

JANUARY 2010

THE *a*lternative

www.readingberksintergroup.org

NEWSLETTER OF THE READING-BERKS INTERGROUP OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

The Alternative: One Month At A Time

Welcome to the New Year and the revitalized Alternative - the monthly newsletter of the Reading-Berks Intergroup of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Our goals at the Alternative are not lofty ones, we'll leave that to others. In our efforts we will attempt to keep matters light, informative and maybe at times entertaining and enlightening. The primary mission is to help carry the message of recovery to our readers by keeping them informed of the activities and programs of the Reading-Berks Intergroup Committee and our member groups. We seek to enhance the unity of our fellowship and strengthening our common bonds while enhancing the lives we lead as individuals.

Content in the Alternative will ever evolving, adapting to the needs and concerns of our readers.

In addition to articles on Intergroup and individual Group activities, we will also feature "Vinelines" selected stories and articles from the Grapevine Magazine. With access to the Grapevine's archives we will be able to offer stories of hope that span the decades, proving once again that the more things change the more they stay the same.

Also featured will be the Intergroup's 12-Step Commitment Schedule, a Calendar of Events previewing activities and events of interest to the fellowship as well as occasional visits from the Grapevine's cartoon characters Victor E and Clara T.

The Alternative not only welcomes but encourages reader contributions and suggestions. It will be through this sharing of ideas that we may enhance the unity of our fellowship. We can be reached by mail at P.O. Box 12451, Reading, PA 196012 or by emailing us at Alternative@ReadingBerksIntergroup.org.

As noted at the outset, our goals at the Alternative are not lofty, but we are looking forward to the challenges and promise future issues hold - one month at a time.

A Few Good Women *Corrections Effort Needs Volunteers*

The RBI's Woman's Prison Outreach program is in need of a few good women to help conduct weekly AA meeting for female inmates at the Berks County Prison.

While four fellowship women currently volunteer for the program, more are needed says Diane, committee chairperson.

Women interested in volunteering must first complete an application through the Berks County Prison. After a criminal background check is completed - usually 2 to 4 weeks - volunteer applicants must participate a few hours of program orientation program at the prison. More detailed information on the process is available on-line at www.ReadingBerksIn-



tergroup.org.

Each week women volunteers working a "buddy system" conduct AA meetings at the prison for female inmates. The meetings are held every Tuesday from 7 to 8 pm.

The meetings, very similar to regular AA meetings with the Serenity Prayer, How It

Works and time for sharing, are currently well-attended with 20 to 25 women inmates participating, says Dianne.

"It's a great experience, a good alternative to sponsoring and a great way to give back," Dianne says.

Women interested in volunteering for the program can contact Diane at by email at WomansPrison@ReadingBerksIntergroup.org.

COH Holiday Dinner Dance Rescheduled for January 30

The Circle of Hope Roundup committee's Winter Holiday Dinner Dance has been rescheduled for Saturday, Jan. 30.

Benefiting the committee's annual speaker conference, the dinner dance will be held at the Recovery Community Center, 1300 Hilltop Rd., Leesport.

Individual tickets are priced at \$20 and a Table of eight can be reserved for only \$150. Tickets already purchased will be honored. If a refund is desired, the ticket must be produced.

Tickets can still be purchased from any Circle of Hope Roundup committee member as well as many home group representatives. Tickets are also available by calling

Beth at 484-880-8671 or Steve at 610-750-4019.

The night's holiday festivities will begin at 6 pm with a hot buffet dinner complete with a more than tempting dessert table. Coffee and punch will also be provided.

Following dinner, guest speaker Stu B. of Severna Park., Md. will share his experiences with those attending at 7 pm.

Music and dance will follow from 8 to 11 pm with music provided by Your Choice Music Entertainment.

The Circle of Hope Roundup Speaker Conference is scheduled for June 4 - 6, 2010 and will feature a number of speakers as well as open AA meetings throughout the day.

