

# NEWSLETTER

Coalition News

Vol IV, #7

Coalition Coordinator : Al Bashevkin 664-4511 x519; 802 442-5200.  
The Northern Berkshire Health and Human Services Coalition is supported by  
the Berkshire Area Health Education Center with funding from UMASS  
Medical School. The Coalition is hosted by North Adams State College.

March 1990

## March Coalition Meeting : Note New Location

**First Baptist Church of North Adams 131 Main St No Adams**  
**Please Enter via Eagle St Entrance**

**Friday March 9 10 AM to Noon**

### Meeting Agenda

I. Welcome

II. Introduction of Participants : **Who's Who of Who-Man Services**

III. What's Happening : **Announcements by Coalition Membership of  
interest to all**

IV. Special Coalition Topic : **Barriers to Economic Opportunity : A  
Roundtable Discussion with :**

**Lisa Jarisch, North Adams Literacy Project**

**Larry Bressler, Health Care for All**

**Phil Rabinowitz, Franklin/Hampshire  
Literacy Project**

**Representatives of the Coalition**

V. Other Business

VI. Adjournment and Conclusion

Bring a Friend to the Meeting : **Βρίνγα Φριενδ το της Μερτυν**

**Coalition News** is the newsletter of the Northern Berkshire Health and Human Services Coalition. Its function is to keep the mailing list informed of what's happening around the Northern Berkshire area. It's a service to the entire COALITION mailing list (about 300). Announcements submitted to the newsletter will reach our entire mailing list. So, take advantage of this unique, free mechanism for informing our friends of news important to all. Please submit these announcements to Al Bashevkin, Coalition Coordinator, P.O. Box 1417, Bennington, VT 05201. For insertion into the April newsletter, news should reach Al Bashevkin by Mar 29.

.....

## **What's Happening!**

- February's Events

### **February Coalition Meeting**

One of the largest turnouts yet for a regular Coalition meeting greeted Senator Peter Webber and Representative Dan Bosley for the Coalition's Fourth annual Legislator's Forum. Thanks to the comfortable setting of the First Baptist Church in North Adams, the Legislator's Forum was accessible to the Northern Berkshire community. The meeting offered area legislators a chance to respond to specific questions drawn up by the steering committee and then to talk in roundtable "Coalition" fashion with those attending.

Specifically, the meeting heard both Senator Webber and Representative Bosley said that there is probably a need for supplemental taxes to get through FY 90. Both Senator Webber and Rep Bosley stated they did not want to see any more cutting of human services budgets. Yet our legislators differed on approaches to the FY 91 budget. Representative Bosley saw the need for increasing State revenues so a more sensible State budget could be proposed. Senator Webber, while feeling that House 1 was not a fair budget, stated he felt more tinkering might be done with the FY 91 budget before he would support raising revenues. He did leave the door open, however, for the possibility of increasing revenues during FY91.

Coalitioners present at the Legislator's Forum stressed the pain they see their clients and colleagues are experiencing as the result of State budget problems. There is an air of job uncertainty among health and human service workers, which has hurt. There is much finger pointing at who should provide the solutions. In trying to save their own jobs, fears of the creation of a "McCarthy-Esque" environment were discussed, where one can turn in another to protect their own job. Coalitioners discussed the dismantling of incentives and benefits that had helped clients enter the employment sector. Preventive programs for young parents, teen pregnancy initiatives, services for DSS families have all been cut back, as have the care options for our elder

population. Loss of job security coupled with diminished client resources has dramatically changed the work environment for many in the health and human services industry.

At the conclusion of the meeting, Legislators asked Coalitioners to think of additional collaborations that might work and save resources. Also, Coalitioners were urged to stay in the public's eye and let the media know of the work we do and the resources that we as consumers need. Continued media and legislative pressure from health and human services advocates is essential.

