

## NEWS & notes

### Washington St. Group Plans Summer Luncheon

The 611 Washington St. Group is holding another of their noted luncheons, this on Thursday, August 26th from 11am to 1pm. The gathering will be held at the First United Church of Christ, 611 Washington St. in Reading — please use Reed St. door). Lost of food, fun and a speaker. Free will notation.

### Big Books Prison Bound

A case of 20 soft-covered Big Books has been purchased for the RBI Corrections committee and are on their way to those in need.

The books include editions complete with the popular personal stories of strength and hope, and will be used in efforts to assist men and women in their recovery efforts.

Volunteers are still needed to assist with meetings at the corrections facilities. If interested contact Terry C. (Men's Prison Chair) at 484-332-0926 or Dianna (Woman's Prison Chair) at [Woman'sPrison@ReadingBerksIntergroup.Org](mailto:Woman'sPrison@ReadingBerksIntergroup.Org) for volunteer requirements and application.

### ...Speaking of Literature

If your group needs additional AA literature, you can send your request to: [Literature@ReadingBerksIntergroup.Org](mailto:Literature@ReadingBerksIntergroup.Org), or call 610-562-0507 for prompt service.

### Donations Appreciated

When making a donation to the RBI, here are a few things to keep in mind. Please annotate the name of your group with your donation. Also, include a return address should you wish a receipt of payment. Also please note whether your group's donation is to the *General* or *Activities* fund.

### Group Anniversary Slated

The *Time To Start Living Group*, formed in 1996, will be hosting an anniversary celebration at their speaker meeting on Friday, Aug. 27 at 6:30 pm. The group meets at the Good Shepherd Church, 170 Tuckerton Rd., Temple.

## Annual Intergroup Picnic Planned for September 26

Mark your calendars and pack your baskets for the annual RBI "End of Summer Picnic" planned for Sunday, Sept. 26 at Gring's Mill Park.

Slated from noon to around 5 pm, the picnic area is located by the picnic tables up the hill from the parking lot — same place as last year.

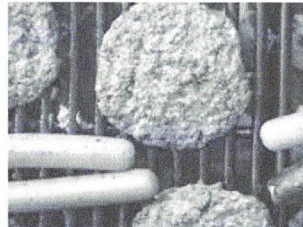
The annual event has proven to both fun and popular for intergroup members and their guests.

"Last year we had 80 or more people at the picnic and people are welcome to bring friends and family," Says Carrie C., RBI Unity Chair.

Intergroup provides most of the essentials for the picnic including hot dogs, hamburgers, veggie burgers, buns, coffee, utensils, and plates.

"We need people to bring desserts, covered dishes, snacks, etc. They should also bring volley balls, soccer balls, or any other outside sporting equipment they want to use," adds Carrie.

Volunteers are always needed with set-up and should arrive early at about 11:15 am. Contact Carrie at 610-404-1518 if you want to help.



Volunteers are also needed with clean up, including taking things to the trash and brining extra food to a shelter or half way house of some sort.

Gring's Mill Recreation area is located on Tulpehocken Rd. in Wyomissing.

### Dist. 67 Annual Picnic Aug. 29 in Gibraltar

If you can't wait for the RBI picnic, District 67 will be holding their 13th Annual Picnic on Sunday, Aug., 29 from noon to 5 pm at Gibraltar Park, in Gibraltar, PA.

Hot dogs and hamburgers will be provided, and picnic goers asked to bring a covered dish. Donations are requested. Speakers begin at 2 pm, with 50/50 and other raffles going on during the day. Sorry, no pets.

### Eastern PA GSA Convention Set for Nov. 12-14

The Eastern Pennsylvania General Service Assembly will be holding their 52nd Annual Convention and Assembly November 12 - 14, 2010 at the Lancaster Host Resort & Conference Center in Lancaster, PA.

The event will include Workshops, Panel Presentations, GSR Orientation, Speaker Meetings, Spanish/Bi-Lingual Meeting, Open Mike Session, "God As I Understand Him" Meeting, Ask-It-Basket, Dance & Ice Cream Social.

Day Only Registration: \$20 per person (includes all convention activities for the entire weekend, *except* the banquet)

Day Only Registration & Saturday Banquet: \$50 per person (includes all convention activities for the entire weekend *plus* the banquet)

For more information or registration forms, go to [www.area59aa.org](http://www.area59aa.org).

## Roadmaps To Sobriety... Or At Least A Meeting

Summer time means visitors to our area and some may be in search of a meeting in an unfamiliar territory. Groups can assist visitors—and locals — in finding a meeting by including a Map option on our Inter-



group's internet meeting listing.

Including a map in your group's meeting listing is very easy, says Greg G., website servant. Simply email the exact street address of your meeting, i.e. 1234 Main Street, Reading, PA, to: [Info@ReadingBerksIntergroup.Org](mailto:Info@ReadingBerksIntergroup.Org).

"Having a map on the web-

site that includes an exact address allows visitors to not only see where your meeting is, but also gives them a street address to plug into a GPS making it a lot easier to find you," adds Greg.

