

# THE ALTERNATIVE

**INTERGROUP NEWSLETTER FOR THE READING AREA, October 2002**

**I AM RESPONSIBLE.....**

*When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of A.A. always to be there, And for that: I am responsible.*

**DECLARATION of 30<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY  
INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION, 1965**

**<<<<< >>>>>**

**Dear Friends:**

*Since 1938, the greatest part of my A.A. life has been spent in helping to create, design, manage, and insure the solvency and effectiveness of A.A.'s world services---the office of which has enabled our Fellowship to function all over the globe, and as a unified whole.*

*It is no exaggeration to say that, under their trustees, these all important services have accounted for much of our present size and over-all effectiveness.*

*The A.A. General Service Office is by far the largest single carrier of the A.A. message. It has well related A.A. to the troubled world in which we live. It has fostered the spread of our Fellowship everywhere. A.A. World Services, Inc., stands ready to serve the special need of any group or isolated individual, no matter the distance of language. Its many years of accumulated experience are available to us all.*

*The members of our trusteeship---the General Service Board of A.A.--- will, in the future, be our 'primary leaders in all of our world affairs.' This high responsibility has long since been delegated to them: they are the successors in world service to Dr. Bob and to me, and they are directly accountable to A.A. as a whole.*

*This is the legacy of world-service responsibility that we vanishing old-timers*

*are leaving to you, the A.A.'s of today and tomorrow. We know that you will guard, support, and cherish this world legacy as the greatest collective responsibility that A.A. has or ever can have.*

*Yours in trust and, and in affection,*

**BILL**

From: As Bill Sees It, pgs. 332-333

**The following excerpt is on Anonymity.....**

*It is important that we remain anonymous because we are too few, at present to handle the overwhelming number of personal appeals, which may result from this publication. Being mostly business or professional folk, we could not well carry on our occupations in such an event. We would like it understood that our alcoholic work is an avocation.*

*When writing or speaking publicly about alcoholism, we urge each of our Fellowship to omit his personal name, designating himself instead as "a member of Alcoholics Anonymous."*

Taken from the forward to the first edition of "Alcoholics Anonymous" as reprinted in the 4<sup>th</sup> edition, pg. xiii

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*Anonymity was originally practiced for reasons that had to do with the experimental nature of the Society and with the prevailing stigma on alcoholism. To make public one's A.A. membership and then to go out and drink again was to jeopardize the reputation and ultimately the survival of the entire Fellowship. Anonymity at the level of the public media was vital to the welfare of the group. This attitude would be one of the major determinants of the Eleventh Tradition: "Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio and films."*

"Pass It On, page 307"



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

### **I'M AN ALCOHOLIC AND A....**

In more and more meeting today, people announce themselves as being an alcoholic and then add whatever their second addiction may be, i.e., I'm and alcoholic and a drug addict; I'm and alcoholic and a pinhead; I'm an alcoholic and cross-addicted; or I'm chemically addicted and an alcoholic.

This identification process, which originates in treatment centers, has slowly crept into common usage at our meetings. There is nothing especially wrong with the idea here, but is it really necessary that we announce our secondary afflictions and maybe more to the point, should we continue to allow it?

Thank God for the treatment centers that are sending so many newcomers to A.A., as we surely want and need these people. However, we do not need the treatment center practices that they bring with them. Treatment centers generally consider alcohol to be only another drug and their treatment includes all types of addiction.

In A.A., we should only be concerned with alcohol. But the more we assimilate treatment center jargon and ideas into A.A. meetings, the further we are moving away from our primary purpose of stay sober and helping other alcoholics to achieve sobriety.

There are many people today that would like to change the name of A.A. to stand for Addicts Anonymous.

In fact, the way membership is going in some groups is not too far from actuality. If this practice of announcing one's secondary problem continues to grow, it won't be long before we will be hearing announcements like: I'm an alcoholic and a food addict; I'm an alcoholic and a gambling addict; I'm an alcoholic and a sex maniac; or I'm an alcoholic and a bad house painter.

When and where do we draw the line? If we go back to basics and abide by the Traditions, the line was drawn for us a long time ago. *The only topic of discussion that we are supposed to deal with is our alcoholism.*

How do we reverse this trend without scaring off the newcomer and maybe offending some that are not so new? First off, if they are truly alcoholic and ready for the program, they

will not be scared off by an explanation of what A.A. can and cannot help them with. Probably the best way to reverse the trend is to generally explain the purpose and the limitations of A.A. as often as possible at meetings.

