeting Aug 25 (Sept/17)

Women of Hope Treatment Facilities meeting at Alpha House, Mondays southeast, is being cancelled, last meeting Sept. 25 (Oct/17)

Woodcreek Group, Thursdays southwest, has been cancelled (Sep/17)

## January 11 Daily Reflections

### "The 100% Step"

*Only Step One, where we made the 100 percent admission we were powerless over alcohol, can be practiced with absolute perfection.*  
Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, p.68

Long before I was able to obtain sobriety in A.A., I knew without a doubt that alcohol was killing me, yet even with this knowledge, I was unable to stop drinking. So, when faced with Step One, I found it easy to admit that I lacked the power to not drink. But was my life unmanageable? Never! Five months after coming into A.A., I was drinking again and wondered why.

Later, back in A.A. and smarting from my wounds, I learned that Step One is the only Step that can be taken 100%. And that the only way to take it 100% is to take 100% of the Step. That was many twenty-four hours ago and I haven't had to take Step One again.

## ***The Public Information Committee of Calgary Intergroup has openings for the following positions***

1. **Literature Package Assembler:** once a month spend a few hours at Central Office putting together 6 to 10 bundles of literature.
2. **Distribution Co-ordinator:** provide and track where Intergroup reps or other members are placing literature around the city.
3. **Advertising Co-ordinator:** place free and paid ads regarding AA in online and print newspapers.
4. **Media and Public Service Announcement Co-ordinator:** contact various media services with information about AA.
5. **Speaker Co-ordinator:** organize engagements and train AA speakers for schools and more.
6. **Special Events Co-ordinator:** organize PI participation in various health fairs.

Together we will apply our 12 Traditions to help still suffering alcoholics of all ages and those who may be in contact with him or her.

Monthly meetings are last Wednesday of the month, 7:00 PM at Central office

For more information e-mail: [pichair.calgary@gmail.com](mailto:pichair.calgary@gmail.com)

***Please consider making a commitment to this very rewarding and challenging work.  
Your love and service are urgently needed.***

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](mailto:westwordeditor@gmail.com)

December				January			
<b>Airdrie Country Group</b>		<b>Midnapore Group</b>		<b>Wednesday</b>		<b>Airdrie Country Group</b>	
Cathy L	8 years	Dave G	10 years	<b>Morning Eyeopener</b>		Diane R	25 years
<b>Awakenings Group</b>		Janis C	2 years	Shelda F	13 years	Moe B	3 years
Don B	7 years	Kim K	6 years	<b>Weekend Serenity</b>		<b>Back From Hell</b>	
Rudy N.	23 years	Kristy B	3 years	Keith B	23 years	Ben K.	11 years
<b>Deer Ridge</b>		Tyler R	1 year	<b>Whitesheep Group</b>		Jack J.	15 years
Delia E	27 years	<b>New Beginnings</b>		Ian M.	46 years	Rene R	37 years
Dawn	5 years	Anita	1 year	Jeff D.	28 Years	<b>Awakenings Groups</b>	
<b>Edgemont Group</b>		Leslie	1 year	Roger P.	39 years	Patti D.	10 years
Kendrick	1 year	Teresa	1 year	Dave F.	6 years	<b>Harvest Hills</b>	
Justin	1 year	Shailey	1 year	Darren W.	6 years	Peter C	42 years
Rob	1 Year	Brandi	2 years	Derrick S.	4 years	<b>Inglewood</b>	
Derek	3 years	Joelle	5 years			Bill D	8 years
Janice	7 years	Darren	6 years			<b>Just for Today</b>	
Anima	9 years	Joan B	6 Years			Trevor S	17 years
<b>Garnet Block</b>		Ceci C	y years			Wendy	30 years
Chris H	1 year	Darmandy	15 years			<b>Kincora Group</b>	
Jeff	1 year	Carol	20 years			Charlotte G.	4 years
Alisa	2 years	Rick V.	20 years			Evan M.	3 years
Sherri-Lynne	4 years	Lyn S.	25 years			Jon B.	7 years
Sherri	10 years	Nancy R.	25 years			Mike O.	10 years
Stu	27 years	<b>NW Calgary Group</b>				Phil	3 years
<b>Haddon Road</b>		Eric J.	1 year			Rick R.	6 years
Kirk R	4 years	<b>Ogden</b>				Kevin L	1 year
Greg H.	14 years	Rosa	1 year			<b>Midnapore Group</b>	
Corey J	20 years	Eric	26 years			Al M	8 years
Ron S	49 years	Darryl	29 years			Mike M	3 years
<b>Harvest Hills</b>		<b>Old Time Group</b>				Murray M	2 years
Dave G	10 years	Kathy B	5 years			Ryan P	5 years
Janis C	2 years	<b>Recovery Group</b>				Wes W	40 years
Kim K	6 years	Marie M.	41 years				
Kristy B	3 years	Woody H.	34 years			<b>Ogden</b>	
Tyler R	1 year	Lestoy S.	24 years			Mike A	2 years
Ron W	13 years	Gary A.	2 years			Chris C	2 years
Jean L	18 years	Clyde L.S.	2 years			Jason O	3 years
Don B	7 years	Bonny W.	1 year			Denise D	4 years
<b>Link Group</b>		Justin	1 year			Crystal H	5 years
Jack M.	35 years	Duane S.	1 year			Jen A	9 years
<b>MAAT</b>		Jas	1 year			Sherry F	12 years
Ron W	13 years	<b>Shipwreck at Sunset</b>				Jesse	17 years
		Marie F.	5 years			Vince C	25 years
		Chad S.	5 years			Brian H	34 years
		Collin G.	2 years				