Meeting schedules as well as other pertinent info are available on the website at: [www.ReadingBerksIntergroup.Org](http://www.ReadingBerksIntergroup.Org).

Next R.B.I. Meeting: Tuesday, August 24 @ 7:30 pm

## 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

**Greg G.**  
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

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

Aug. 1 Caron Alumni  
Aug. 8 8:15 AM Group  
Aug. 15 Leesport Group  
Aug. 22 Walnut St. Group  
Aug. 29 Time To Start Living  
Sept. 5 Caron Alumni

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

Aug. 2 Alpha Group  
Aug. 9 Twin Valley Group  
Aug. 16 8:15 AM Group  
Aug. 23 Sober @ Six  
Aug. 30 Alpha Group  
Sept. 6 HOLIDAY

### Reading Detox Unit Every Other Tuesday 8 pm

Aug. 3 YASNY Group  
Aug. 17 8:15 AM Group  
Aug. 3 Oley Group

### Reading Detox Unit Thursdays 8 pm

Aug. 5 Alpha Group  
Aug. 12 Boyertown Group  
Aug. 19 New Life Group  
Aug. 26 Happy Hour Group  
Sept. 2 Sunday Morning Speakers

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

Aug. 1 Caron Alumni  
Aug. 8 Walnut St. Group  
Aug. 15 Hilltop Group  
Aug. 22 YASNY  
Aug. 29 Time To Start Living  
Sept. 5 Caron Alumni

### St. Joe's Hospital MH Unit 3rd Floor Reed & Walnut Sts. Mondays 7:30 pm\*

Aug. 2 Birdsboro Group  
Aug. 9 Walnut St. Group  
Aug. 16 Boyertown Group  
Aug. 23 611 Washington St. Group  
Aug. 30 Advent Men's Group  
Sept. 6 Alpha Group

### Caron Foundation Young Adult Female Fridays 8 pm

Aug. 6 Hilltop Group  
Aug. 13 Walnut St. Group  
Aug. 20 Courage To Change  
Aug. 27 Happy Hour Group  
Sept. 3 Sober @ Six

\*Note New Time for St. Joe's Monday Meetings. Call 610-378-2000 and ask for Berkshire Pavilion before going.

*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!!*

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 12157, Reading, PA 19612, or you can email us at [Alternative@ReadingBerksIntergroup.org](mailto:Alternative@ReadingBerksIntergroup.org)

## On the 8th Step...

*"Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all."*

In some ways it is easier to straighten things out with God than with other people. He fully understands everything, we can count on His forgiveness, we talk to Him as it were "in private."

But it is not enough to be right with Him, we must also be right with man. How well do I remember that from the first moment of fresh conviction there was a letter I had to write to someone in the family towards whom I held a long-standing resentment. It was one of the first things I had to do after my decision. You see, we want to get *clear*, to begin anew, to start life all over again. This Step calls for *definiteness*, and it calls for *willingness*: "made a list," and "became willing." How many strained and broken human relationships drag on through years, unresolved, unhealed, unlinked. Nobody will make the break and say the two great words of renewal, "I'm sorry."

We are willing to tell God, we are not willing to tell man, of our repentance and desire for new life. This can hold us back at the first, and it can trip us way down the line. The laws governing human relations are as iron-clad as those that uphold the stars. Individualize the persons whom we have wronged, and those who have wronged us.

Don't forget the wise adage, that "it is harder to forgive those whom we have wronged than those who have wronged us." Get willing to go to them in honesty and humility. It may be the hardest thing you ever did in your life, but it will be one of the most rewarding.

We shall need to do it in the beginning of our new life; we shall have to do it, perhaps often, in the after-stages of it.

*Dr. Samuel Shoemaker, the widely known Episcopal clergyman who helped so greatly in the founding of AA, wrote this in 1963 as part of an article for the Grapevine.*



# Not Under The Rug!

IN approaching Step Eight for the first time, those of us who tend to fight or question various of the Steps until we become convinced they are vital to our sobriety, need reassuring on several points. We may be tempted to tell ourselves that we have done enough housecleaning in the Fourth and Fifth Steps. If we are truthful though, we will have to admit that the biggest obstacle to our taking this Step is that we are afraid to face the unpleasant aspects of our past, especially where we have been at fault.

The first part of the Eighth Step is neither difficult to understand nor hard to go through with. As a matter of fact, if we have written out our Fourth Step inventory, we may already have the list of persons we have harmed. However, becoming willing to make amends to them all is another matter. To make amends means to mend or repair, in this case damaged relationships with people, organizations and institutions we have wronged.

This Eighth Step is to our relations with others what the Fourth was to our relations with ourselves. And obviously the Ninth and Fifth Steps are similarly related to one another. When I went through with the Fourth Step inventory for the first time, it was with the understanding that I would move on to the Fifth Step as soon as possible. Clearly, I do well to approach this "became willing" part of the Eighth Step with the idea that it feeds directly into the action in Step Nine of going out and making such amends as I can.

