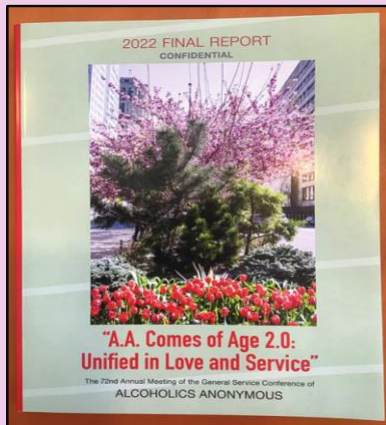


SUGGESTED 25¢ DONATION



THE WESTWORD

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER PUBLISHED BY THE CALGARY INTERGROUP OF AA

To receive a digital copy of the WestWord please email westwordeditor@gmail.com

FREE!
The 2022
General Service
Conference Reports
have finally arrived!

REGULAR OFFICE HOURS

Mon–Fri, 8:30am–5:00pm

(Closed 1-2pm for lunch)

Saturdays 9:00am–1:00pm

HOLIDAY CLOSURES**FAMILY DAY**

Sat., Feb.18 – Mon., Feb.20

AA Central Service Office
 4021 – 4 St. S.E.
 Calgary, Alberta T2G 2W4
centraloffice@calgaryaa.org
www.calgaryaa.org

Celebrate the Golden Anniversary of the Banff RoundUp

50 **YEAR** **of Recovery in The Rockies**

FEBRUARY 24TH TO 26TH**The Banff Park Lodge****222- Lynx Street Banff, AB****1-800-661-9266****Room rate: \$157 and up****Registration only: \$45****Banquet and Registration: \$140****February 17th cutoff****Purchase tickets from****Calgary Central Office or****at www.banffroundup.com****Speakers:****Kacy R - Texas (AA)****Tony M - Oklahoma (AA)****John A - Texas (AA)****Ruth L - Quebec (AA)****Rhonda J - Connecticut****(Al-Anon)****Plus: Workshops and Entertainment****"Struck something better than Gold."****Big Book p129**

Banff Park Lodge
Booking ID: 462462.

Email: cgigbanffch@gmail.com for more details**DON'T MISS IT !!!**

INSIDE – Find more...
Experience, Strength and Hope

INTERGROUP CONTACTS:

Intergroup Chairperson	cgigchair@gmail.com	Intergroup Alternate Chair	cgigalterchair@gmail.com
Intergroup Archives Chair	cgigarchives@gmail.com	Telephone Monitoring Chair	telmonitor.calgary@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@calgaryaa.org	Intergroup Treasurer	cgigtreasurer@gmail.com
Banff Roundup Chair	cgigbanffchr@gmail.com	Intergroup Special Events	specevents@gmail.com
Sunday AM Breakfast Chair	cgigbrkfst@gmail.com	Intergroup/CGSC Liaison	cgscintergroup@gmail.com

CGSC CONTACTS:

Chairperson	cgsccchair@gmail.com	Alternate Chairperson	cgsccaltchair@gmail.com
Treasurer	cgsctreasurer@gmail.com	Secretary	cgsccsecretary@gmail.com
Treatment Chair	cgsctreatment@gmail.com	Corrections Chair	cgsccorrections@gmail.com
C.P.C. Chair	cgsccpc@gmail.com	Grapevine Chair	cgsccgrapevine@gmail.com
Records & Registration Chair	cgsccrecords@gmail.com	Intro to Service Chair	cgsccintro@gmail.com
Bridging the Gap Chair	cgsccbtg@gmail.com	Intergroup/CGSC Liaison	cgsccintergroup@gmail.com

MEETING CHANGES:**NEW MEETINGS / BOOK STUDIES:**

Big Book Meeting – Haddon Road - Saint Andrews Presbyterian Church on Heritage Drive.

The study will start Sunday January 15, 2023, from 3:30 PM until 5:30 PM, and will run every Sunday for approximately 14 weeks.

