

The Alternative

Reading-Berks County Intergroup Newsletter January 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

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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 One

“We admitted we were powerless over alcohol ~ that our lives had become unmanageable.”

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.

(Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions pg. 21)

Tradition One

“Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon A.A. unity.”

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. Neither he nor anybody else can survive unless he carries the A.A. message. The moment this Twelfth Step work forms a group, another discovery is made – that most individuals cannot recover unless there is a group. Realization dawns that he is but a small part of a great whole; that no personal sacrifice is too great for preservation of the Fellowship. He learns that the clamor of desires and ambitions within him must be silenced whenever these could damage the group. It becomes plain that the group must survive or the individual will not.

(Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions pg. 130)

1st 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 this day to understand the true meaning of powerlessness. Remove from me all denial of my alcoholism.

Friends of Bill W. (http://friendsofbillw.net/twelve_step_prayers)

Events

“Reading Berks Intergroup New Year’s Eve Alcathon”

2:00 PM Sunday, December 31st, 2017 thru

2:00 AM Monday, January 1st 2018

Meetings on the Hour every Hour

Antonement Parish Church – Old Borough Hall

Penn Ave. & Wyomissing Blvd., Wyomissing, PA 19610

Join us in Celebrating Sobriety!

Lots of Food, Fun, Friends & Fellowship!

Please bring a snack or your favorite dish to share!

For more information email unity@ReadingBerksIntergroup.org or

Text Misty H. @ 484-818-1350

“Hilltop Group 2nd Anniversary Celebration”

Tuesday, January 9th, 2018

The Bridge (in Basement), Rt. 724 & High St, Grill, PA 19607

Food, Fun & Fellowship at 6:30 / Speaker Meeting at 7:30

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

All are Welcome to Attend!

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

Announcements Continued

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

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

Service Commitments

Commitment & Visitation Positions are Available for Reading Berks Intergroup

Please Contact Mike M. Intergroup Chairperson
@ Chairperson@ReadingBerksIntergroup.Org or
Attend the Intergroup Meeting held on the 4th Tuesday every month located at
Calvary Baptist Church, 510 Park Ave., Reading, PA at 7:30 PM

Need Volunteers for Alcathon

Please Contact Misty H. at Unity@ReadingBerksIntergroup.Org
or Text 484-818-1350

Need Male Volunteers for the Prison Commitment

Meetings are Monday Nights

Please Contact Terry C. 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

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

Intergroup: Alpha Group; Books & People; Saturday AM Women’s Group; Teathyme Group of AA; Turning Point Group; Advent Men’s Group; Kutztown Friday Night Group; and St. Gabriel’s Group.

Alcoholism Quotes

“A woman came up to me after the meeting and said, ‘You’ve just taken away my last excuse to have a drink.’ I asked her what she meant. She said, ‘I’ve always had this little corner of my mind which held the excuse that, if anything were to happen to my kids, then I’d be justified in getting drunk. You’ve shown me that’s not true.’ I was suddenly aware that maybe I had found a way to turn this dreadful tragedy into something positive. I really was in the position to say, ‘Well, if I can go through this and stay sober, then anyone can.’ There was no better way to honor the memory of my son.”

Eric Clapton, www.elementsbehavioralhealth.com

“You want to get sober for your parents, you want to get sober for your job, you want to get sober for the cops, you want to get sober to protect your image. A lot of good reasons, by the way, but unfortunately, the only thing that works is that you have to want to get sober for you.”

Rob Lowe, www.elementsbehavioralhealth.com

“It’s like learning to ride a bike, you know? You have to get your bearings and you have to stay stable and balanced.”

Edie Falco, www.huffingtonpost.com

“The thing that I’m most proud of in my life is that if a stranger came up to me and said, ‘I can’t stop drinking. I can’t stop drinking. Can you help me?’ I can say, ‘Yes, I can help you.’”

Matthew Perry, www.huffingtonpost.com

Alcoholism is a three-fold illness: The physical component is the inability to stop drinking once one starts on any given night (or afternoon or morning). The mental aspect is an obsession with alcohol -- the belief that it can solve our problems, although it ends up that our solutions are even worse than our problems were. These two parts lead to a third: the spiritual loss of values. We all have values we gained from our parents, from older siblings, from teachers, coaches and religious leaders. But alcoholism is the "great eraser." It wipes out all those values and replaces them with one quest: the need to kill emotional pain.

Michael Levin, <http://www.notable-quotes.com>

The Blueprint for Staying Sober at a Party: A Simple 4 Point Plan

1. Act Accordingly - Chances are you're accepting an invite from a friend who may be well aware of your decision to embrace sobriety. If the host is not providing any non-alcoholic beverages, bring own drink, whether it is a liter of Coca-Cola, fruit juice or sparkling water. If there are other people who are teetotalers, you are increasing your chances of staying sober at the party by joining their circle. While you may not be familiar with these folks, you may enjoy their company and you might leave that night with a few new friends. You also may want to bring a supportive family member or friend along to encourage you and help you feel confident.