READING-BERKS INTERGROUP

Kenny T.
 Intergroup Chairperson
 Chairperson@ReadingBerksIntergroup.org
 610-207-1486

Beth B.
 Intergroup Alt. Chairperson
 Alt-Chair@ReadingBerksIntergroup.org

Greg G.
 Intergroup Treasurer
 Treasurer@ReadingBerksIntergroup.org

Mark S.
 Intergroup Secretary
 Secretary@ReadingBerksIntergroup.org

Ted
 Hotline Chairperson
 Hotline@ReadingBerksIntergroup.org
 610-373-1456

Henry
 Archives Chairperson
 Archives@ReadingBerksIntergroup.org
 484-794-6363

Terry C.
 Men's Prison Chairperson
 MensPrison@ReadingBerksIntergroup.org
 484-332-0926

Dianne
 Woman's Prison Chairperson
 WomansPrison@ReadingBerksIntergroup.org

Chris L.
 Literature Chairperson
 Literature@ReadingBerksIntergroup.org

Danielle B.
 Schedules Chairperson
 Schedules@ReadingBerksIntergroup.org
 610-823-9010

Steve W.
 Institutions Chairperson
 Institutions@ReadingBerksIntergroup.org
 610-750-4019

Angelo B.
 Newsletter Chairperson
 Alternative@ReadingBerksIntergroup.org
 484-794-9153

Carrie C.
 Unity Chairperson
 Unity@ReadingBerksIntergroup.org

Terry Mc F.
 Bridging the Gap
 BridgingGap@ReadingBerksIntergroup.org

Greg G.
 Website
 Info@ReadingBerksIntergroup.org

commitments

INTERGROUP TWELFTH STEP

*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!!*

**Caron Adolescent
 Extended Care - Men
 Sundays 7 pm**

- Jan. 3 Caron Alumni
- Jan. 10 Leesport Group
- Jan. 17 Robesonia Group
- Jan. 24 New Life Group
- Jan. 31 Hilltop Group
- Feb. 7 Caron Alumni

**Caron Adolescent
 Extended Care - Women
 Sundays 7 pm**

- Jan. 3 Caron Alumni
- Jan. 10 Leesport Group
- Jan. 17 Sober @ Six
- Jan. 24 New Life Group
- Jan. 31 OPEN
- Feb. 7 Caron Alumni

**Wernersville State Hosp.
 See Guard in Building 34
 Mondays 7 pm**

- Jan. 4 Robesonia Group
- Jan. 11 OPEN
- Jan. 18 New Life Group
- Jan. 25 Robesonia Group
- Feb. 1 Robesonia Group

**St. Joe's Hospital MH Unit
 3rd Floor Reed & Walnut Sts.
 Mondays 7 pm**

- Jan. 4 Alpha Group
- Jan. 11 Alpha Group
- Jan. 18 Alpha Group
- Jan. 25 Congo BB Group
- Feb. 1 Alpha Group

**Reading Detox Unit
 Every Other Tuesday 8 pm**

- Jan. 5 Wyomissing Group
- Jan. 12 -----
- Jan. 19 Congo Big Book
- Jan. 26 -----
- Feb. 2 Jacksonwald

**Caron Foundation
 Thursdays 8 pm**

- Jan. 7 Walk the Walk
- Jan. 14 New Life Group
- Jan. 21 Robesonia Group
- Jan. 28 Walk the Walk
- Feb. 4 Oley Group

**Reading Detox Unit
 Thursdays 8 pm**

- Jan. 7 Leesport Group
- Jan. 14 Walk the Walk
- Jan. 21 New Millennium Group
- Jan. 28 Hilltop Group
- Feb. 4 Sober @ Six

**Caron Foundation
 Young Adult Female
 Fridays 8 pm**

- Jan. 8 OPEN
- Jan. 15 New Life Group
- Jan. 22 OPEN
- Jan. 29 OPEN
- Feb. 5 OPEN

If you take a commitment for your group, make sure the person agreeing to go has a substitute if they can't make it. If you would like to go to the St. Joe's meeting, contact the hospital first to see if there are any alcoholics there: 610-378-2092.
When sending group members to commitments, it's great to double up! Send a newer and an older member, and everyone will benefit!! PLEASE make sure that someone honors the commitment that you take for your group. These may be the only meetings that the patients may have. Remember, "You Are Responsible", when you commit your time. PLEASE don't let these commitments go unattended. If you cannot make your commitment please notify Steve at 610-750-4019.