Big Book Meeting – New Beginnings – Starting Monday, January 16 and facilitated by Mary and Steve – 6:30 – 8:30 at Canyon Meadows location – see poster on page 8, for details

Hybrid Big Book Meeting – Uncover, Discover, Recover – Join Mondays from Nov 23, 2022 – March 13, 2023 at the Alexandra Centre Society, SE Calgary. 6:30 – 8:30 MST – In person and Zoom ID: 5298412715, PW: surrender7 – see poster on page 8

MEETING CHANGES

N/A

MEETING INFO - REOPENING MEETINGS


District 77 Sunday Night Speaker Meetings will be resuming, Sunday, Feb. 5, 2023 at 8 p.m. at Parkdale United Church, 2919 8 Ave NW, Calgary, AB T2N 1C8. (at the bottom of the hill below the Foothills Hospital)

Now reopening – “Was Temporarily cancelled”- NW Calgary Group, Saturday 5:30 pm Step and Tradition meeting at Foothills Alliance Church cancelled Dec. 24 and Dec. 31, 2022, only. **Regular Saturday meetings will resume in January 2023.**

CANCELLED MEETINGS

Centre of Hope - The Friday Night Big Book Study Meeting at 6pm., Will cease to operate as of February, 3rd, 2023., However, Our Wednesday Night Centre of Hope Meeting is continuing on we meet at 6pm.. Harry Patrick, 403-612-0228

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.

JANUARY				FEBRUARY					
ABC		Garnet		272		Midnapore			
Ramona B	3 years	Aline C	1 year	Jim C	33 years	Jeremy B	1 year		
Jessica B	14 years	Ashton	1 year	Awakenings		Matt S	1 year		
Jim C	26 years	Daniel L	1 year	Ron W	8 years	Amber W	4 years		
Awakenings		Melissa	1 year	Charles C	19 years	Dave W	4 years		
Kim A	47 years	Christine	2 years	Back to the Book		Rob G	6 years		
Better Days		Richie	2 years	Evan	2 years	Kelly D	14 years		
Sandra M	33 years	James	3 years	Back from Hell		Ogden			
Linda J	46 years	Jenn Z	3 years	Jared M	8 years	Trent L	3 years		
Edgemont		Nicole H	7 years	Brandy B	9 years	Cameron G	8 years		
Paul T	1 year	Bruce S	10 years	Better Days		Tania M	17 years		
Judy Mc	24 years	Homeward Bounders		Charles M	33 years	Keith K	32 years		
Kincora		Matt C	8 years	Deer Ridge		Recovery Group			
Craig M	1 year	Patty D	11 years	Dey	1 year	Val D	24 years		
Dave S	1 year	Knox Nooners		Slavek	2 years	Regal			
Charlotte G	9 years	Lenora	16 years	Jennifer F	7 years	Joe H	4 years		
Mike O.	15 years	New Beginnings		Jon W	7 years	James F	5 years		
Art W	49 years	Ashlynn P	1 year	Jerry P	9 years	Bruce M	35 years		
McKenzie Towne		Pamela	1 year	Katherine J	17 years	Thursday Night Ladies			
Jennifer L	9 years	Renee M	2 years	Yvon	36 years	Iris M	10 years		
Wayne B	13 years	Ryan R	3 years	Edgemont		Unity			
Shaun C	14 years	Emmett M	10 years	Patrick F	30 years	Jordan L	1 year		
Heather W	23 years	Glen T	12 years	Don G	48 years	Wed Eye Opener			
Mike C	30 years	Holly	14 years	Homeward Bounders		Ahsok P	26 years		
Midnapore		Lenora G	16 years	David L	4 years	Whitesheep			
Mike W	2 years	Carol	25 years	Betty E	11 years	Jim S	2 years		
Ryan P	10 years	Sheryl P	25 years	Just for Today		Rhett M	4 years		
Al M	13 years	John R	34 years	Wayne	10 years	Gerry M	24 years		
Wes W	45 years	Sharon W	38 years	Colleen	28 years	Terry K	31 years		
Ogden		Ian N	42 years	Knox Nooners		Cliff M	47 years		
Alex R	2 years	NW Calgary Group		Trent B	9 years				
Theo P	2 years	Joy H	3 years	Warren J	10 years				
Denise D	9 years	Gord P	4 years	McKenzie Towne					
Crystal H	10 years	Kevin O	4 years	Heather M	1 year				
Derek F	10 years	Jason M	4 years	Noel W	2 years				
Jeremy K	11 years	Rick R	11 years	Al D	3 years				
Sherry F	18 years	Anson C	13 years	Anne E	4 years				
Vince C	30 years	Judy M	24 years	Jaclyn S	5 years				
Unity		Recovery Group		Greg M	6 years				
Todd M	15 years	Farrall F	3 years	Mark P	32 years				
Whitesheep		Susan S	5 years	Dennis F	37 years				
Brant V	3 years	Crystal	10 years	NADZIEJA					
Tim G	5 years	Cate N	15 years	Slawek S	2 years				
Peter R	6 years	Linda G	25 years	Andrzej K	4 years				
Wayne B	13 years	Happy birthday, everyone!							
Chris B	20 years								

