



The Alternative

Intergroup newsletter for the Reading-Berks County Area
October 2013

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

Announcements:

COMBINED INTERGROUPS WORKSHOP: UNITY IN SERVICE

Next planning mtg: Nov 3rd @ 1pm @ Victory Baptist Church.....

...1059 Victory Cl., Reading PA

**The Intergroups and Districts that serve Area 59 for 12
step work will be having its 2nd workshop:**

**December 1st 2013 @ Seventh Day Adventist church, 2706
Pricetown Rd., Temple PA 19560**

All members are welcome. So please come and join us!

Eastern Pennsylvania General Service Assembly

56th Annual Convention & Assembly

Nov 8-10, 2013 @ Lancaster Host, Lancaster PA

Area 59 Quarterly Meeting—District 66 will host!!

December 8th, 2013 @ 8:00 AM SHARP!!! To be held @:

Kenhorst Fire Company, 411 S Kenhorst Blvd Shillington, PA 19607

DON'T MISS THIS OPPORTUNITY TO SEE AREA 59 IN ACTION!!!!

NEWS from RBI:

**Archives: please UPDATE your group histories—please get YOUR
history to Ann!!!!**

**Literature: We have Big Book and 12 & 12 on cassette >>Do you know
anyone who has a player or is hard of hearing?? Contact Mark for more
information!!**

**Keep watching for more information here about this year's
Alka-thon: lots of meeting, food, fun & fellowship!!**

Next Intergroup Meeting: October 22nd 2013

*****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 4th
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!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!***

12th Step Commitments

Caron Adolescent Extended Care – MEN Sunday @ 7:00 PM		Caron Adolescent Extended Care – WOMEN Sunday @ 7:00 PM		St. Joe's Hosp. MH Unit 3 rd FL Reed & Walnut Entrance Mondays @ 7:30 PM ***ALWAYS CALL AHEAD!!!***	
10/6	Atonement 8:15	10/6	Walk the Walk	10/7	Robesonia
10/13	St. Gabe's Bgnr's Mtg	10/13	Sat Women's AA	10/14	**HOLIDAY**
10/20	Sec & Inches	10/20	Women Living Sober	10/21	Congo BB
10/27	Atonement 8:15	10/27	Courage to Change	10/28	Advent
Wernersville State Hosp. See Guard in Building 34 Monday @ 7:00 PM		Reading Detox Unit Tuesday @ 8:00 PM		Reading Spruce Pavilion Wednesday 7:00 PM	
10/7	Birdsboro	10/1	Alpha	10/2	East Reading
10/14	**HOLIDAY**	10/8	Happy Hour	10/9	Jacksonwald
10/21	French Creek	10/15	Walk the Walk	10/16	Courage to Change
10/28	Shoey	10/22	Time to Start Living	10/23	Hilltop
		10/29	Sun AM Spkrs	10/30	Alpha
Reading Detox Unit Thursday @ 8:00 PM		Caron Foundation Young Adult Female Friday @ 7:00PM			
10/3	New Life	10/4	Courage to Change		
10/10	Sec & Inches	10/11	Lang o/t Heart		
10/17	Leesport	10/18	Sat Women's AA		
10/24	Shoey	10/25	Sec & Inches		
10/31	Congo BBSG				

Step 10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong **PROMPTLY** admitted it

Step 10 may be one of the least popular of all the 12 steps, because it is simply no fun to be wrong and then have to admit it! But without this step, progress toward recovery can not only cease, it can actually lose ground.

Tradition 10: No AA group or member should ever, in such a way as to implicate AA, express any opinion on outside controversial issues – particularly those of politics, alcohol reform, or sectarian religion. The Alcoholics Anonymous groups oppose no one. Concerning such matters they can express no views whatever. (cont'd on page 6)

CONCEPTS CHECKLIST

A service piece for home groups, districts, areas
Some of these discussion points were originally developed by an A.A. group and further developed by the trustees' Literature Committee to be distributed by the General Service Office. While this checklist is intended as a starting point for discussion by groups, districts or areas, individual A.A. members may find it useful along with our co-founder Bill W.'s writings, a service sponsor if you have one and reflection on your own service experience. Additional information about the Concepts can be found in The A.A. Service Manual/Twelve Concepts for World Service and "The Twelve Concepts Illustrated" pamphlet. (The Concepts stated here are in the short form.)