The Alternative is published monthly by the Reading-Berks Intergroup of Alcoholics Anonymous. Serving Districts 33, 66, and 67 of Delegate Area 59—Eastern Pennsylvania. Reach us by mail at P.O. Box 12451, Reading, PA 196012, or you can email us at Alternative@ReadingBerksIntergroup.org

New Millennium Group Celebrates A Decade of Service

Over nine years ago, gathering in the home of Larry S., a Big Book meeting began with the help of Chad S., Mike M., and Joe. H. However, after little support, they decided such a meeting needed more structure and a permanent place.

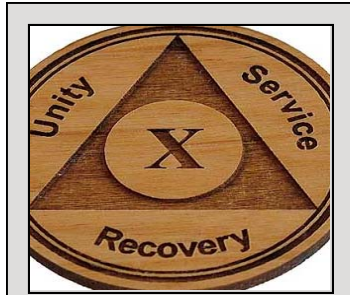
Therefore, they sought out a local church and a format that allowed for an in-depth study of our basic text. After spreading the word, gathering basic supplies, and obtaining the support of Immaculate Conception Church, the first meeting of what would come to be known as the New Millennium Group was held on Sunday, January 2, 2000, at 7pm.

The group's trusted servants were elected, literature and supplies were purchased, and a format used by Brad S.'s old home group in Langhorne was adopted. Soon, the meeting flourished, with anywhere between ten and twenty-five people attending the meeting on any given week, including the weekly commitment to the group of the initial five men and Heidi K.

We also began sending representatives to District and Intergroup meetings, contributions to our service entities, and members on twelfth step calls to institutions. We made the first meeting of the month an "open meeting" so that family members and other non-alcoholics could attend, and we hold our "business meeting" a half-hour before the second meeting of the month.

We have joyfully watched new members sober up and we have, with sadness, seen others struggle in their efforts. Regardless, our core group of members arrives early, stays late, and offers an outstretched hand to new and old members each week.

Our format allowed us to spend the entire year reading the first 164 pages of the book *Alcoholics Anonymous*, in addition to the "Preface" and "Forwards", as well as



Anniversary Celebration Scheduled

The New Millennium Group of Birdsboro will be celebrating their 10th Anniversary Sunday, Jan. 31 with an evening of food, fellowship and speakers.

The evening begins at 6 pm at St. Paul's UCC Church, Washington & W. 2nd St., Birdsboro, with food and fellowship. A speakers meeting will follow at 7 pm with three speakers of various periods of sobriety offering their experience, strength and hope. All are welcome to help celebrate.

depth manner.

The participants find the process invigorating and insightful. We also held a Home Group Workshop in the winter of 2005. In the spring of 2005, our Sunday meeting moved to its present location at St. Paul's U.C.C. Church.

In addition to the weekly meetings, a fellowship has developed, where group members spend time outside of the meeting, working to strengthen their relationships and sobriety.

We talk on the phone, travel to different meetings together, meet for picnics or A.A. gatherings, and invite each other into our homes to share in the A.A. way of life.

Thus, with a strong foundation for sobriety developed, the New Millennium Group hopes to continue to stay sober and carry the message of Alcoholics Anonymous to all who want to it.

"Dr. Bob's Nightmare" or the traditions. Such a studious effort gives newcomer's exposure to the program and old timers a much-needed refresher.

On March 17, 2001, the group started a Saturday 8am, 11th Step Meeting, at Douglassville's St. Gabriel's Church. Five people, including three home group members, attended the initial meeting. Attendance now averages about thirty people, and we have a core group of regulars who have a special connection to the meeting. The concentration on prayer and meditation, including up to twenty minutes of meditation time, often allows us to regain our focus, both in A.A. and our daily lives.

