

The Alternative

Reading-Berks County Intergroup Newsletter February 2018

ReadingBerksIntergroup.org

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 12157, Reading, PA 19612, or you can email us at Alternative@ReadingBerksIntergroup.org

HELP IS AVAILABLE 24 HOURS A DAY, 7 DAYS A WEEK CALL 610-373-6500

INTERGROUP REPRESENTATIVE CONTACT INFORMATION

Mike M.	Intergroup Chairperson	Chairperson@ReadingBerksIntergroup.Org
Robert D.	Intergroup Alt. Chairperson	Alt-Chair@ReadingBerksIntergroup.Org
Rol S.	Intergroup Treasurer	Treasurer@ReadingBerksIntergroup.Org
Mark S.	Intergroup Secretary	Secretary@ReadingBerksIntergroup.Org
Bridget J.	Hotline Chairperson	Hotline@ReadingBerksIntergroup.Org
Larry M.	Archives Chairperson	Archives@ReadingBerksIntergroup.Org
Al S.	Men's Prison Chairperson	MensPrison@ReadingBerksIntergroup.Org
Susan W.	Woman's Prison Chairperson	WomansPrison@ReadingBerksIntergroup.Org
Bill C.	Literature Chairperson	Literature@ReadingBerksIntergroup.Org
Tyler J.	Schedules Chairperson	Schedules@ReadingBerksIntergroup.Org
Rob S.	Institutions Chairperson	Institutions@ReadingBerksIntergroup.Org
Tammy G.	Newsletter Chairperson	Alternative@ReadingBerksIntergroup.Org
Misty H.	Unity Chairperson	Unity@ReadingBerksIntergroup.Org
Terry Mc F.	Bridging the Gap	BridgingGap@ReadingBerksIntergroup.Org
Greg G.	Website	Info@ReadingBerksIntergroup.Org
Pete R.	Public Information	PublicInfo@ReadingBerksIntergroup.Org
(Tyler J.)	Visitation	Visitation@ReadingBerksIntergroup.Org

The Reading Berks Intergroup meets on the 4th Tuesday of each month at the Calvary Baptist Church, 510 Park Ave., Reading, PA at 7:30 P.M. All members of Alcoholics Anonymous are welcome and encouraged to attend.

“Responsibility Declaration”

“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.”

Step Two

“Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.”

Step Two is the rallying point for all of us. Whether agnostic, atheist, or former believer, we can stand together on this Step. True humility and an open mind can lead us to faith, and every A.A. meeting is an assurance that God will restore us to sanity if we rightly relate ourselves to Him.

(Twelve Steps and Twelve Tradition pg. 33)

Tradition Two

“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.”

If the founder and his friends have served well, they may – to their surprise – be reinstated for a time. If, however, they have heavily resisted the rising tide of democracy, they may be summarily beached. In either case, the group now has a so-called rotating committee, very sharply limited in its authority. In no sense whatever can its members govern or direct the group. They are servants. Theirs is the sometimes thankless privilege of doing the group’s chores. Headed by the chairman, they look after public relations and arrange meetings. Their treasurer, strictly accountable, takes money from the hat that is passed, banks it, pays the rent and other bills, and makes a regular report at business meetings. The secretary see that literature is on the table, looks after the phone-answering service, answers the mail, and sends out notices of meetings. Such are the simple services that enable the group to function. The committee gives no spiritual advice, judges no one’s conduct, issues no orders. Every one of them may be promptly eliminated at the next election if they try this. And so they make the belated discovery that they are really servants, not senators. These are universal experiences. Thus throughout A.A. does the group conscience decree the terms upon which its leaders shall serve.

(Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions pg. 134)

2nd Step Prayer

Heavenly Father, I am having trouble with personal relationships. I can't control my emotional nature. I am prey to misery and depression. I can't make a living. I feel useless. I am full of fear. I am unhappy. I can't seem to be of real help to others. I know in my heart that only you can restore me to sanity if I am just willing to stop doubting your power. I humbly ask that you help me to understand that it is more powerful to believe than not to believe and that you are either everything or nothing.

