

# First Things First

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 4

APRIL 2007

The Monthly Newsletter of The Rock Solid Group of Alcoholics Anonymous

## Moral Inventory

...Just Do It!

**Moral** (*mor'-uhl*) *adj.* concerned with principles of right and wrong or conforming to standards of behavior and character based on those principles; ethical.

### Special points of interest:

- What's New with The Rock solid Group
- What Our Members are Thinking
- Website News and Info You can Use
- Upcoming Events
- Fourth Tradition, Step, Concept and Prayer

### Inside this issue:

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I was hesitant about doing the fourth step, and very nearly relapsed doing it. I was afraid I wouldn't do it right. If I didn't do it right I thought I would possibly drink again. I asked around and was given a few suggestions. One was 'if you have done the 3rd step to best of your ability, then the 4th step will come'. Next I was told to pray about it. Then I heard 'don't worry too much about it, just do it. If you are afraid you have left some things out, God will reveal them to you sooner or later'. So off I went with pen and paper.

I listed the most evident resentments first. Then I tried to determine why I had the resentment and finally how I was affected by them. The reasons were exactly as the book describes. My lack of self esteem and feelings of security was fairly easy to recognize. Discovering my false pride was a rude awakening! I had a hard time understanding how I could be lacking in self esteem and be prideful at the same time. What a concept! I found for example that taking pride in a job well done is not the same thing as getting all puffed up about myself and boasting about how great I was!

Another area I had problems

was my fooling myself into believing I really didn't have a lot of resentments. My explanation for this was, 'I have always treated most people with indifference'. Hence, no resentments occurred. I have learned since doing this step with my sponsor that indifference is a not so subtle form of hate, or at least contempt.

The basis for all my resentment was FEAR! What? I always thought I was fearless. I was always better than, more educated, had a better job than you! Why this behavior? Because I was afraid. If I couldn't convince myself all these things were true then I would be unworthy. Unacceptable. Rejected.

I discovered a mountain of information about myself while doing this step. Things no one else would ever have been able to convince me of. I got answers to why I behaved the way I did. I was so scared and relieved at the same time it was indescribable. I finally had something solid to work with, and I had a way out of the misery I had been living in all my life. All I had to do now was tell someone!

If you have just gotten to your 4th step, please just do it! I was 44 years old by the time I got to AA. I had a 30-year drinking career with lots of bag-



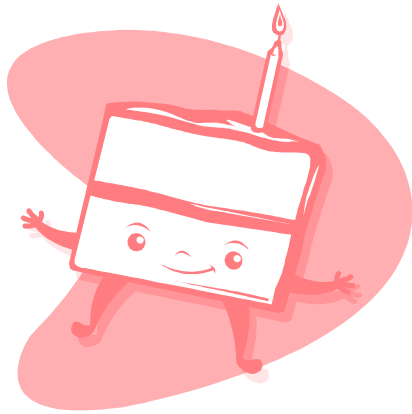
"It is worth every second of pain I had to go through just to come out on the other side."

gage to unload. It wasn't easy. I had to humble myself before God. It is worth every second of pain I had to go through just to come out on the other side. I do not ever want to go back into that pit of hell. The only way I can have that assurance is to do what is suggested in the steps, and work with my sponsor.

And now I have the opportunity to see the 'light bulb' come on in someone else, right in our group, nearly every day. What a sight!

Thank you all for helping me stay sober for just one more day. Thank you for letting me share my experience, strength and hope.

## Rock Solid News



### Happy Birthday Rock Solid!

The Rock Solid group turns one year old on April 18, and we have a very special guest planned. Richard B., the group's founder and advisor, will be our lead speaker. We will also have cake and ice cream, so plan to stay a bit later after the meeting for the festivities and fellowship!

The group mourns the passing of one of its own, Tim H. Some heart-felt tributes are in the Members Thoughts Section of the newsletter.

The website now has a meeting directory that contains all Area 53 meetings, and then some (over 1000 in all). We plan to have ALL Ohio meetings listed by July. It's easy to search, too. The site also features 'cheesy' music when you open the home page now.

Area 53 generously donated more literature to the group, which is always appreciated. They indicated we can expect some pocket Big Books and Twelve & Twelve's this month, too.

The group's 'library' has become very popular. We have a large selection of AA books, literature and recovery-related DVD's available to members for check out. Thanks to Jason L., our secretary, for taking on the additional responsibilities.

