

ALTERNATIVE

"INTER-GROUP NEWSLETTER FOR THE READING AREA" February, 2000



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.

Sooner or later, every AA comes to depend upon a Power greater than himself. He finds that the God of his understanding is not only a source of strength, but also a source of positive direction. Realizing that some fraction of that infinite resource is now available, his life takes on an entirely different complexion. He experiences a new inner security together with such a sense of destiny and purpose as he has never known before. As each day passes, our AA reviews his mistakes and vicissitudes. He learns from daily experiences what his remaining character defects are and becomes ever more willing that they be removed. In this fashion he improves his conscious contact with God.

Every AA group follows this same cycle of development. We are coming to realize that each group, as well as each individual, is a special entity, not quite like any other. Though AA groups are basically the same, each group does have its own special atmosphere, its own peculiar state of development. We believe that every AA group has a conscience. It is the collective conscience of its own membership. Daily experience informs and instructs this conscience. The group begins to recognize its own defects of character and, one by one, these are removed or lessened. As this process continues, the group becomes better able to receive right direction for its own affairs. Trial and error produces group experience, and out of corrected experience comes custom. When a customary way of doing things is definitely proved to be best, then that custom forms into AA Tradition. The Greater Power is then working through a clear group conscience.

We humbly hope and believe that our growing AA Tradition will prove to be the will of God for us. (continued next page)

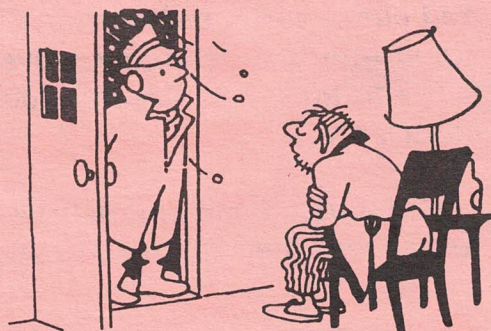
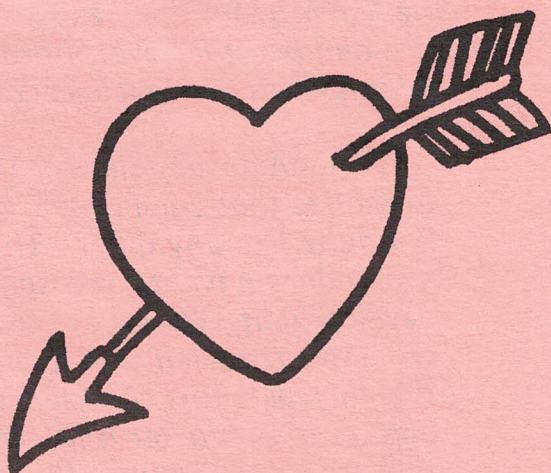
Many people are coming to think Alcoholics Anonymous is, to some extent, a new form of human society. In our discussion of the First Tradition, it was emphasized that we have, in AA, no coercive human authority. Because each AA, of necessity, has a sensitive and responsive conscience, and because alcohol will discipline him severely if he backslides, we are finding we have little need for manmade rules or regulations. Despite the fact that we do veer off at times on tangents, we are becoming more able to depend absolutely on the long-term stability of the AA group itself. With respect to its own affairs, the collective conscience of the group will, given time, almost surely demonstrate its perfect dependability. The group conscience will, in the end, prove a far more infallible guide for group affairs than the decision of any individual member, however good or wise he may be. This is a striking and almost unbelievable fact about Alcoholics Anonymous. Hence we can safely dispense with those exhortations and punishments seemingly so necessary to other societies. And we need not depend overmuch on inspired leaders. Because our active leadership of service can be truly rotating, we enjoy a kind of democracy rarely possible elsewhere. In this respect we may be, to a large degree, unique.

Therefore, we of Alcoholics Anonymous are certain that there is but one ultimate authority, "a loving God as he may express himself in our group conscience."-----By Bill W., from the January 1948 Grapevine.

HUGS

AS GOOD TO GIVE AS TO RECEIVE

It's wondrous what a hug can do.
A hug can cheer you when you're blue.
A hug can say, "I love you so"
Or, "I hate to see you go."
A hug is "Welcome back again,"
And "Great to see you! Where've you been?"
A hug can soothe a small child's pain,
And bring a rainbow after rain.
The hug, there's just no doubt about it --
We scarcely could survive without it!
A hug delights and warms and charms,
It must be why God gave us arms.
Hugs are great for fathers and mothers,
Sweet for sisters, swell for brothers;
And chances are your favorite aunts
Love them more than potted plants.
Kittens crave them, puppies love them;
Heads of states are not above them.
A hug can break the language barrier,
And make travel so much merrier.
No need to fret about your store of 'em;
The more you give, the more there's of 'em.
So stretch those arms without delay
And give someone a hug today!