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.

UPCOMING EVENTS

DATE	EVENT	Posters with details
February 11	Better Days group Speaker Meeting <i>Johnny B.</i>	Page 6
February 24 - 26	Banff Round Up – 50 th anniversary Celebrate the Golden Anniversary	ON THE COVER & Page 6

Treatment Facility	AA Group for February	AA Group for March
Renfrew Fridays	Midnapore	Regal
Alpha House - Tuesday	Daily Reflectons	Ogden
Alpha House - Friday	Radical Change	Need a Group
Sunrise	Ogden Group	Recovery
AARC – alternating Mon	Daily Reflections	Edgemont
Dream Centre	Forest Lawn	New Beginnings
Sandstone (2 nd Friday)	Forest Lawn	District 83

Monthly CGSC ← Service Commitments

Sunday Morning (9:30am) Ramada Breakfast Meeting	AA Group
February 5	Garnet
February 12	ABC
February 19	Walking Eagle
February 26	TBA

Ongoing Monthly Intergroup Service Commitments

Phone Monitoring Dates	AA Group
January 30 – Feb 5	Kincora
February 6 – 12	Knox Nooners
February 13 - 19	Midnapore
February 20 - 26	Rule 62

CALLS FOR “SERVICE”

“Bridging the Gap”...Bridging the Gap helps to soften the transition for individuals from treatment to an AA life.

Bridging the Gap (BTG) is looking to grow our team of temporary contact known as “Bridgers”. Want to find out what it means to sign up and how you can help “bridge the gap” with a fellow looking to get into the rooms of AA? Reach out to cgsbctg@gmail.com for more information.

Bridging the Gap is also looking for fellow AAs with a minimum one year sobriety to share along side a BTG member and carry the message of AA and BTG at our Wednesday night Renfrew Detox meetings. Reach out to crazyMTmountainman@gmail.com for more information

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.

Public Information Committee (PI committee):

Contact Calgary Intergroup for more information...

The committee is also looking for more committee members to join the group and tackle the various responsibilities of PI.

Public Information is responsible for getting info out to those who may still be suffering. Some examples are:

1. Speakers needed for high school presentations
2. Literature to be delivered to various public locations

Meeting Dates: Last Tuesday of every month

Time: 7:00pm.

Location: Central Office, 4021 4 St SE

- Contact the PI Committee chair for more information
pichair.calgary@gmail.com

"Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics and to practice these principles in all our affairs."