(A.A. Big Book pgs. 52:2, 52:3, 53:1, 53:2)

Events

“The New Millennium Group 17 Year Anniversary Celebration ”

Sunday, January 28th, 2018

St. Paul’s UCC, Christian Education Building
Washington & W. 2nd St., Birdsboro, PA

Food, Fun & Fellowship at 6:00 PM / Speaker Meeting at 7:00 PM

Please bring a covered dish or snack or just bring yourself !

All are Welcome to Attend!

Service Commitments

Need Male Volunteers for the Prison Commitment

Meetings are Saturday Nights from 7-8 PM

Please Contact Al S., at MensPrison@ReadingBerksIntergroup.Org

Applications are available on the Reading Berks Intergroup Website

<http://www.readingberksintergroup.org/Prison%20Volunteer%20App-2015.pdf>

Need Female Volunteers for Prison Commitment

Meetings are Tuesday Nights from 7-8 PM

Please Contact Susan W. at SanLee715@gmail.com

Applications are available on the Reading Berks Intergroup Website

<http://www.readingberksintergroup.org/2015%20PrisonVolunteerApp%20Female.pdf>

“Bridging The Gap” – Needs Volunteers

Contact Terry Mc F. at 610-944-3167, BridgingGap@ReadingBerksIntergroup.Org or at

“Bridging the Gap”, P.O. Box 301, Blandon, Pa. 19510.

“HOTLINE” Needs Volunteers

AA members with some accumulated sobriety are always needed to join up to take calls from individuals who are reaching out for one reason or another... Contact the Intergroup Hotline Chairperson at Hotline@ReadingBerksIntergroup.Org and sign up sheets are available at

http://www.readingberksintergroup.org/Getting_Involved.htm#HOTLINE_SIGN-UP_SHEET

Announcements

“Alternative Advertisements”

All A.A. Events, Notifications, and/or Announcements are Welcome!

Please email all requests to: Alternative@ReadingBerksIntergroup.Org

“New AA Meeting Guide Mobile App”

Free mobile app for IOS and Android

Designed to be simple, fast, and help you find AA meetings

Google: <https://meetingguide.org/>

Existing Meeting Time Change:

“Time To Start Living”

Beginning January 1st 2018 Every Wednesday & Friday

The group will start their meeting at 6:30 PM ending at 7:30 PM

Wednesdays’ (Beginners) & Fridays’ 1st-Step, 3rd-Living Sober, 5th-Traditions

Good Shepherd Church, 170 Tuckerton Rd., Reading, PA 19605

Existing Meeting New Location:

”Great Fact Big Book”

Beginning Wednesday, January 3rd 2018

The group will begin meeting at their new location from 7:00 PM to 8:00 PM

Wyomissing Church of the Brethren, 2200 State Hill, Rd., Wyomissing, PA 19610

**** Please Note: Meeting Day & Time has not changed – only the location ****

New Meeting:

Nueva Vida

Sunday 6 - 7 PM (Spanish/English) Big Book

Monday 6 – 7 PM (Spanish/English) 12 & 12

Easy Does It Clubhouse, 647 Walnut St., Reading, PA

Meeting Needs Support:

Stouchburg Group

Marion Twp. Municipal Bldg., 420 Water St., Womelsdorf, PA 19567

Monday’s & Thursday’s at 7:00 PM

Meeting Needs Support:

Spirit of Recovery

Holy Spirit Church, 423 Windsor St., Reading, PA

Monday’s at 7:00 PM

Announcements Continued

Meeting Needs Support:

5th Street Recovery

Pennsylvania Counseling Building, 125 South 5th Street, Reading, PA , PA
Tuesday's at 6:30 PM

Meeting Needs Support:

Nolde Forest Group

1 United Church of Christ, 1730 New Holland Rd., Kenhorst, PA
Wednesday 7:30 PM (2 Meetings Upstairs and Downstairs)

Meeting Needs Support:

The Wires Meeting

(Now Open to Men & Women**)**

Zion U.C.C. Church, 2nd & High Sts., Womelsdorf, PA 19567
Closed Meeting (Step Discussion, Big Book, Speaker)
Sunday's, 6:45-8:00 PM

All are Invited to Attend:

District 66 Area 59 Meeting

2nd Thursday each month at 7 - 8 PM
St. Peters UCC, Dwight St. & Curtis Rd., West Lawn, PA

A Special Thanks to the following groups for their contributions to support Reading-Berks

Intergroup: T.L.C. Group; French Creek Group of AA and Alcathon

Alcoholism Quotes

“It’s been six years since I have had a drink and I have two girls, and my priorities are a lot different now and I just can’t believe I was that guy. And I would not go back, I would not trade the way I am for anything.”