THIS IS CARRYING THE MESSAGE

GREEN BEANS

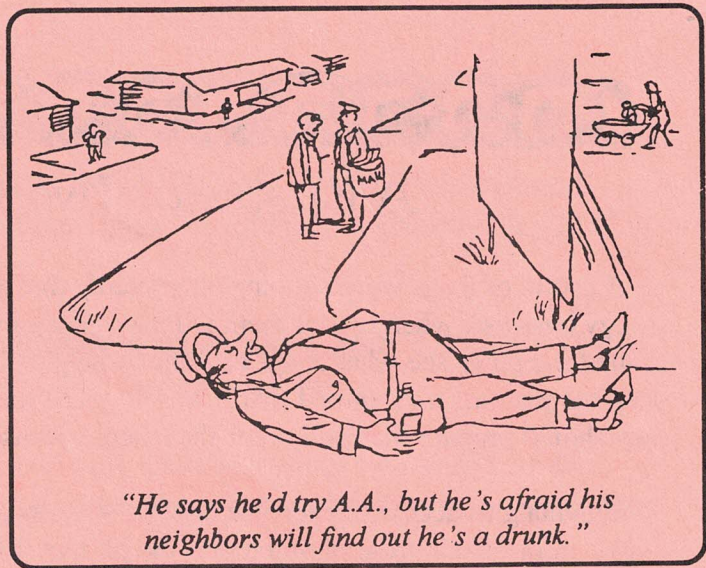
It has occurred to me that, even though I like green beans, I do not have a problem, nor am I powerless over them. I can say this for the following reasons:

- I can't tell you the last time I ate green beans and how many I ate.
- I am not planning the next time I will eat green beans or how many I will eat.
- I don't know if we have any green beans in the house, and if so, where they are.
- I have never hidden green beans around the house.
- I have never lied about how many green beans I ate or what I did when I ate them.
- I have never forgotten what I did after eating green beans.
- I have never embarrassed or abused myself or my family after eating green beans.
- I have never stolen money from my employer to pay for my green beans.
- I have never cheated on my wife after eating green beans.
- I have never been stopped by the police for driving while eating green beans.
- I have never been unable to stop eating green beans once I started.

None of these things has ever occurred as a result of eating green beans. And I think I can safely say that if any of them had occurred, I would have had serious reservations about ever eating another green bean.

And yet all of these things happened when I drank alcohol, and I thought they were perfectly normal. Sure sounds like powerlessness to me!

*Reprinted from the
Cleveland Central Office Bulletin*



"He says he'd try A.A., but he's afraid his neighbors will find out he's a drunk."

Acronyms

HOPE: Happy Our Program Exists

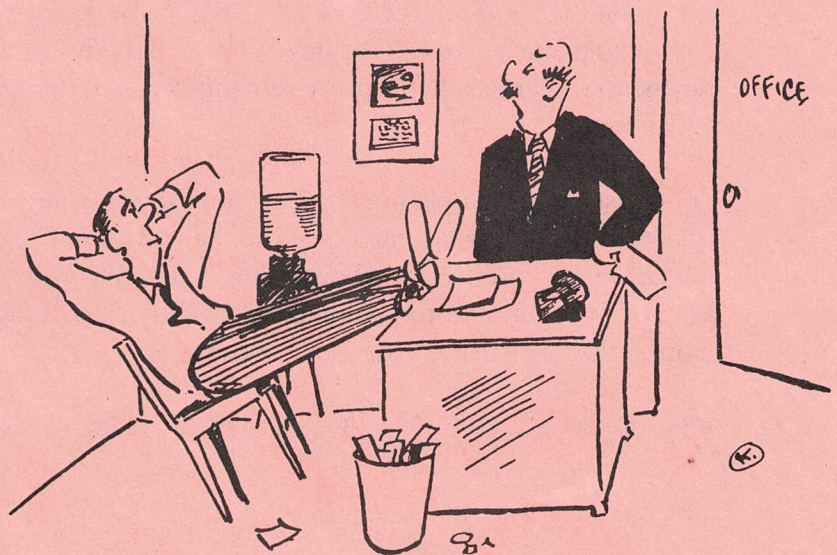
SLIP: Sobriety Losing Its Priority

ASK: Ass Saving Kit

EGO: Edging GOD Out

NUTS: Not Using The Steps

ACTION: Any Change To Improve Our Nature



"Joining AA was an excellent move Fenton, but let's not overdo the easy does it!"

MANY THANKS FOR CONTRIBUTIONS RECEIVED FROM THE FOLLOWING GROUPS, for the general fund, DURING THE PAST MONTH: Books and People, Robesonia, Hilltop, WIRES, Walnut Street, Skylight Room, Wilshire, St. Alban's Womens' Saturday, Honeybrook

Thanks also for contributions to the Activity fund, received from: Alpha, Glenside, Wyomissing AA, Skylight Room, St. Alban's Womens' Saturday

Intergroup is in need of a Unity person. This is one of the sides of the triangle in our AA symbol. We need all three to work. Unity, service, and recovery, one supports the other.

ALL MEMBERS ARE WELCOME TO ATTEND INTERGROUP AND DISTRICT MEETINGS. SEE YOUR MEETING SCHEDULE OR GSR FOR TIME AND PLACE. (Does YOUR group have an Intergroup Representative?)

