



# The Alternative

Intergroup newsletter for the Reading-Berks County Area

January 2014

[ReadingBerksIntergroup.org](http://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.

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## Announcements:

**EDITOR'S NOTE**—last month's issue had the wrong date for Leesport's "Pancake Meeting" my apologies and correction:

**LEESPORT GROUP OF AA---Invites you to a "Start Your Day Over with Pancakes" Meeting. February 15<sup>th</sup> @ 8 PM, when pancakes and breakfast foods will be served... (clean-up @ 9) and special OPEN meeting @ 9:30PM. Located at Trinity UCC Church, Rt. 61 (next to the car wash)**

**District 33 HAS MOVED!! New location is: St. Paul's Lutheran Church, 117 Arch Str., Fleetwood Pa 19522--SAME DAY—3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of the month and SAME TIME—7 PM. Come on out and catch the "service smile" (the district 'inventory' is being planned for February)**

**Next Intergroup Meeting: January 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2014**

***\*\*Reading Intergroup has no outside affiliations. We exist as a central office to serve Alcoholics Anonymous groups in the Reading area\*\******ALL MEMBERS ARE WELCOME TO ATTEND INTERGROUP MEETINGS.** Meetings are held on the 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of each month, at 7:30pm, at Calvary Baptist Church 510 Park Ave. (intersection of Grace & Park). See your group's representative for Intergroup meeting minutes. See you at the NEXT MEETING!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

## 12<sup>th</sup> Step Commitments

Caron Adolescent Extended Care – <b>MEN</b> Sunday @ 7:00 PM		Caron Adolescent Extended Care – <b>WOMEN</b> Sunday @ 7:00 PM		St. Joe's Hosp. MH Unit 3 <sup>rd</sup> FL Reed & Walnut Entrance Mondays @ 7:30 PM	
1/5	Springview	1/5	Women Living Sober	1/6	Shoey
1/12	Jacksonwald	1/12	Sunday AM Speakers	1/13	Women Living Sober
1/19	Happy Hour	1/19	Shillington Lifeline	1/20	Leesport
1/26	Springview	1/26	Congo	1/27	Sunday AM Speakers
				StJoe's***ALWAYS CALL AHEAD!!!!** =====	
Wernersville State Hosp. See Guard in Building 34 Monday @ 7:00 PM		Reading Detox Unit Tuesday @ 8:00 PM		<b>Reading Spruce Pavilion Wednesday 7:00 PM</b>	
1/6	Sunday AM Speakers	1/7	Happy Hour	1/1	611 Washington
1/13	Leesport	1/14	Springview	1/8	Alpha
1/20	Sunday AM Speakers	1/21	Congo	1/15	Shillington Lifeline
1/27	Shillington Lifeline	1/28	Twin Valley	1/22	Hilltop
				1/29	
Reading Detox Unit Thursday @ 8:00 PM		Caron Foundation Young Adult <b>Female</b> Friday @ 7:00PM			
1/2	611 Washington	1/3	Springview		
1/9	Shoey	1/10	Happy Hour		
1/16	Sec & Inches	1/17	Congo		
1/23	Alpha	1/24	Twin Valley		
1/30	Hilltop	1/31	Women Living Sober		

**Step 1.** Admitted we were powerless over alcohol; that our lives had become unmanageable.

**Tradition 1** –Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon AA unity.

**Concept I:** *Final responsibility and ultimate authority for A.A. world services should always reside in the collective conscience of our whole Fellowship.*

This defines the principle of the 'collective conscience' and so distinguishes it from the group conscience. It is this principle that applies, as the wording says, across 'all our world services', that is it should be used in all service committees throughout the world. There is no need for any fellowship in the world to write their own Concepts. One very important way in which the collective conscience is different from the group conscience is that whereas in a group conscience, unity is achieved best by consensus, with people following the lead of the trusted old-timers; in a collective conscience of a service committee it would be wrong always to seek consensus because the participating GSRs and delegates have a responsibility to speak up on behalf of their groups. If they do not they are neglecting their duties. There must be debate and tolerance of disagreement. Therefore, the collective conscience looks for 'substantial unanimity', that is a 2/3 majority, rather than consensus, which means complete agreement (see concept XII later).



## WHAT A CONCEPT!!!!!!!!!! (OR: WHAT'S A CONCEPT??)

### The Twelve Concepts

Why do we need the Concepts?

Reading: "The AA Service Manual and 12 Concepts for World Service, by Bill W."

Tradition 9 creates the need for the Concepts by distinguishing between Service Committees and Groups. The Group has a 'group conscience' through which a loving God works to allow it to make the best decisions. The service committee serves those groups by making decisions in answer to the 'collective conscience' of those groups. Note: a service committee is not a group, so cannot have a group conscience! The service committees are committees such as Intergroup, Region and Conference (with the GSB an executive sub-committee of Conference). Area and District are service committees which exist in fellowships throughout the world, but not in Great Britain. The 12 Concepts are the rules of debate and conduct for service committees that ensure that they serve the collective conscience of the groups they are accountable to. They appear in Appendix VII of the Big Book. They are also discussed at length in the book called: "The AA Service Manual and 12 Concepts for World Service, by Bill W".

The primary purpose of a group is to carry the AA message. The primary purpose of a service committee is different. There are no newcomers at Intergroup so there is no point in us sharing as we do in an AA group. Intergroup is there to serve the groups that carry the AA message. In the US this is emphasized in some service committees by the reading of a preamble that states: 'Our primary purpose is service.' The service committee organizes and provides the services that enable the groups to do their job (i.e. telephone hotline, cross-fertilization of group experience through workshops and lastly and very importantly, discussion of service policy (for we cannot do service well if we do not consider how to do it.)

The committees that discuss service policy such as District and Area in the US, and Intergroup and Region in Great Britain, are called General Service Committees and comprise the General Service structure (sometimes also called the Conference structure). The group representative who participates in this should therefore be called a General Service Representative (GSR).

As stated, the 12 Concepts are the rules of debate, so to speak, that enable service committees to serve the collective conscience. Without the application of the Concepts debate can become acrimonious, be dominated by forceful personalities and leads to time-wasting as people spend as much time arguing over how to take a fair vote as they do discussing the actual issues on the agenda.

As editor of the *Alternative*, I personally invite questions or comments so we all can better understand these concepts

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Victor E. (Jan 1970)