In January of 2003, the group started an ongoing series of workshops focused on the twelve steps. We spent a full day at St. Gabriel's Church, studying and discussing each of the twelve steps in an in-

District 33 Meeting New Location

Beginning January 2010 District 33 will be meeting on the 3rd Thursday of each month at Timber's Restaurant, 14323 Kutztown Road (Rts. 222 & 662) Fleetwood, PA 19522 at 7:00 PM. All AA Members Welcome.

Telephone Hotline Seeks Volunteers

Volunteers are needed to take 12 Step calls from our answering service. If you are interested please contact the Hotline Chairperson at P.O. Box 1257, Reading, PA 19612 or email at Hotline@ReadingBerksIntergroup.Org. Sing-up sheets are also available at many local group meetings.

The RBI Telephone Hot line received 62 calls during the month. The breakdown is as follows:



Call for Information: 51
Schedule Requests: 2
Solicitations: 1
Rides to Meetings: 1
To Talk: 1

Treasurer's Report

From Dec. 22 Intergroup meeting

Beginning Balance	Ending
Prudent Reserve	
\$2,400	\$2,400
General Fund	
\$2,939.87	\$2,446.92
Activities Fund	
\$297.79	\$397.79
Petty Cash	
\$66.25	\$96.25

LOOKING FOR AN ALTERNATIVE?

If your group is not receiving enough copies of the Alternative—or none at all—please contact us at Alternative@ReadingBerksIntergroup.Org

vinelines

SELECTIONS FROM THE GRAPEVINE

One Day at a Time

The ability to live one day at a time, unhampered by yesterday's mistakes and tomorrow's anxieties, is one of the priceless gems of wisdom of the ages.

This is the season of the noble looks, and the empty resolutions. But not, thank Heaven, for us. Not any more! Let others weep over the shattered remains of their good intentions. We've found something better, something we call our 24-hour plan.

We've learned at last what we cannot order our lives for a whole year ahead. Nor for a month in advance. No, not even for a week. We've learned to reduce the whole business of living to a size we can understand, and handle! The current 24-hours!

Now, at New Year's, with a new set of 365 24-hour units ahead of us, is a good time to re-examine this 24-hour philosophy of ours. At first, it was a defensive measure, a device to get off the stuff, a challenge to stop drinking and get started on the A.A. way of life. Many of us, however, toss the 24-hour plan away after the craving for a drink recedes from us. We feel we're above such childish things. We are masters of our own fate again. We don't have to have time chopped up into small bits, like meat for an infant.

If you're one of those, you've missed the whole point of the 24-hour philosophy.



Actually, the ability to live one day at a time, unhampered by yesterday's mistakes and tomorrow's anxieties, is one of the priceless gems of wisdom of the ages. The Bible tells us, "Give us this day our daily bread;" "Sufficient to the day is the evil thereof." We could fill this page with such familiar quotations, all merely other ways of describing our 24-hour plan.

Few of us will ever have a tougher problem to solve in this life than our own alcoholism. We had to break that one down to a size we could deal with,

and lick! Our lesser everyday problems will yield to the same treatment.

It's a delightful technique, really! Whether we're job hunting, trying to reunite a broken home, or just trying to be a better guy, the trick is to concentrate on this one day. If we do the best we can today, then regardless of what our fears may try to tell us, we've done the most we could possibly do. We are a lot closer to our goal, we've accomplished more than we ever could if we had chosen to weight ourselves down with the twin millstones of yesterday and tomorrow. We are free to run, and we run the best race we can--today!

We've had our knowledge forced upon us, as a matter of personal survival. We've paid a horrible price, most of us. So let us not spurn one of the greatest lessons we've learned. Let the hung-over sad sacker vow, "Never again!" Let the self-righteous say, "I shall control my future--." Let us remember our humility. Let us face 1949 as it comes, day by day.

Twenty-four hours is a big enough hunk of time for us to worry over. Thus, our resolutions may be smaller, less flashy. But on us, they look good! So--HAPPY NEW YEAR -- One day at a time!

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Victor E.



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