Here honesty becomes all important. The quickest way for me to put myself in bad relationship with the Step is to kid myself that I am willing to make an amend if I am not really completely ready. The best method I know of for dealing with unwillingness is this: 1) face it honestly, 2) remember that I have agreed to "go to any lengths to gain victory over alcohol" and 3) ask God to make me willing. This approach works--maybe not in five minutes--but if persisted in, it does work.

Then the question arises of just what constitutes an amend. Many of us find that the old rationalization, "If I stay sober, that's amends enough to those I have hurt," just doesn't work. We have to be willing to go further. Some of the most common amends have to do with: people we owe money; wives, parents, children, relatives and friends we have mistreated; employers, employees and business associates we have harmed; people with whom we have become involved morally in an injurious manner.

This list is only a partial one, but it gives a pretty good general idea of the different types of messes we are dealing with. It is impossible to lay down general rules for handling these various situations. For me, there is no substitute for sitting down with my sponsor and thrashing out each individual case, keeping in mind the intention to do whatever turns out to be necessary to thoroughly and honestly go through with the Step.

In the case of money amends, I didn't have enough

money to make them all good at once, but a willingness to pay when and as I could, backed up by small monthly installments, did wonders in putting matters right. In the case of family members I had wronged, a sincere apology was often amend enough, although I sometimes found it difficult to become willing to go even this far.

My natural inclination with unpleasant life situations or soured personal relationships is to sweep them under the rug, look the other way, justify myself and hope they will resolve themselves in time. It seems to be a plausible enough approach but, unfortunately, it never worked very well. These wrongs refused to stay forgotten, didn't solve themselves, and even thrived on this treatment to the extent that they drove me back to the first drink again and again.

Facing the people I had hurt and the difficulties I had created seemed impossible, but those who had gone before me on the road to recovery in AA assured me that not only was this method possible but, if followed through, it produced freedom from the guilt, fear, self-pity, resentment and depression which these situations had produced in my life.

I gained faith in the principle which the Eighth Step is about, through experience. When I went through with the process, it did produce the results my sponsor and AA friends said it would.

I'm a guy who used to make god out of what others thought of me. This Step helped free me from a slavish dependence on other people's opinions. It helped teach me the value of placing principles before personalities in my life. It is not a Step that I feel I have taken. What I have made is a beginning. As it says in Chapter Five of the Big Book, "We are not saints." I still have character defects, and I still hurt other people (though not as often or seriously as before AA). Each time I become aware of an amend I owe, there is another chance to become willing with God's help to put the principles of the AA program before my fear of personalities (mine or anyone else's).

The wonderful thing about growth on the program is that each time I make a right decision in the area of becoming willing to make an amend it makes the next one a little easier to make. And strangely, I find that the more willing I become to admit it when I am wrong, the less often am I in the position of having to make such an admission. Sure I am still wrong, but only sometimes now--not all the time as I used to be.

T. P., Jr., Hankins, New York

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# Some Summer Fun

## Find Your Home Group

These Groups Were Represented at the Last Intergroup Meeting. Was Yours?

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

Six Eleven Washington Street  
Twin Valley  
Eight Fifteen AM  
Walk The Walk  
Advent Mens  
Walnut street recovery  
Alpha  
Wyomissing  
Books And People  
YASNY  
Birdsboro  
Boyertown  
Congo Big Book  
Courage To Change  
Happy Hour  
Hilltop  
Jacksonwald  
Leesport  
New Life Speakers  
Oley  
Shillington Lifeline  
Sunday Morning Speakers  
Time To Start Living

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



### THE CAT'S MEOW

A DRUNK HATED HIS WIFE'S CAT and decided to get rid of it by driving it twenty blocks from his home and leaving it at the park. But as he was getting home, the cat was walking up the driveway.

The next day, he decided to drive the cat forty blocks away. He let it out of the car and headed home. Driving back up his driveway, there was the cat!

He kept taking the cat further and further and the cat would always beat him home. At last, he decided to drive a few miles away, turn right, then left, past the bridge, then right again, and another right, until he reached what he thought was a safe distance from his home and left the cat there. Hours later the man called home to his wife: "Honey, is the cat there?"

"Yes," his wife answered. "Why do you ask?"

Frustrated, the man answered, "Put the cat on the phone. I'm drunk, I'm lost, and I need directions!"

### TWO DRINK LIMIT

The man at the bar ordered one drink after another. After downing each one, he took out a notebook and wrote in it. After a while, the curious bartender asked what he was so busy scribbling. The fellow explained his doctor had given him a two-drink-a-day limit and told him to keep track of them. The bartender couldn't believe it, pointing out that he'd served the fellow at least fifteen drinks.

"Oh, I know," replied the drunk, taking out his notebook. "I'm already into next year."

### STORMY WEATHER

In a virtual blackout, a future member staggered home, made his way through the house and wound up in the shower stall of his bathroom. Groping in the dark, he turned on the water and was soon a sodden sot. The commotion woke up his wife, who took a dim view of the situation, and loudly told him so.

"I know, I know," the victim bubbled through the roar of the shower, "but please let me in--it's raining out here."

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### VICTOR E.