Chairperson:	Rick F.	610-372-9240	Alternate Chair:	Dawn R.	610-678-0335
Secretary:	Michael L.	610-926-4753	Treasurer:	Harry S.	610-562-0924
Hotline:	Shirl O.	610-689-5144	Schedules:	Bob G.	610-372-0840
Alternative:	Bonnie Z.	610-478-7049	Books & Literature:	Bob B.	610-376-6007
Women's Prison:	Chris H.	610-371-0102	Men's Prison:	John K.	610-775-7818
Archives:	Harry S.	610-562-0924	Institutions:	Stan S.	610-375-1441
Unity:	OPEN		Spanish Liaison:	Angel R.	610-372-2438
District Liaison:	Steve H.	610-929-8286	Alcathon:	Jim P.	610-562-5045

GET INVOLVED: GET A HOME GROUP, JOIN INTERGROUP, ATTEND INTERGROUP - THIS MEANS YOU, EXISTING MEMBERS!

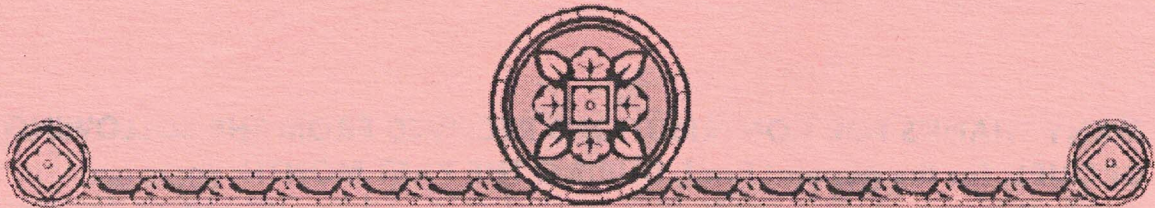
If your group's name or address are incorrect on the address label for the Alternative, please mail the correction to Intergroup. On a related note, we need updated addresses for FRENCH CREEK and the PHOENIX GROUP!!

******Attention: Recovery Riders Wednesday night Big Book has been discontinued due to lack of support. ******

February 15th is the print date for the new schedules. Please get your changes in ASAP so that they will be on the new schedules!! You can also fax them to Bob G. at the above number.

The Highland Group, which was started many years ago by Dick Caron, is in need of support to keep it running. Gone to a different group lately? Try it!

If you would like **The Grapevine** to visit your group, contact Nikki P. at 610-562-0507



Old Grapevines are available at Walnut Street. Pick one up, read it, pass it on. Drop some off, too!

The Walnut Street Recovery Group Women's Meeting is Sundays at 2p.m., and is now 1 hour & a non-smoking meeting. They are looking for support.

**Intergroup welcomes contributions for this newsletter. Please send them to:
Reading Intergroup, P.O. Box 184, Reading, PA 19607**

*****Institutional Commitments for February*****

CHILDREN'S HOME
Sundays at 7:30p.m.
6-OPEN
13-Leesport
20-Time to Start Living
27-Walnut Street

WERNERSVILLE HOSPITAL
Tuesdays at 7:00p.m.
1-Time to Start Living
8-Leesport
15-Walnut Street
22-Topton
29-Time to Start Living

CHIT CHAT FARMS****
Thursdays at 8:00p.m.
3-Recovery Riders
10-Leesport
17-Recovery Riders
24-Walnut Street

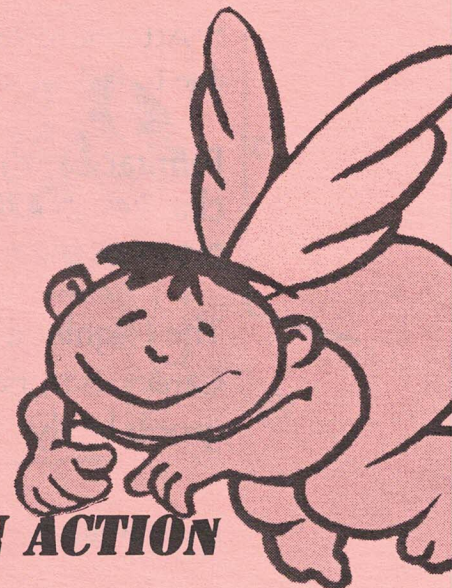
READING DETOX
Thursdays at 8:00p.m.
3-Walnut Street
10-Time to Start Living
17-Leesport
24-Topton

Please notify Rick, Stan or anyone at Intergroup if you cannot make your commitment!!

The Thursday 11a.m. meeting at Wernersville needs people to help out in whatever capacity. Contact Keith, the activities director there. The meeting is in the same place as the Tuesday meeting.

PLEASE SEND YOUR ARTICLE SUBMISSIONS, GROUP(EX. ANNIVERSARY) ANNOUNCEMENTS, SCHEDULE CHANGES TO INTERGROUP.

*Hug another alkie,
not just on
Valentine's Day,
but everyday!*
B



SERVICE WORK IS GRATITUDE IN ACTION