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# LIST OF EVENTS

DATE	EVENT	More Info
January 19- 20 2018 Whitehorn Community Centre 228 Whitehorn Dr. NE Calgary, AB	<b><u>Area 78 Committee Meeting</u></b>	Registration 5:00 Friday. Local AA members welcome, no registration fee required. ACM begins 5:30 pm Friday. Meetings 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM Saturday. Banquet dinner/speaker to follow. 7 <sup>th</sup> tradition gratefully received. See event poster on <a href="http://www.calgaryaa.org">www.calgaryaa.org</a> .
January 27, 2018 (Saturday) Edgemont Community Centre, 33 Edgevalley Circle NW, Calgary, AB	<b><u>6<sup>th</sup> Annual District 77 Round Up</u></b>	Registration at 9:00am, \$40 Registration with Lunch and Dinner, \$20 Registration with Lunch. Tickets from District 77 GSRs or Central Office.
February 10, 2018 (Saturday) Taber, Alberta	<b><u>Taber Roundup</u></b>	More information to follow.
February 15-18, 2018 (Thursday – Sunday) Phoenix, Arizona, USA	<b><u>54<sup>th</sup> International Women's Conference</u></b>	For more info, please go to <a href="http://www.internationalwomensconference.org">www.internationalwomensconference.org</a> .
March 2-4, 2018 (Friday -Sunday) Banff Park Lodge, Banff Alberta	<b><u>Banff Roundup</u></b>	Tickets may be purchased from your General Service Rep, Intergroup Rep, online at <a href="http://www.banffroundup.com">www.banffroundup.com</a> See event poster on page 1.

**\*\*\*\*\*Steps, Stories and Beyond would like to thank all who attended our roundup and dance on New Year's Eve. The event was a success, however, we ended up with a \$450 shortfall. Unfortunately, if this cost is not recouped, there will likely be no budget for future events. Those wishing to help please contact Buddy B (403) 875-9894. \*\*\*\*\***

## 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")

# Service Opportunities

## Upcoming CGSC Service Commitments

Treatment Facility	AA Group - January	AA Group - February
Renfrew Tuesday	Back from Hell	Midnapore
(Renfrew Wednesday (Bridging the Gap)	Midnapore	New Beginnings
Renfrew Thursday	Regal	Back From Hell
Renfrew Sunday	Saturday Morning Bridge	New Beginnings
Sunrise	Shipwreck at Sunset	Garnet
Alpha House	New Beginnings	Glenmore
Dream Centre	Midnapore	Shipwreck at Sunset
The Alex (bridging the Gap)	NW Calgary	

## Upcoming Intergroup Service Commitments

Sunday Breakfast at Ramada **served till 9:30**	AA Group
January 7	Garnet
January 14	Deer Ridge
January 21	West End Step & Tradition
January 28	Unity
February 4	Haddon Road
February 11	McKenzie Towne
February 18	Rule 62
February 25	Inglewood

Telephone Monitoring Dates	AA Group
January 1- 7	Inglewood Group
January 8-14	Go For It
January 22-28	NW Calgary
January 29- Feb 4	Getting There
February 5-11	Airdrie Reflections
February 12-18	Daily Reflections
February 19-25	Haddon Road
February 26-March 4	Thursday Night Ladies

# Calls for Service

Gratitude Round Up Committee is looking for volunteers. We hold our meetings the first Wednesday of every month at 7 pm at Central Office. Thank you!

*We have 2 vacancies for COMC members (Central Office Management Committee) that should be filled by the end of the year. Business experience as well as firm understanding of the steps and traditions are considered an asset. Time requirement would be minimal (about 1 day a month), and suggested sobriety is a minimum 5 years.  
**Please submit resumes to Central Office.***

We need daytime phone monitors at Central Office. If you can help with a regular morning or afternoon shift, please call Mathew at Central Office at 403-777-1212 or email [CentralOffice@calgaryaa.org](mailto:CentralOffice@calgaryaa.org)

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.



## **The January 2018 Issue of GRAPEVINE is here!**

This month, "Sponsorship," featuring stories by AA members about the joys and challenges of sponsorship.