We purchased a 60-cup commercial coffee urn to replace the smaller old pot we 'burned up'. Since it meets our current coffee needs, we now use the small pot for hot water for tea and cocoa. What a nice little 'perk'!

Our group conscious meeting determined that the next major purchase we make should be a small, wireless PA speaker, and we already have a model in mind. It's acquisition should help readers and speakers with quieter voices be heard with ease.

#### March Statistics

|                        |        |
|------------------------|--------|
| Starting Balance       | 32.91  |
| Income                 | 152.51 |
| Expenses               | 171.45 |
| Ending Balance         | 19.25  |
| Newcomers              | 7      |
| Releases               | 5      |
| Avg Meeting Attendance | 38     |
| Website Hits           | 69     |

"Continuing our personal inventory is like weeding a garden; it allows the good things to grow."

"Service work is like pissing your pants. Everybody sees it, but you're the one who feels the warmth."

"The steps keep us from committing suicide. The traditions keep us from committing homicide."

Z T G V K N X D H N H N Y S B  
W G A G M F C M U E B T J H Y  
M W R X E Z K O R V I G X O J  
F I J A E N C D W L O N O W N  
N A K H T S J G A L Y I N E H  
V X H I R I T U Z V U P I R H  
M I N V E N T O R Y Y E U S J  
K F H Z U I T U F R X E Q Y S  
V W I A R R F L D V C K E T N  
H Y V I E R O R B E N E T F T  
U E P T E W L O O F N S B H W  
J S S S E S P R I N G U U A R  
K A H R C I N A T I T O N W P  
E E S M X R P Q P H T H N B Z  
P N Z Q I S V F S N U M Y T A

BUNNY  
EASTER  
EGG  
EQUINOX  
FLOWERS  
FOOL  
FRESH  
GRATITUDE  
HOUSEKEEPING  
INVENTORY  
SHOWERS  
SPIRITUALITY  
SPRING  
TAXES



APRIL  
SHOWERS

Can you find the hidden words from the list?

#### Trivia Question

On April 15, 1912 a luxury liner hit an iceberg and sank. In 1997 a big budget movie was made based on the event. The part of 'unsinkable' Molly Brown was played by Kathy Bates, but what famous Country singer was originally cast for the part? (By the way, the name of the ship is an UNLISTED word in the word search puzzle. Can you find it?)

## Group Members Share Their Thoughts

### Good Bye, Friend

Good bye, friend.

You will be greatly missed by your family and friends. You will be in our prayers and our thoughts, and you will grace the skies with your presence.

You made a difference in the lives of so many people by showing us that we cannot give up when things look bad. You were so strong. You had no resentments, even though resentments would have been easy to rationalize for the injustice done to you.

You were a person who never met a stranger. You were always kind and generous with your words of wisdom, your time, and your willingness to help anyone who needed it. Even with your last act on this earth, you have helped others—to show how our disease will get us if we let our guard down. You had a strong faith in your Higher Power, and my faith tells me that you have joined him.

They tell us that some must die for others to live. I wish it wasn't you reminding us of this lesson. Thanks for touching our lives. We love you, Tim.

God, he is yours again, and one thing is certain; Heaven is laughing and smiling more today.

-Doug M.

### I Will Miss You, Tim

To me, Tim was a compassionate man. Always sharing advice with others or giving words of wisdom. He always had a kind word for everyone he met. Tim had a tough road to travel be it with addiction or incarceration. He was a family man, always talking of his wife and kids. His story was of bravery and courage against all odds. To me he was a beacon of light in my sea of addiction. I will always remember his sense of humor. He was also very artistic in everything he attempted. We may have lost a good soul, but Heaven has gained a rare one, indeed. I will miss you, Tim. You impacted me more than you'll ever know. Right here is where I should say "God bless you and your family," but God has blessed all of us with your presence.

- Chuck F.



"You will be in our prayers and our thoughts, and you will grace the skies with your presence."

### Gratitude

I am grateful for life  
I am grateful for love  
I am grateful for hope  
I am grateful for peace and harmony  
  
I am grateful for clarity of thinking  
I am grateful for freedom  
I am grateful for true friendship  
I am grateful for courage and wisdom

But most of all I am grateful for AA, its fellowship and the recovery made possible by it. If not for AA none of these things are possible, and for that I have all the gratitude in the world.

- Jamie F.

### Looking

If I must look back, do so forgivingly.  
If I must look forward, do so prayerfully.

However the wisest thing I can do is to be present in the present gratefully.