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

- ~Does our group have a general service representative (G.S.R.)? Do we feel that our home group is part of A.A. as a whole and do our group's decisions and actions reflect that?
- ~Do we hold regular group conscience meetings encouraging everyone to participate? Do we pass that conscience on to the district, area, or the local intergroup meetings?
- ~Is the "collective conscience" of Alcoholics Anonymous at work in my home group? In my area?
- ~Where do we fit in the upside-down triangle of A.A.?
- ~Are we willing to do what it takes to insure that our democracy of world service will work under all conditions?

Concept II: The General Service Conference of A.A. has become, for nearly every practical purpose, the active voice and the effective conscience of our whole Society in its world affairs.

- ~Do we have an understanding of the history of the General Service Conference (the "Conference")?
- ~What is a Conference Advisory Action? Does our home group's G.S.R., D.C.M., area delegate report back to the group on the highlights of the Conference and Conference Advisory Actions?
- ~Is our group meeting its wider Seventh Tradition responsibilities?

Concept III: To insure effective leadership, we should endow each element of A.A. —the Conference, the General Service Board and its service corporations, staffs, committees, and executives—with a traditional "Right of Decision."

- ~Do we understand what is meant by the "Right of Decision"? Do we grant it at all levels of service or do we "instruct"?
- ~Do we trust our trusted servants —G.S.R., D.C.M., area delegate, the Conference itself?

Concept IV: At all responsible levels, we ought to maintain a traditional "Right of Participation," allowing a voting representation in reasonable proportion to the responsibility that each must discharge.

- ~Do we understand the spiritual principles underlying the "Right of Participation"?
- ~What does "in reasonable proportion" mean? Do we understand when it is appropriate for A.A. paid staff to have a vote at the General Service Conference or in our local service structure?
- ~Do we expect that, because we are A.A. members, we should be allowed to vote at any group, even if we are not active members of that group?

Concept V: Throughout our structure, a traditional "Right of Appeal" ought to prevail, so that minority opinion will be heard and personal grievances receive careful consideration.

- ~Do we encourage the minority opinion, the "Right of Appeal", to be heard at our home group, district committee meetings, area assemblies and the Conference?
- ~What does our group accept as "substantial unanimity"?
- ~Has our group experienced the "tyranny of the majority" or the "tyranny of the minority"?
- ~Does our group understand the importance of all points of view being heard before a vote is taken?

Concept VI: The Conference recognizes that the chief initiative and active responsibility in most world service matters should be exercised by the trustee members of the Conference acting as the General Service Board.

- ~Are we familiar with how our General Service Board (G.S.B.) Class A and Class B trustees serve A.A.? Are we familiar with how our other trusted servants serve A.A.?
- ~Are we clear about the terms, "chief initiative" and "active responsibility"? Can we see a direct link to our home group?

Concept VII: The Charter and Bylaws of the General Service Board are legal instruments, empowering the trustees to manage and conduct world service affairs. The Conference Charter is not a legal document; it relies upon tradition and the A.A. purse for final effectiveness.

~Do we act responsibly regarding the "power of the purse?"

~Do we realize that the practical and spiritual power of the Conference will nearly always be superior to the legal power of the G.S.B.?

Concept VIII: The trustees are the principal planners and administrators of overall policy and finance. They have custodial oversight of the separately incorporated and constantly active services, exercising this through their ability to elect all the directors of these entities.

~Do we understand the relationship between the two corporate service entities (A.A. World Services, Inc., the A.A. Grapevine) and the General Service Board?

~How can the business term "custodial oversight" apply to the trustees' relationship to the two corporate service entities?

~Does my home group subscribe to G.S.O.'s bimonthly newsletter Box 459?
The A.A. Grapevine? Do I?

Concept IX: Good service leadership at all levels is indispensable for our future functioning and safety. Primary world service leadership, once exercised by the founders, must necessarily be assumed by the trustees.

~Do we discuss how we can best strengthen the composition and leadership of our future trusted servants?

~Do we recognize the need for group officers? What is our criteria for election?

Do we sometimes give a position to someone "because it would be good for them?"

~Do I set a positive leadership example?

Concept X: Every service responsibility should be matched by an equal service authority, with the scope of such authority well defined.