12 Step List Service –

(1-Year Sobriety): Looking for a service opportunity? Add your name and number to the list for 12 step calls. This list is used when a caller needs to talk to another alcoholic. All we need is your availability and which part of the city you live in/are willing to travel to. E-mail:
cgig12steplist@gmail.com

Volunteers Needed Chairpersons needed for young offenders centre

The AA Corrections Committee needs male volunteers to chair meetings at the Calgary Young Offenders Centre (CYOC) - on 85 Street NW, Calgary, AB.

We're looking for four to six male volunteers to be on a schedule to chair an hour-long AA meeting Wednesdays at 7 p.m. once or twice a month, for young male offenders under the age of 18.

The CYOC meetings, well supported by CYOC staff members, provides a rewarding experience to carry a message of hope that will hopefully help these young people get their lives back on track.

Requirements include at least one year of continuous sobriety, the need to complete a criminal record check (cost covered by Corrections Committee) and complete an Intervention Record Check (which shows volunteers have a clear record to work with juveniles).

For more information, please contact: Bianca T. - CGSC Corrections Committee chairperson at: cgsc corrections@gmail.com or call or text: (403) 437-9930; or Lee H. Corrections volunteer at: 403 815 3719.

Where could I be of service?

COMC WANTS YOU!

Central Office Management Committee is looking for members at large to join our committee

Requirements: must have minimum 5 years sobriety

Previous Alcoholics Anonymous service experience outside of the group level, as well as experience in business such as Finance, Human Resources, Law, Business, Labour relations, Management etc.

Interest and knowledge of computers / websites is an asset!

Please drop off or email your resume to Central Office for consideration

Email: centraloffice@calgaryaa.org

TREATMENT NEEDS SUPPORT!!

"Treatment needs to add 2 people who would love to provide service in the roll of Chair or Alt Chair for the Treatment Facilities we serve. Sobriety Minimum 1 year. Term 1 -2 years.

Ideally we could use to additional people to help with the spirit of rotation of our Chairs. If interested or have questions please contact Dave at: cgsc treatment@gmail.com. Thank you.

**UNCOVER. DISCOVER
RECOVER**

A DESIGN FOR LIVING

BOOK STUDY JOIN US MONDAYS
NOV 21, 2022 - MAR 13, 2023

ALEXANDRA CENTRE SOCIETY
922 9TH AVE SE
6:30 PM - 8:30 PM
DOORS OPEN AT 6:00 PM

**FACILITATED BY
BILL W.**

JOIN US ONLINE
ZOOM ID: 529 841 2715
PASSWORD: surrender7

- UNDERSTANDING THE ILLNESS
- REMOVAL OF SUBSTANCE
- THE DESIGN FOR LIVING
- SPONSORSHIP

AND JANINE H.

FOR MORE INFORMATION
CONTACT BILL @ 403-903-3694

PARTICIPANTS ARE WELCOME TO BRING THE
BIG BOOK AND 12X12 TO FOLLOW ALONG

OPEN TO ANYONE

FRIENDS AND FAMILY * SPONSORS * EDUCATORS
HEALTHCARE WORKERS * SERVICE PROVIDERS

BIG BOOK STUDY

**HADDON
GROUP**

STARTING ...

- SUNDAY JANUARY 15 3:30 - 5:30PM
- WILL RUN EVERY SUNDAY FOR 14 WEEKS

705 Heritage Dr SW
St. Andrews church

It's an open meeting, all are welcome. Bring your big book, highlighter, pen, and an open mind.

Any questions email Mike at
mg_hartwell@hotmail.com

Big Book Study

Big Book Study held at New Beginnings
3216, 380 Canyon Meadows Drive SE
Fish Creek Village
2nd floor

Monday January 16, 2023
Time 6:30 to 8:00 PM

Facilitated by Mary S and Steve
Bring your big book and highlighters

Enjoy and great night of teaching and
fellowship

Hope to see you there

For more information email Steve
monsternac13@gmail.com

Better Days Speaker Meetings Feb & Mar

SPEAKER COREY J.
FROM THE
GARNET
BLOCK

BETTER DAYS GROUP

SPEAKER MEETING

FEBRUARY 11TH

SATURDAY AT 8:00 PM
1432 19TH STREET N.E.