### Trust and Accept

As I continue to ACCEPT the things I cannot change, and to change the things I can, I TRUST that I am growing in wonderful ways once again, one day at a time.

- Doug M.

## Fourth Step Prayer and Concept

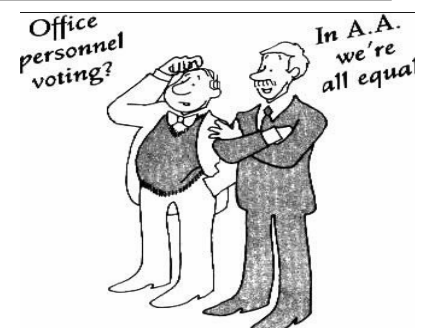
### Fourth Step Prayer

Dear God, It is I who have made my life such a mess. I have done it, but I can't undo it. May mistakes be all mine, and I will begin a searching and fearless moral inventory. I will write down my wrongs, but I will also include that which is good. I pray for the strength to complete this task.

Amen

### Concept Four

Throughout our Conference structure, we ought to maintain at all responsible levels a traditional "Right of Participation", taking care that each classification or group of our world servants shall be allowed a voting representation in reasonable proportion to the responsibility that each must discharge.



# From a Cell To The Street



This workshop will focus on ALL questions concerning carrying the message behind the walls! Literature restrictions? Dress code? Acceptable Behavior? What is a GIR or Outside Sponsor? What is considered contraband? Have you read the guidelines to go into prisons? Bridging the Gap? Am I responsible?

GIR's, Outside Sponsors and CFC members encouraged! All interested AA's are welcome!

## Agenda

**Speakers**  
**CFC Members**  
**Outside Sponsor Panel**  
**Lunch**  
**Professional Panel**

**Group Donations**  
**Accepted!**

Just 12 Steps Away...

Hosted by:  
 Area 53  
 Correctional Facilities  
 Committee

Date: Saturday, May 19

Time: 9:00 am - 3:00 pm

Box Lunch available for purchase

**LOCATION:**  
**THE INSTITUTE OF**  
**BEST PRACTICE**

Adjacent to London  
 Correctional Institute!

1580 State Route 56  
 London, OH 43140  
 740-852-2454 x1094

Call the numbers below if  
 you need directions

Contact:  
 George W. 614-496-4394  
 Constance C. 614-258-2381

## The Fourth Tradition

“Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or AA as a whole.”

A member who does any amount of traveling finds the A.A. spirit much the same everywhere. But apart from this inward kinship, there are vast differences among groups. Here, the traveler finds three members discussing the Steps in somebody's living room; there, 300 listening to speakers in a church auditorium. In one part of the U.S., respectful silence greets the speaker who begins, "My name is Ann, and I am an alcoholic." In another, everybody happily shouts, "Hi, Ann!" And in many other places, she may introduce herself with her full name—at a one-hour meeting or a 90-minute meeting. In each neighborhood in every part of the world reached by A.A., the local group is free to work out its own customs. As always, freedom brings responsibility. Because each group is autonomous, it's up to each group to avoid any action that might harm A.A. And there have been such actions— or this Tradition would be unnecessary. "Implicit

throughout A.A.'s Traditions," Bill W. wrote, "is the confession that our Fellowship has its sins. We admit that we have character defects as a society and these defects threaten us continually." Blown up to multiple size, the Big Ego may inspire one group to take over all the public information work for its area, without consulting any of the other local groups. Once the group has decided, "We have all the answers," the lid's off. The group may then decide that, let's say, the Eleventh Tradition is an outdated technicality: "This is a competitive age! We're going to come right out and give A.A. some good, vigorous promoting!" To

the general public, this one conspicuous group is A.A. Its antics reflect, not only on the ignored neighboring groups, but on the entire Fellowship. In a way, the Fourth Tradition is like the Fourth Step: It suggests that the A.A. group should take honest inventory of itself, asking about each of its



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independently planned actions, "Would this break any Tradition?" Like the individual member who chooses to make the Steps his or her guide toward happy sobriety, the wise group recognizes that the Traditions are not hindering technicalities—they are proved guides toward the chief objective of all A.A. groups.