### **To view the Table of Contents, click here.**

**Some stories include:**

**Always Open** A member reflects on the joys and challenges of sponsorship and how it's kept him sober for 31 wonderful years

**Earthshaking News** You'll be able to look him straight in the eye and say with all honesty, "I know what you're going through"

**No Human Power** I don't have a sponsorship legacy to boast about, but I have definitely had some amazing sponsors and I'm so grateful they taught me how to rely on God.

**Oliver & Me** A man in Tennessee shares about a sponsee he once had who struggled with mental illness

## **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.

### **"Recovery Group Women's BB Study"**

There is a new weekly women's Big Book study on Sundays at the Recover Group, Room 104, 4820 McLeod Trail SW, 2:00pm-4:00pm. Please bring a Big Book, Pen, Highlighter, & notebook or writing pad. Big Books can also be purchased at the meeting.

### **"Big Book Comes Alive"**

There is a weekly Big Book study running at New Brighton Community Centre, 2 New Brighton Drive SE, Calgary. Meeting runs on Sundays from 6:00pm – 7:15pm.

### **"Joe and Charlie Big Book Study at Haddon Road"**

There is a weekly Big Book study at Haddon Road on Sundays from 2:00pm–4:00pm. Please bring a Big Book, a highlighter and an open mind. Big books can be purchased at the meeting or from Central Office. Note that current study should end around Dec 17, and start up on January 14<sup>th</sup>, going from 2- 4 pm. There will also be a Big Book study beginning on Tuesday, January 9<sup>th</sup> from 7:30 – 9 pm with the same format. For any questions, please contact Steve at 403-889-5240.



ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

## January 19-20, 2018 Area Committee Meeting

### Calgary Fellowship Welcomes You!

**When:** January 19-20  
 Registration 5:00 PM Friday  
 (Local AA members welcome. No registration fee required.)  
 ACM begins 5:30 PM Friday  
 Meetings 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM Saturday  
 Banquet Dinner/Speaker to follow

**Where:** **The Whitehorn Community Centre**  
 228 Whitehorn Rd NE, Calgary, AB  
 Ample parking, wheelchair accessible  
 Close to shopping and amenities

**Meals:** **No One Goes Hungry!**

- Coffee/Tea available at all times
- Bag lunch/salad bar will be offered at noon Saturday
- Banquet dinner served Saturday evening
- 7th Tradition gratefully received

### Accommodations

**CALGARY COAST PLAZA HOTEL**  
**1316 33 Street NE, Calgary AB, T2A 6B6**

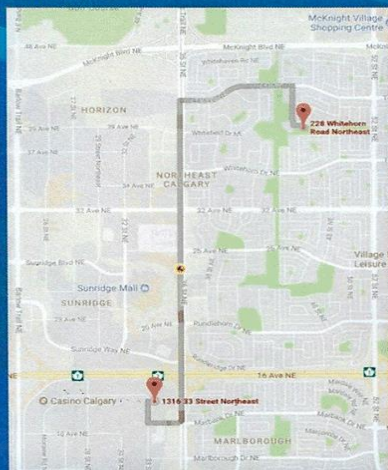
AREA 78 Group Agreement has been arranged for Jan 19-20 as follows:

- \$99 Comfort Suite: 2 queen beds
- \$114 Comfort Suite: 2 queen beds including breakfast for 2
- \$124 Superior Room: 1 King bed
- Breakfast \$14.94 for adults and \$8.95 for children (4-10)
- Available 6:30 to 10:30 AM
- Taxes apply to rooms and meals
- Complimentary airport shuttle service

### Reserve Now!

- Quote AREA 78 or reservation# CPC-GFC-24131 when booking
- **NOTE:** the group rate expires December 20, 2017
- Call 403.248.8888 (or 1.800.661.1464)
- Email: res@calgaryplaza.com

### AREA MAP



### Stay Connected

Please watch for more information to be posted on  
[www.calgaryaa.org](http://www.calgaryaa.org) for new developments and announcements  
 between now and January 19!

Please contact [bonniefaasse@gmail.com](mailto:bonniefaasse@gmail.com) with questions.

**[www.calgaryaa.org](http://www.calgaryaa.org)**



# 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.*

*Why all this insistence that every A.A. must hit bottom first? The answer is that few people will sincerely try to practice the A.A. program unless they have hit bottom. For practicing A.A.'s remaining eleven Steps means the adoption of attitudes and actions that almost no alcoholic who is still drinking can dream of taking. Who wishes to be rigorously honest and tolerant? Who wants to confess his faults to another and make restitution for harm done? Who cares anything about a Higher Power, let alone meditation and prayer? Who wants to sacrifice time and energy in trying to carry A.A.'s message to the next sufferer? No, the average alcoholic, self-centered in the extreme, doesn't care for this prospect—unless he has to do these things in order to stay alive himself.*

*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 One** *"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 their 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...*

*Thus has it been with A.A. By faith and by works we have been able to build upon the lessons of an incredible experience. They live today in the Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous, which—God willing—shall sustain us in unity for so long as He may need us.*

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