Special meeting on the Third Tradition could be held. Also whenever an appropriate opening arises at meetings, we can make a general objection to the announcement of secondary problems at A.A. meetings. Sponsors and older members can explain the sole purpose of A.A. on a one-to-one basis when the opportunity arises with someone they are working with.

We should be careful though, not to point the finger or embarrass anyone during a meeting by telling them that they are out of order. After all, it is the announcement of secondary problems that we are objecting to, not the person or the problem itself.

The only requirement for A.A. membership is a desire to stop drinking. The only problem that should be brought into an A.A. meeting is our alcoholism or problems cause by alcoholism. The only announcement should be that "I'm an alcoholic." After all, that says everything that we need to know.

*Anonymous*

*Reprinted from the Akron Intergroup  
Newsletter, July, 1994*

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### **TWISTING THE TRUTH**

The slogans and saying we hear around A.A. are catch reminders of some important truths. But like all statements, they can be interpreted in ways quite contrary to the original spirit. I've been guilty of a few mis-interpretations myself, and have heard others. Here are some of the ways we can twist them around.

**FIRST THINGS FIRST** — Don't bug me about getting a job. After all, I've stayed sober for five years, haven't I?

**LIVE AND LET LIVE** — Let me alone. I'll do it my way.

**BUT FOR THE GRACE OF GOD** — Maybe my luck will hold out one more time.

**EASY DOES IT** — The Steps will take care of themselves if I don't bother with them.

*"continued on page 4"*

**Tradition 10....."Alcoholics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the A.A. name ought never be drawn into public controversy"**



Mike L. is the head of the Public Information Committee for District 33. You may contact him at 610-926-4753, or e-mail him, alphaleh@epix.net

### CONCEPT X

*Every service responsibility should be matched by an equal service authority—the scope of such authority to be always well defined whether by tradition, by resolution, by specific job description or by appropriate charters and bylaws.*

## Announcements

Let's not forget that Intergroup elections will be held in November. We, at Intergroup encourage all groups to send their Intergroup Representatives to this meeting (as well as all other meetings), so that your group may take part in the process, give us your input, and cast your votes at election time.

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*You can get applications for clearance to the Men's Prison meeting from Terry M. at 610-944-3167, or call Jimmie C. at 610-478-8645. Completed applications go to "Bridging The Gap", P.O. Box 301, Blandon, Pa. 19510.*

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*Jimmie C. also has a list of all men and women who are cleared for B.C.P., and a list of all persons who are waiting to be cleared. If you would like to find out if you are on either list, please call him at 610-478-8645 and that information will be given to you.*

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*If your group, or someone in your group is having an anniversary, or if you wish to have an AA announcement appear in*

Nicki P. is the Area 59 Grapevine Representative. You may contact her at 610-562-0507, or e-mail her at [grapelady33@aol.com](mailto:grapelady33@aol.com)

*the Alternative, please contact Jimmie C. Call 610-478-8645, or send an e-mail to [Dblwinrjimmie@aol.com](mailto:Dblwinrjimmie@aol.com)*

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*The Women's Prison committee needs a new chairperson. Chris is moving on. Many thanks for her service.*

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*The Boyertown Group currently has an interpreter for deaf members, at their Tuesday 5:30 p.m. meeting. For further information/questions, contact: Doreen at 1-800-654-5988, or 610-718-9678. Please dial the 800 number first, for relay for the deaf.*

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*Reading Intergroup is forming a committee, made up of representatives from Intergroup, and Districts 33, 66, & 67, to research the possibility of holding a Dinner-Dance, Breakfast, or some other event, to promote co-operation and unity, in the Reading area. Stay tuned for further information, or contact an officer at Intergroup. This has been a long time coming, and currently is just an idea. If anyone has any suggestions, please give us a call.*

.....  
*There will be a Unity Celebration Joint Workshop with Districts 33, 47, 38, & 67, from 11am to 3pm, Sunday October 13<sup>th</sup>, 2002. It will be held at IBEW Local 380 Hall, 3900 W. Ridge Pike, Collegeville, PA. 19426. For more information, please call: Dave S. 610-944-1692, Bill S. 215-257-0210, Mark G. 610-705-9435, or Dub B. 610-292-9202. There are flyers out, with directions and a map on the back.*

### FROM THE INTERGROUP STAFF:

Attendance at Intergroup meetings has been on the rise again, as have donations. All of us at Reading Intergroup wish to thank everyone who has participated, and thank all of the groups who have been so generous with their donations. Every little bit helps, and is very much appreciated by Intergroup, and the groups we serve.



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Terry M. is the chairman for the Area 59 Corrections sub-committee. You may contact him at 610-944-3167, or e-mail him at tmaa93@comcast.net

*"continued from page 2"*

ONE DAY AT A TIME --- Planning for the future is a waste of energy.