~Do we understand "authority" and "responsibility" as they relate to group conscience decisions by G.S.R.s, D.C.M.s and our area delegates?

~Why is delegation of "authority" so important to the overall effectiveness of A.A.? Do we use this concept to define the scope of "authority?"

Concept XI: The trustees should always have the best possible committees, corporate service directors, executives, staffs, and consultants. Composition, qualifications, induction procedures, and rights and duties will always be matters of serious concern.

~Do we understand how the roles of non-trustee directors and non-trustee appointed committee members help serve and strengthen the committee system?

~How do we encourage our special paid workers to exercise their traditional "Right of Participation?"

~Do we practice rotation in all our service positions?

Concept XII: The Conference shall observe the spirit of A.A. tradition, taking care that it never becomes the seat of perilous wealth or power; that sufficient operating funds and reserve be its prudent financial principle; that it place none of its members in a position of unqualified authority over others; that it reach all important decisions by discussion, vote, and, whenever possible, by substantial unanimity; that its actions never be personally punitive nor an incitement to public controversy; that it never perform acts of government, and that, like the Society it serves, it will always remain democratic in thought and action.

~How do we guard against becoming a "seat of perilous wealth or power?"

~How do we practice prudent use of our Seventh Tradition contributions and literature revenue?

~Do we insure the spiritual liberties of all A.A. members by not placing any member in the position of absolute authority over others?

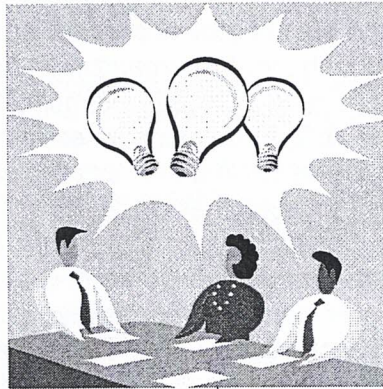
~Do we try to reach important decisions by thorough discussion, vote and, where possible, substantial unanimity?

~As guardians of A.A.'s traditions, are we ever justified in being personally punitive?

~Are we careful to avoid public controversy?

~Do we always try to treat each other with mutual respect and love?

Eastern Pennsylvania Area 59 Intergroups and Central Offices Combined Workshop



SUNDAY, DECEMBER 1, 2013

Time: ~~1 P.M.~~ registration *10 AM*

Workshop: ~~1:15 P.M.~~ to 5 P.M.

LOCATION: (~~tentative~~)

Reading Hampden Heights Seventh-day Adventist Church

2706 Old Pricetown Rd • Temple, PA, 19560

Unity In Service

See how other Intergroups and districts/central
offices of Area 59 do their 12th step work and
share ideas to carry the message to the still sick
and suffering alcoholic

**FOOD - FUN - FELLOWSHIP and
INFORMATION SHARING**

This Tradition is unusual in that it wasn't included because of what happened within AA, but because of what happened to another organization that was successful for a while in stopping people drinking, and then collapsed. The literature tells us of a 19th-century temperance movement called the Washingtonians. More than 100,000 people sobered up. However, giddy with success, it decided to turn its attention to other matters (campaigning on the slavery issue and the temperance movement). The process of trying to decide exactly what the Washingtonians stood for caused so much disunity that within two years, amidst the squabbling, the organization had destroyed itself. Most of those thousands drank again. Learning from this example, AA doesn't comment on any outside issue, and AA groups don't form opinions on anything except those things that pertain to their own primary purpose or affect AA as a whole. However, those who enjoy a good argument will be pleased to learn that there are still lots to disagree about in AA. Any visit to a group conscience or service committee, such as Intergroup, district or area meeting will quickly demonstrate that we have differences of opinion on almost any service matter. And those disagreements are not always expressed graciously. This sort of disagreement does not represent disunity. The difference is that all the discussions are about how we can best carry the message. For all the disagreement, we are united behind the idea that we should carry the AA message. It might seem at times to be an uncomfortable state of unity, but it is unity nonetheless.

It is worth noting that as individuals we are entitled to hold opinions on any outside issues. Of course, it's not always appropriate to share them in an AA meeting and wherever we do happen to express them, we should ensure that we are not seen to speak for AA, but only for ourselves. We usually use the preface: "in my opinion".