Brett Favre, NFL Green Bay Packers; <http://www.azquotes.com>

“All I wanted was the opportunity to make my own decision again. It started out as a recreational thing and then it became an all-day job.”

Lawrence Taylor, NFL New York Giant; <http://aforeverrecovery.com>

“Up until last year, I have never really treated my illness — it took a humiliating experience and a feeling of complete self-loathing, and only then was I finally willing to do the things necessary for recovery. Emotional sobriety means learning to be comfortable in your own skin and delving deep into personal issues. It also means surrendering. I’ve stopped fighting everybody and everything; I was one of the most defiant people on the planet. On self-reflection, where did that actually get me? It didn’t help me out in any positive way.”

Todd Marinovich, NFL Los Angeles Raiders; www.ocreger.com

“My body never felt so great. I never looked so good. Now I can hopefully compare myself to last year when I wasn’t able to run 10 or 12 plays without being incredibly tired. All my focus is on my body and how much stronger I can get, how much stronger I can be and being a reliable teammate.”

Rey Mauluga, NFL Cincinnati Bengals; <https://drugabuse.com>

“I wouldn’t trade those 30 days for anything, to be able to better myself and do some soul searching. I’m sober, but it’s definitely an everyday battle. Every day is a struggle, but they say it’s one day at a time, so that’s how I’m taking it. But I’m enjoying the sober life.”

Erin Henderson, NFL Minnesota Vikings; <https://drugabuse.com>

“I still have a lot of work to do, but...I’ve never been clean and sober this long since I was 11. The best part is being able to help other people. If I can help one kid, it would be worth it.”

Erik Ainge, NFL New York Jets; <https://drugabuse.com>

“I’m here now, and I’m grateful,” said Tautolo. “It’s such a bad word, addiction, alcoholism, but it really isn’t. That’s my truth.”

Terry Tautolo, NFL San Francisco 49ers; <https://drugabuse.com>

Cris Carter: From Addiction to Superstardom in the NFL “We Do Recover”

“What you deny or ignore, you delay. What you accept and face, you conquer.”

Fans would be surprised to know how much of a drug culture exists behind the scenes in the NFL.

In the 1980s, it was out of control. Without much thought, I found myself regularly abusing alcohol and cocaine. Despite the partying, I was looking pretty good on the field and my lifestyle was still hidden from the public.

However, in the summer of 1990, cocaine caused me to fail my third drug test. Buddy Ryan, the coach of the Eagles at the time, had enough. I was released from the team after just three seasons. To make matters worse, word was starting to get out in the NFL circles. I was becoming branded as a problem player before I even wanted to admit the problem to myself. For too many young athletes, this is where their story takes a terrible downward spiral.

If it wasn't for the Minnesota Vikings, drugs and alcoholism would have ended my career too.

My new team invested so much in me. I owe everything to the Vikings. Though being dropped from the Eagles was a harsh wake-up call, getting and staying sober was hard. I struggled even with plenty of help and motivation to get my life together.

Ultimately, the Vikings got me to the right people — like the people at Ambrosia — who taught me how to live the rest of my life. I didn't have to be a prisoner to the things that held me back before. I could finally tap into my athletic ability and give it 100 percent. My lifestyle completely changed to focus on my workouts and training.

Because of this life-changing shift, I was able to accomplish so many of the dreams that I had ever since I was a little boy.

Being in recovery allowed me to play in the Pro Bowl for eight consecutive seasons, retire with more than 1,000 career catches and, ultimately, make it to the Pro Football Hall of Fame. I can say with absolute certainty that I would have never achieved any of this without my sobriety.

As proud as I am of my accomplishments as a wide receiver, I am even more proud to have been named NFL's Man of the Year. I feel so passionate about preventing addiction and helping those already struggling. I work with a variety of charities to get underprivileged kids to understand the importance of staying in school and away from the party scene. For those already caught up in drugs and alcohol, there is hope. I know firsthand that everyone possesses the inner strength to escape the iron grip of addiction.