LET GO AND LET GOD --- It's hardly worth making any effort.

SPIRITUAL PROGRESS RATHER THAN SPIRITUAL PERFECTION --- I'll grow up when I darned well please.

GOD GRANT ME THE SERENITY TO ACCEPT THE THINGS I CANNOT CHANGE --- I'll always be a little squirrely, so why worry?

THIS IS A SELFISH PROGRAM --- Twelfth-Stepping is fine for other people, but my sobriety comes first.

KEEP IT SIMPLE --- I have never read the Big Book. I don't want to get confused.

Unsigned

*Please pass this message along: The majority of calls to our answering service have been for information. Most of this information is in the schedules, on the Websight, and in the Alternative. It would be very helpful if you could check these sources first, so your contributions will go that much further. THANK YOU!!!*

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Anyone who has an AA related article, joke, cartoon, or anything else about recovery, please make your submission by the Intergroup meeting, so we may publish it in the Alternative.  
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Reading Inter-group is forming a new committee for the "Bridging The Gap", and "First Contact" programs. Tim M. from Robesonia will be the chairman of that committee. Please contact Inter-group for more information on how you might help. You may also contact Tim at 610-927-3065. Many thanks to Tim for volunteering his time and effort.  
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Groups in attendance: Gibraltar Group, Leesport Group, Courage to Change Group, Alpha Group, Walnut St. Recovery Group, Lifeline Group, Boyertown Group, 164 Group, Birdsboro Group, Wilshire Group, Morgantown Group, Just For Today Group, Time To Start Living Group, District 33, District 66

Thank you to all who attended, and participated.

Groups who made contributions.

Alpha Group, Walnut St. Recovery Group, Turning Point Group, Sunday Morning Speaker Meeting(to General Fund, and Activity Fund), Prosit Group(to General Fund, and Activity Fund), Millenium Group, Teathyme Group, Advent Men's Group. Sorry if anyone was left out.

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Websights & E-mail Addresses

Akron Intergroup --- [www.akronaa.org](http://www.akronaa.org)

A.B.E. Intergroup --- [www.aalv.org](http://www.aalv.org)

Connecticut AA --- [www.ct.aa.org](http://www.ct.aa.org)

East Bay Intergroup --- Oakland, Calif.  
[www.eastbayaa.org](http://www.eastbayaa.org)

Fresno Central Service Office (Calif.)  
[www.fresnoaa.org](http://www.fresnoaa.org)

e-mail: [fresnoaa@psnw.com](mailto:fresnoaa@psnw.com)

GSO --- [www.alcoholics-anonymous.org](http://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org)

GSO archives --- [archives@aa.org](mailto:archives@aa.org)

Grapevine --- [www.aagrapevine.org](http://www.aagrapevine.org)

Houston Intergroup --- [www.aahouston.org](http://www.aahouston.org)

General Service Board of AA of Ireland  
[ala@indigo.ie](mailto:ala@indigo.ie)

Maine AA-[www.mainetoday.koz.com/maine/aa](http://www.mainetoday.koz.com/maine/aa)

Minneapolis Intergrp-[www.aaminneapolis.org](http://www.aaminneapolis.org)

Pottstown and vicinity - [www.district38-aa.org](http://www.district38-aa.org)

SEPIA --- websight --- [www.sepennaa.org](http://www.sepennaa.org)

The 164 Group is a new group which meets on Friday nights at 8:00pm, at the Grace Methodist Church located at 11<sup>th</sup> and Union Streets, in Reading Pa. 19604. Support is needed. THANKS!!!!!!

Roger M. is the Secretary for the Treatment Facilities/First Contact programs. Contact him at 610-582-3534, or e-mail him at [rojo12580@aol.com](mailto:rojo12580@aol.com)



You may be alcoholic if----"If the grass isn't mowed, The dishes aren't washed, and the cat is pregnant."

## The O'Malley Twins

A man stumbles up to the only other patron in a bar and asks if he could buy him a drink. "Why of course," comes the reply. The first man then asks: "Where are you from?" "I'm from Ireland," replies the second man.

The first man responds: "You don't say, I'm from Ireland too! Let's have another round to Ireland." "Of Course," replies the second man. Curious, the first man then asks: "Where in Ireland are you from?" "Dublin," comes the reply. "I can't believe it," says the first man. "I'm from Dublin too! Let's have another drink to Dublin." "Of course," replies the second man.

Curiosity again strikes and the first man asks: "What school did you go to?" "Saint Mary's," replies the second man. "I graduated in '62." "This is unbelievable," the first man says. "I went to Saint Mary's and I graduated in '62, too!"