2. Be Prepared to Answer the Inevitable Questions... Confidently - Most of the people that you know at a given event may already know of your decision to embrace sobriety. By answering in a confident manner, you are letting people know that you are sticking to your guns. There will be those instances where people may try to goad or pressure you, but no matter the situation, stay your ground and be confident. If you are feeling uncomfortable with any pressure being thrown your way, it is OK to politely excuse yourself and leave the situation.

3. Be In Charge of What You Are Drinking: 3 Important Points - No matter what the circumstance or reason, NEVER EVER LET SOMEBODY WHO IS NOT IN RECOVERY GET YOU A DRINK. While you want to trust a friend to get you a non-alcoholic beverage, they could inadvertently grab you something that contains alcohol. Also, it is important that if you grab a drink for yourself that you **watch the bartender pour your drink**. Most importantly, you need to **keep your hands on your drink at all times**. While you may think it won't happen, someone at a party may try to slip some alcohol or something else in your drink because they may think its funny or may want to see you "loosen up a little". The golden rule is if you leave your drink unattended, you throw it away and ask for a new one.

4. Have an Exit Strategy - As with most parties or get-togethers, the witching hour may strike and the atmosphere may get a little too uncomfortable for you to bear. Watching a room full of people under the influence may cut a little too close for comfort (like you need any more reminders of your past). If you are feeling uncomfortable, say your goodbyes and leave at once. If you come with a supportive family member or friend, tell them that you are ready to leave and so do right away.

If you happen to have come to the gathering by yourself, it is wise to get the phone numbers of those who are in recovery, your sponsor or a trusted family member or friend and let them know you may be giving them a call. If you leave without saying proper goodbyes to the host or your friends, call or email them the next day apologizing for your hasty exit from the party. If they already know of your commitment to your sobriety, they will completely understand.

Final Note: It is very important to stress that if you question your comfort in attending any function in which alcohol will be served – JUST DON'T GO. Your sobriety and recovery takes center stage. There will always be other invitations that come down the pike. If you are new and in your first year of recovery, it is best to avoid these functions until you are more comfortable in your recovery.

Ultimately, if you do decide that you are ready to regain your wings and become a social butterfly once again, the tips given above will give you a good foundation to party smart, sane and safe without drinking.

Important Dates in A.A. History

January 1:

1943: Columbus Dispatch reports 1st Anniversary of Columbus AA

1948: First A.A. meeting was held in Japan, (English speaking.)

1988: West Virginia A.A. began first statewide toll-free telephone hotline.

January 2, 2003: Mid-Southern California Archives moved to new location in Riverside.

January 3, 1941: Jack Alexander told Bill Wilson the Oxford Group would be in his Saturday Evening Post.

January 4:

1939: Dr. Bob stated in a letter to Ruth Hock that A.A. had to get away from the Oxford Group atmosphere.

1940: First A.A. group was founded in Detroit, Michigan.

1941: Bill and Lois Wilson drove to Bedford Hills, NY to see Stepping Stones.

January 5, 1941: Bill Wilson told Jack Alexander that Jack was "the toast of A. A. -- in Coca Cola, of course."

January 8, 1938: New York A.A. split from the Oxford Group.

January 10, 1940: 1st AA meeting not in a home meets at King School, Akron, Ohio.

January 13:

1988: Jack Norris, M.D., Chairman/Trustees of A.A. for 27 yrs. died.

2003: Dr. Earle Marsh, author of "Physician Heal Thyself," sober 49 years, died

January 15:

1937: Fitz M brings AA meetings to Washington DC.

1945: First AA meeting held in Springfield, Missouri.

January 17, 1919: 18th amendment, "Prohibition," became law.

January 19:

1943: 1st discussion for starting AA group in Toronto.

1943: Wilson's returned from 1st major A.A. tour started in Oct 24 1943.

1999: Frank M., A.A. Archivist since 1983, died.

January 21, 1951: A.A. Grapevine published memorial issue on Dr. Bob.

January 23, 1961: Bill W. sent an appreciation letter to Dr. Carl Jung for his contribution to A.A.

January 24:

1945: 1st black group St. Louis

1971: Bill Wilson died in Miami, Florida.

January 26, 1971: *New York Times* published Bill Wilson's obituary on page 1.

January 27, 1971: The Washington Post published an obituary of Bill Wilson

January 30, 1961: Dr. Carl Jung answers Bill's letter with "Spiritus Contra Spiritum."