**WE WELCOME YOU TOO THE
BETTER DAYS GROUP
SPEAKER MEETING**

Nancy R. from THE GROUP NEW BEGINNINGS

March 11, 2023, 8:00 PM

1432 19 ST., N.E.
MEETING OPENS AT 7:30 pm
SPEAKER STARTS AT 8:00 pm

The February 2023 Issue of GRAPEVINE is here!



On the Cover: This issue is for "Making Amends"

[To view the Table of Contents, click here.](#)

Some stories include:

[All she ever wanted](#)

I am not sure when it started. It seems that for as long as I can remember, I was mad at my mom

[Things can change](#)

I came to AA mad and mean. I wasn't this way as a young girl. In fact, I was just the opposite.

[The best son I can be](#)

What do you do when there's a person in your life to whom you are trying to make amends and they don't want to hear anything about it?

[The Plain Truth](#)

My sobriety date is 2006 and since then I have made many, many amends through this amazing program.

[Not by accident](#)

In 1974, I had a serious auto accident. I was not drinking that day. I ran over two people, killing a 43-year-old woman who was married and had three young children.

[Payback](#)

Her drinking and stealing damaged their friendship. But the healing the Steps gave them was priceless

[Making the rounds](#)

With his sponsor's help, he headed for an ex's funeral to make a few amends. Turned out there were more than a few

DELEGATE'S CORNER – FEBRUARY 2023

Oh, how brightly you shine!!

Quick announcements (more at the end):

1. **WRAASA (Western Region A.A. Service Assembly)** is an entire weekend of inspiration and motivation for ALL MEMBERS! See you there © <https://wraasa.org>
Feb 24-26, 2023, at the Edmonton Inn
2. Our **Pre-Conference Assembly** this year is April 14 – 16, 2023 at the Edmonton Inn.
 - a. Our 'March' Assembly is in **APRIL**
 - b. The membership is quickly gearing up to address the agenda items. What interests you??
 - c. Submitting an agenda item for the 2024 Conference is Sept 15th



We are one body and one mind moving toward solutions and unity within our Area 78 community. The **only** difference between you and me is our current role, merely a temporary one. You are wise in the ways of AA, in the ways of being sober and reaching out your hand. And you are here, reading this! Together we do this work to keep

A.A. alive and well.

There are deepening levels of our evolution as we give of ourselves to others. In AA language, we call this Service, and refer to it as our Third Legacy in our recovery journey. THIS is the work of 'general service'. It IS the reason we have Districts and an Area. Since the General Service structure started in 1951, YOU, the membership has been guiding and determining the direction of A.A. Many thought that having the membership make all the decisions wouldn't work. But for the last 73 years it has been stupendous. Area 78's first Delegate was George Dunaway. George served on Panel 2 for 1952 & 1953. Come be a part of history.

Thank you for allowing me to serve. My understanding is clear that the Area Committee Officers are to take direction from you, the membership of Alcoholics Anonymous. Your thoughts come through your GSRs to your DCM, to the Area, and on to the Conference in NYC. None of us govern, but we are **all** leaders (refer to Concept 9), working together by sharing our experiences, our strengths, and much hope for one another. The Area's job is like the Trustees and subsequently, the staff at the General Service Office, who take their direction from the Conference members' advisory actions (decisions) and committee considerations (suggestions) and all the discussions that happen over the annual week-long meeting.

We rely on you to raise issues, open discussion, make suggestions or motions at your business, district, or Area meetings so we can all listen to the differing ideas that lead to the decisions. Then we get busy working on those solutions as our Area moves forward with our primary purpose, while supporting one another with love, tolerance, kindness, and acceptance.

Why do we need a Conference?