To save lives, we need to take the stigma out of addiction.

Through my active involvement in the recovery community, I see too many people not getting the help they need because of shame. As a society, we need to put to rest the idea that being an alcoholic or a drug addict is something to be embarrassed about. The reality is that addiction is a disease. It is all around us. Addiction is not a crime, and it is not a choice.

If my story can inspire even one person to seek help and turn their life around, then I need to keep telling it.

<https://www.christiandrugrehab.com/christian-recovery/addiction-nfl>

Important Dates in A.A. History

February 1, 1918: Original date set for Bill Wilson's marriage to Lois Burnham. The date was moved up because of the war.

February 2, 1942: Bill Wilson paid tribute to Ruth Hock, AA's first paid secretary, who resigned to get married. She had written approximately 15,000 letters to people asking for help.

February 5, 1941: Pittsburgh Telegram ran a story on the first AA group's Friday night meeting of a dozen "former hopeless drunks."

February 8:

1940: Bill W., Dr. Bob, and six other AA's asked 60 rich friends of John D. Rockefeller Jr., for money at the Union Club, NY. They got \$2,000.

February 10, 1922: Harold E. Hughes was born on a farm near Ida Grove, Iowa. After his recovery from alcoholism, he became Governor of Iowa, a United States Senator, and the leading dark horse for the Presidential Democratic nomination in 1972, until he announced he would not run. He authored the legislation which created the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, and other legislation to help alcoholics and addicts.

February 11, 1938: Clarence Snyder ("Home Brewmeister" in 1st, 2nd & 3rd editions) had his last drink.

February 12, 1945: World War II paper shortage forced reduction in size of the Big Book.

February 13, 1940: With about two years of sobriety, Jim Burwell ("The Vicious Cycle") moved to the Philadelphia area and started the first Philadelphia A.A. group.

February 14, 1971: AA groups worldwide held a memorial service for Bill Wilson.

February 15, 1946: AA Tribune, Des Moines, IA, reported 36 new members since Marty Mann had been there.

February 16, 1941: Baltimore Sunday Sun reported city's first AA group begun in 1940 had grown from 3 to 40 members, with five being women.

February 18, 1943: AA's were granted the right to use cars for 12th step work in emergency cases, despite gas rationing.

February 19, 1967: Father "John Doe" (Ralph Pfau), 1st Catholic Priest in AA, died.

February 20, 1941: The Toledo Blade published first of three articles on AA by Seymour Rothman.

February 21, 1939: 400 copies of the Big Book manuscript were sent to doctors, judges, psychiatrists, and others for comment.

February 22, 1842: Abe Lincoln addressed the Washington Temperance Society in Springfield, IL.

February 23, 1959: AA granted "Recording for the Blind" permission to tape the Big Book.

February 24, 2002: Hal Marley, "Dr. Attitude of Gratitude," died. He had 37 years of sobriety. Hal testified, anonymously, before the U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse on December 3, 1970.

February 28, 1940: 1st organization meeting of Philadelphia AA was held at McCready Huston's room at 2209 Delancy Street.

WHY WOULD WE WANT TO VISIT THE GSO/AA WORLD SERVICE OFFICE?

At Intergroup, we recently discussed the possibility of running a bus trip to AA's World Service Office /General Service Office in New York City. Later someone asked me why we would want to go there. I thought that was a very good question. I realized that many AA's might never have this on their radar. Thus, this article; most of this information can be found in the A.A. Service Manual.

As AA has grown, it was recognized that some type of organization was needed to carry the message in ways that are not possible for small, local groups. Some examples are the publication of AA literature, public information, helping new groups get started, carrying the message to other countries and in other languages, as well as protecting AA's traditions. Carrying the message to prisons + institutions, meetings in print (Grapevine), archives, special needs, and International conventions are also a part of GSO's work. GSO's objective is the same as for the individual groups: to carry the message to the alcoholic who still suffers.