AA does not avoid all communication with the rest of society: it can talk to others about itself. But when it does so, it is vital that it does so in a spirit of humility. We cannot rely on any of us doing anything with humility if left to our own devices.

I love this Tradition. AA minds it's own business, we keep our nose out of other peoples, places, or things. Alcoholics Anonymous has no opinion on (place topic here)

1. Do I ever give the impression that there really is an "AA opinion" on ... (place topic here).
2. Can I honestly share my own personal experience concerning any of those without giving the impression? I am stating the "AA opinion"?
3. What in AA history gave rise to our Tenth Tradition?
4. Have I had a similar experience in my own AA life?
5. What would AA be without this Tradition? Where would I be?
6. Do I breach this or any of its supporting Traditions in subtle, perhaps unconscious, ways?
7. How can I manifest the spirit of this Tradition in my personal life outside AA? Inside AA?

Member's Corner:

The recent Reading Berks Intergroup Unity Picnic this year allowed for me a few pleasant surprises.

Mixed in with the, "Food, Fun and Fellowship" was a guest speaker, "Donald," an archivist who, within his talk on the early years of AA in the Reading area, mentioned a few of the groups and some of the personalities involved with them. One person of whom he spoke as being a physician notably supportive of those early groups made my ears perk up like a puppy who just heard a can opener, as he was my uncle, Dr. Peter Stelmach. Hearing that, and about his work with those alcoholics, got me to thinking of, "The Doctor's Opinion," and how the work of those physicians had so very much to do with AA's getting its foot in the door of the professional community.

Additionally, hearing that familiar name suddenly put the whole presentation on a much more personal level for me, and made me think of just how strangely events can play out, and the inter-connectedness of us all.

Some other things he outlined as to the nature of the early groups also allowed a few dots to connect. In speaking of one of these dots, the "Sixth Street Group," he noted that these early groups tended to be a bit "nomadic," depending on where they could find a meeting place. I got to thinking about what I knew of the area's early history. I had my suspicions, and one of those was confirmed at a subsequent meeting, when a knowledgeable member noted that the Walnut Street Recovery Group is indeed the direct descendant of that earlier group.

Amazing, the things you can learn at a picnic!

— Mark S.

REVIEW OF CONCEPT WORKSHOP

Districts 33, 66 and 67 combined resources and organized a workshop on the 12 Concepts of A.A. The committee was well pleased with the turn out. 50 people registered, and were a count of 42 at the end. We started out with greetings and registration, food and great fellowship which ran for an hour. Kim P (DCM for District 33) was the chairperson for the event and opened with the Serenity Prayer. She then introduced the members presenting the 12 concepts: Greg G. (Web servant for Area 59 and Reading Berks Intergroup) started with Concepts 1-4; Paul M (Area 59 Chairperson) presented concepts 5-8;

Pat F. (Area 59 Alternate Delegate) finished with Concepts 9-12.

Reviews from members after the event

"Great presentations by all three members in terms of understanding. I love that each presented from the concepts in layman's terms. Great job!" Kim P.

"I love being able to learn about something that seems like a deeper level of involvement in service. Amazing, even with so little time in the program (less than 2 months)" Greg L.

"Love the fact that it was a combined Districts Workshop.....I also want to thank Bob and Grace for opening their home to us for the planning meetings" Pat T.

"Freedom under God to grow in His likeness and image will ever be the quest of Alcoholics Anonymous. May our General Service Conference be always seen as
a chief symbol of this cherished liberty." ~found in Service Manual

PS- "Gratitude is an action word"

~anonymous

All the presenters stressed that these concepts work THROUGHOUT the triangle from the **home groups** on down through the **districts** and **areas** and through to the GSC for which it was written.

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To Employers

S H Z F H A Z K P N D Q V Y L Z B I T P G U E B G U T I Y X
Q V R G K E A F U E K S E I T I L I B A S W R J D K C C L X
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NATURAL
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ABSURDITIES
ALCOHOLICS
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TEMPORIZES
CRAVES
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TRANSFORMATION
CONFIDENCE
REALIZATION
DEMANDS
MALICIOUS
SERVICES

TRUSTED
APPROXIMATELY
RECREATIONAL
NORMAL

Victor E. (Oct 1967)