Well, Bill Wilson's dear friend and confidant, Bernard Smith (fondly referred to as Bern), non-alcoholic, was our GSB Chair for many years. He was 'a principal architect' in creating our Conference Structure. He answered this question in his opening remarks at the 1954 meeting. An excerpt of it for today:

"...We need it to ensure that changes within A.A. come only as a response to the needs and the wants of all A.A., and not of only a few. We need it to ensure that the doors of the halls of A.A. never have locks on them, so that all people for all time who have an alcoholic problem may enter these halls unasked and feel welcome. We need it to ensure that Alcoholics Anonymous never asks of anyone who needs us what his or her race is, what his or her creed is, what his or her social position is."

(Bern's very moving, spiritual talk can be found in the Service Manual pg 40).

We are open to all who need and want us. This is true! So, I ask you, "Do we believe all who need and want to be sober ARE in our rooms? Could any be missing? Are we attractive, welcoming, inclusive, and available to those who may be missing - unsure, scared, or confused about us?

With this in mind, we prepare for the 73rd General Service Conference.

An update on my activities: January was busy! I was flat out with Area meetings, Conference Delegate Chair meetings, Western Regional meetings including WRAASA, speaking at groups, districts and events, and lots of Conference preparations. The dashboard, our conference communications tool, opened Jan 10th. Lots to 'find', then read! All the new Panel 73rd Delegates are elected. In our Western Canada Region, we have new Delegates Rio D, Area 79, BC/Yukon and Lori R, Area 91, SK. Honestly, ours is the best of all 8 regions ©

January 26 – 31 has me in New York for the January Board Meetings. I had a challenge concerning the 1-year term as the Conference Delegate Chair. The past Delegate Chair (and the 4 before her) confirmed the term is Jan to Dec - made sense to me. However, conversations with the Trustees and GSO folks since August indicated they thought I knew things I didn't and expected things I wasn't to do yet. The term for Conference Committee Chairs, Trustees and Directors runs conference to conference (April to April). All will be corrected this year. Ben N, Alt Delegate Chair/Mailman and I will serve January to end of April. See! 'STUFF' happens everywhere. And just cuz it's *always* been done that way, doesn't mean it has to, or that it's right. Ben and I will offer regular online Delegates-only discussion meetings till then.

I encourage all members to be part of the agenda discussions in your groups. Talk to your GSR or DCM to see about the committees and see where **your** heart lies in carrying the message to those who suffer. Which committee do you want to know more about? Make decisions for? Suggest materials about? Have an opinion about?

At the conference, 135 of us from all over Canada and US discuss these same items again to see what is best for AA as a whole body. You are welcome to come to the pre-conference Assembly April 14 – 16 at the Edmonton Inn. Join in the discussions, listen to other members from other districts across our Area share their thoughts and needs. Learn more and share your thoughts.

My role is to carry members' thoughts to the Conference. I cannot if your voice is silent.

Quick GSO update – check with your DCM for the detailed update from GSO – tons of stuff!!

With Love and Service,

Tami

TRADITION TIDBITS

What Is an Informed A.A. Group Conscience?

The group conscience is the collective conscience of the group membership and thus represents substantial unanimity on an issue before definitive action is taken. This is achieved by the group members through the sharing of full information, individual points of view, and the practice of A.A. principles. To be fully informed requires a willingness to listen to minority opinions with an open mind.

On sensitive issues, the group works slowly — discouraging formal motions until a clear sense of its collective view emerges. Placing principles before personalities, the membership is wary of dominant opinions. Its voice is heard when a well-informed group arrives at a decision. The result rests on more than a “yes” or “no” count — precisely because it is the spiritual expression of the group conscience. The term “informed group conscience” implies that pertinent information has been studied and all views have been heard before the group votes.

Reprinted from The AA Group, Pg.28, with permission of Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc.



<https://www.aa.org/aa-groupwhere-it-all-begins>

Step 2 & Tradition 2

Step 2 - "We came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity."

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 2.

Tradition 2 - "For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority - a loving God as HE may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants. They do not govern."

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