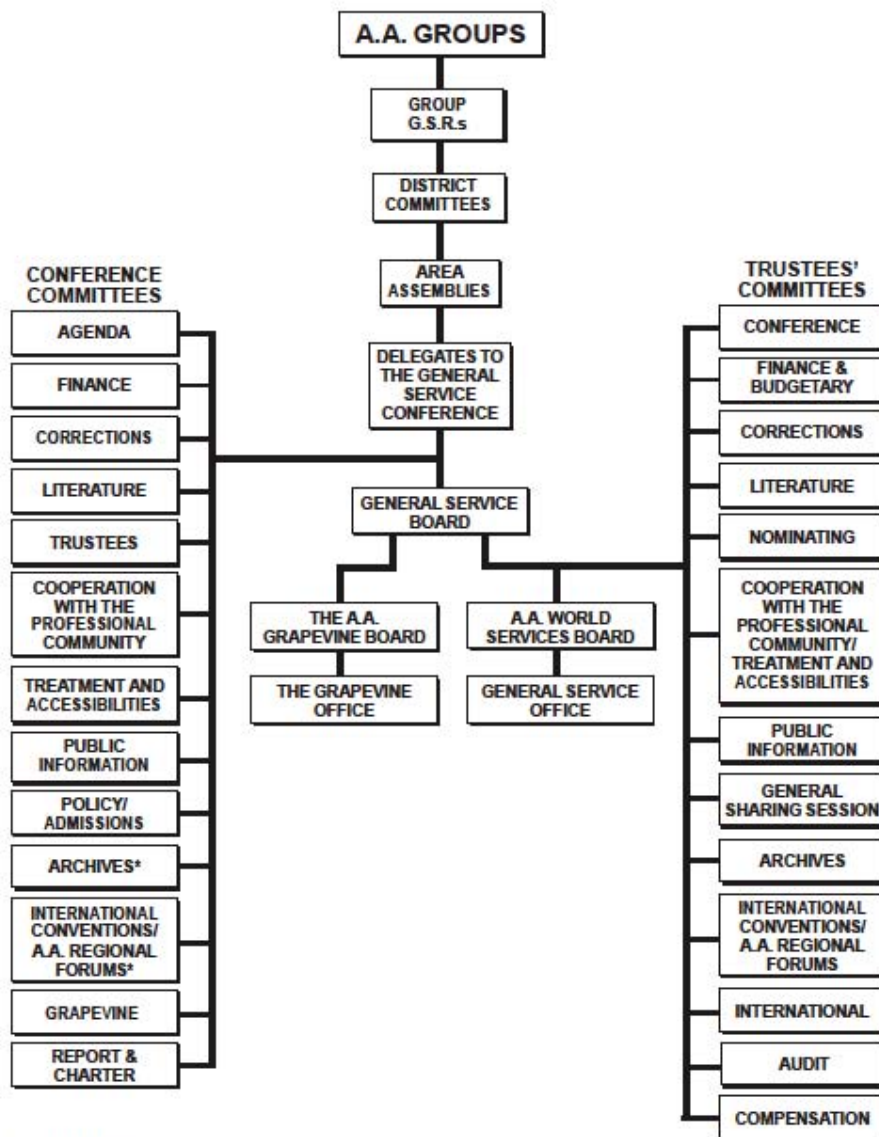
Communications up and down the service structure is of vital importance; group wishes are carried to World Service via the 'service structure.' Group reps (GSRs) carry the group conscience to their districts; district DCMs to their areas. Area delegates attend an annual Conference meeting with conference committees, trustees, and GSO staff. Conference members report back to groups via the same service structure.

So again, the question "why visit?" The service manual (p. S23) points out that **"once A. A. members are well informed about service, they often want to become involved and to take on their own service responsibilities."** A visit to GSO can help to reactivate groups and districts, encouraging new participation in service. GSO serves as a clearinghouse and exchange point for the wealth of A.A. experience accumulated over the years, coordinates a wide array of activities and services (see the General Service Conference Structure diagram) and oversees the publication of all AA approved literature. It's an interesting place! During the tour we will meet the individuals who perform all these service. In addition, we will attend an AA meeting with others from around the country and the world. Oh, and you will probably make some new AA friends on the bus!

Hopefully, this article will generate some discussion among individuals and within your home groups. With enough interest, we hope to organize a charter bus trip to GSO/NYC at a nominal fee, this coming spring. Let your intergroup rep know if you are interested!

Submitted in Gratitude, Cris M.

The General Service Conference Structure (U.S. and Canada)



*Secondary committee.