## April 2007

| Sun                         | Mon              | Tue           | Wed            | Thu              | Fri | Sat             |    |    |    |
|-----------------------------|------------------|---------------|----------------|------------------|-----|-----------------|----|----|----|
| 1                           | Big Book 8:00    | 2             | 12 & 12 8:00   | 3                | 4   | 5               | 6  | 7  |    |
|                             |                  |               | Step Ten       | Speaker 8:00     |     |                 |    |    |    |
|                             |                  |               |                | Jim G.           |     |                 |    |    |    |
|                             |                  |               |                | Jamie F. Release |     |                 |    |    |    |
| 8                           | Big Book 8:00    | 9             | 12 & 12 8:00   | 10               | 11  | 12              | 13 | 14 |    |
|                             |                  |               | Step Eleven    | Speaker 8:00     |     |                 |    |    |    |
|                             |                  |               | Book Drawing   | Ron M.           |     |                 |    |    |    |
| LAI Steering Committee 2:00 | 15               | Big Book 8:00 | 16             | 12 & 12 8:00     | 17  | 18              | 19 | 20 | 21 |
|                             |                  |               | Step Twelve    | Speaker          |     |                 |    |    |    |
|                             |                  |               |                | Richard B.       |     |                 |    |    |    |
|                             |                  |               |                | BIRTHDAY BASH    |     |                 |    |    |    |
| 22                          | Big Book 8:00    | 23            | 12 & 12 8:00   | 24               | 25  | 26              | 27 | 28 |    |
|                             |                  |               | Tradition Four | Speaker 8:00     |     |                 |    |    |    |
|                             |                  |               |                | TBA              |     |                 |    |    |    |
|                             |                  |               |                |                  |     | Doug M. Release |    |    |    |
| 29                          | Big Book 8:00    | 30            |                |                  |     |                 |    |    |    |
|                             | Financial Report |               |                |                  |     |                 |    |    |    |



## The Rock Solid Group

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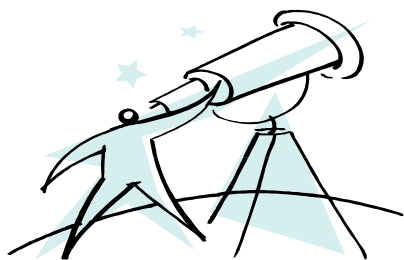
We're on the Web!  
[www.aarocksolid.org](http://www.aarocksolid.org)

We are The Rock Solid Group of Alcoholics Anonymous. We are what is referred to as an 'inside' group -- that is, we function from within a correctional facility-a 'halfway house', if you will. Residents are typically in house for one to six months. Our meetings are open to all current residents of the transition center. Former residents and guests may attend by special permission from the staff. Because the general public is not free to attend our meetings, and because current residents are not free to attend outside AA meetings at will, an inherent limitation exists for most group members to experience everything that Alcoholics Anonymous has to offer. Since its inception in April 2006, our group's focus has been to bring the 'look and feel' of outside meetings to residents.

For many of us, The Rock Solid Group is our first exposure to AA. We know our group is unique; we know it is special. We are continually looking for lead speakers on Wednesday nights. If you have a story to share and are in the area, please contact us. Thanks for reading about us, and please learn more at our website, [www.aarocksolid.org](http://www.aarocksolid.org).

Trivia Answer: The role of Molly Brown in the movie 'Titanic' was originally offered to, and accepted by Reba McEntire. Due to scheduling conflicts, she had to withdraw from the project.

## A Parting Shot...



"We don't make mistakes. You're supposed to be here. Let's walk around and figure out where you belong."

A man died and went to heaven, and St. Peter met him at the gate. The man said, "I'm not very religious, I don't think I belong here." St. Peter said, "We don't make mistakes. You're supposed to be here. Let's

walk around and figure out where you belong."

They walked down a hall, and came to a room full of people kneeling and speaking Latin. "Who are they?" the man asked. "They are the Catholics," replied St. Peter. "Well, I don't want to stay in there." and they continued to walk.

Next, they came to a room of people standing and facing the front. "Who are they?" the new arrival asked. "The Protestants", came the answer. "I don't think that's for me, either."

Next, they came to a room at the end of the hall. The man smelled coffee. There was a circle of people smiling and talking. They all had a big group

hug and said the serenity prayer. "I like these folks. Who are they?", the man asked. St. Peter said, "We don't know, they won't tell us."

As I sit here bleary-eyed in front of the PC, I'm reflecting on how grateful for I am for the opportunity to work on 'First Things First', and how it offers me a break from my duties at home.

The way that my involvement in this group, and in the local AA community has manifested itself is the absolute last thing I would have expected in my life, and it makes me feel truly blessed. It really does work if you work it!

Unless you've already made other plans, have a great day!

-Todd S.