About that time in comes one of the regulars and sits down at the bar. "What's been going on?" he asks the bartender. "Nothing much," replies the bartender. "The O'Malley twins are drunk again."

Submitted Anonymously

EVERY NIGHT, JOE SAT IN FRONT of the TV and drank a six-pack of beer. One night after several years of this, the doorbell rang. Joe finished off his last beer and stumbled to the door. A six-foot cockroach was standing there. It grabbed him by the collar, shook him, threw him back into the house, and left.

Next night, the bell rang after Joe's third beer. He walked slowly to the door and found the same cockroach waiting. This time it punched him in the nose, then left.

The third night, Joe was still nursing his second brew when the doorbell rang. Same cockroach. It beat him into a heaving pulp on the floor, then left.

In the morning, Joe went and told a psychiatrist the events of the previous three nights. "It isn't the beer, is it, doc?" pleaded Joe.

"No, no," the shrink assured him, "it's just a real nasty bug going around."

"The Grapevine, October, 1998"

THIS INCIDENT ON AN AIRPLANE was reported a while back by B. C. from Pennsylvania, who was on his way to visit his sister who had just given birth to twin daughters. As a gift for his new nieces, he had bought two life-sized Raggedy Ann dolls. They were too large to pack, so he carried them aboard the plane, one under each arm, and sat them in the vacant seat beside him.

Across the aisle sat a gent who had come aboard the plane already half bagged, and seemed intent on finishing the job en-route with a number of bourbons from the cocktail cart.

It was a fairly rough flight, all in all, and when the plane landed and it was time to get off, the lush rose from his seat, bowed unsteadily, and said, "Sir, your children behaved remarkably well during the journey."

"The Grapevine, August, 1994"

You may be alcoholic if---- "you wake up and your watch says 7:00 and you get ready to go to work and find out that it is 7 p.m. not 7 a.m."



**\*\*\*\*\*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 the UGI building on route 10, just up the road from Queen City Diner. Please come out and show your support. See your group's representative for Intergroup meeting minutes. **NEXT MEETING: TUESDAY, Oct. 22, 2002.**

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**Intergroup Staff**

Chairperson: Jimmie C. 610-478-8645	Alternate Chair: Jay K. 610-376-6343
Secretary: Traci D. 610-404-8923	Treasurer: Bonnie C. 610-404-8909
Hotline: NEED REPLACEMENT	Schedules: Traci D. 610-404-8923
Alternative: Jimmie C. 610-478-8645	Books & Literature: Ron S. 610-779-3927
Women's Prison: Chris H. 610-371-0102	Men's Prison: NEED REPLACEMENT
Archives: Glenn L. 610-404-4738	Institutions: Stan S. 610-375-1441
Unity: Jim A. 610-779-1862	Spanish Liasion: Angel R. 610-372-2438
Websight: <a href="mailto:info@readingintergroup.org">info@readingintergroup.org</a>	Bridging The Gap: Tim M. 610-927-3065

**\*\*\*Institutional Commitments for October, 2002\*\* (and first week of Nov.)**

**CHILDRENS HOME**

Sundays at 7:30 p.m.

6-Walnut St.  
13-Wilshire  
20-Alpha  
27-Walnut St.  
11/3-Boyertown

**ST. JOE'S (MH UNIT)**

Mondays at 7 p.m.

7-Walnut ST.  
14-Alpha  
21-Intergroup Chair  
28-Wilshire  
11/4-Walnut St.

**WERNERSVILLE**

Tuesdays at 7 p.m.

1-Leesport  
8-District 33  
15--164 Group  
22-Robesonia  
29-Alpha  
11/5-District 33  
**CHIT-CHAT**  
Thursdays at 8 p.m.  
3-Robesonia  
10-Walnut St.  
17-Walnut St.  
24-Wilshire  
31-Robesonia  
11/7-Courage to Change

**WERNERSVILLE**

Thursdays at 11 a.m.

3-Stan S.  
10-Alpha  
17-Wilshire  
24-UNFILLED  
31-Boyertown  
11/7-Alpha

**READING DETOX**

Thursdays at 8 p.m.

3-Walnut St.  
10-Walnut St.  
17-Leesport  
24-Lifeline  
31-Walnut St.  
11/7-Alpha

**Please notify anyone at Intergroup if you cannot make your commitment! If you take one 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 Melanie at the hospital first to see if there are any AA's there: 610-378-2092. If you are interested in particulars about Chit Chat, contact Brian Halstead, Clinical Director for inpatient care, at 610-678-2332, Ext. 2497. 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. This could be the only exposure to our Fellowship, that these people have.**