### **Information Outreach Task Force**

The mission of the I/O task force is to keep the greater Northern Berkshire community informed of health and human service programs and issues. That work could not be more important than it is today. Thanks to the members of the I/O Task Force, **Ken Swiatek, Thorman Hulse, Al Bashevkin, Al Nelson, Chris Lytle, Donna Brule, and Janice O'Keefe**, this task force is moving ahead. The *Human Side* is now a regular column in the Transcript. Our *Power Lunch* offers Coalitioners and the community an opportunity to mingle weekly at lunch time. We will continue these lunchtime gatherings at the Shipper's Lounge (Heritage Park) until at least Mar 15. See the local media for plans after that date. The Coalition *Speaker's Bureau* will be sending out a memo to local organizations advertising our willingness to serve as speakers. This list will be updated in the Fall. I/Oer's are planning an updated call guide with, hopefully, help from our local media.

### **Parenting Issues Task Force**

A most engaging meeting of the Parenting Issues Task Force was held on Feb 22. Representatives of DSS, NB Mental Health Association, PASS, VNA of Northern Berkshire, NB United Way, Berkshire Center for Families and Children, McInerney Parenting Center, Family Life Support Center, and Parent's Anonymous met and rehashed the need for a similar model to the McInerney Center. Discussions about how to proceed, and collaborative models were overshadowed by the budget constraints the local area is experiencing. Carolyn Burns, of BCFC, made the group aware of her organization's activity towards duplicating the McInerney model for North County, with collaboration from local agencies. The task force offered support for BCFC's efforts, will next meet Thurs, Apr 5, at 11 AM (Louison House). Later in newsletter is a listing of existing resources for parents.

### **Coalition Budget Advocacy**

Sadly, not much headway has been made with the State budget dilemma since our last edition of Coalition News. The Governor's Budget

(House 1) by all admissions will be difficult to sell the State. Without increased revenues, the State will need to continue to make major cuts in its health and human service programming. Many of these cuts were outlined in the last edition of Coalition News. The House Ways and Means has proposed a series of FY 91 budget hearings. All hearings are in Gardner Auditorium, State House unless otherwise noted. For more information, contact the Mass Human Services Coalition (617 482-6119) Of interest to Coalitioners :

Thurs Feb 22	10:30 AM	Medicaid
Thurs Mar 1	10:30 AM	EOCD, EOHS
	1 PM	Rate Setting, Mass Commission for Blind, Mass Rehab, Mass Commission for Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Veteran's Services, Soldier's Homes
Friday Mar 2	10:30 AM	Dep't Mental Health
	1 PM	Dep't Mental Retardation
Mon Mar 5	10:30 AM	Dep't Social Services, Office for Children
Wed Mar 7	10:30 AM	Dep't of Correction, Dep't Youth Services, Parole Board
	1 PM	Dep't Public Health, Elder Affairs
Thurs Mar 8	10:30 AM	Dep't Public Welfare, Dep't Medical Security
	1 PM	Public Safety
Tues Mar 13	10:30 AM	Library Commissioners, Dep't of Education
	1 PM	Board of Regents
Friday Mar 23	10:30 AM	<b>Public Hearing in Springfield : Springfield Technical Community College</b>

### Barriers to Economic Opportunity

A group of Coalitioners have been gathering to discuss the current economic climate and what we can do to improve this climate for our clients. These Coalitioners have looked at a number of factors that serve as barriers to economic improvement. There is much dismay that North County lacks a consistent testing site for those wishing to pass the GED exam. Committee members are working to rectify this problem. Illiteracy is high in the Northern Berkshires and the North Adams Public Library has a wonderful program to train readers under the direction of Lisa Jarisch. Lisa will talk about this program at the March Coalition meeting and will be joined by Phil Rabinowitz from the Literacy Project in Hampshire and Franklin counties. We are also concerned that access to health care is a barrier to opportunity, as clients fear seeking employment, as it might mean their families will not receive health benefits. Larry Bressler of the Health Care for All group will talk about the current status of Universal Health Care in Massachusetts. Child care is also a needed service to assist young families to secure employment. Representatives from Child Care of the Berkshires will be at the meeting to talk about day care as a component to the health and human services infrastructure. Our March meeting will be an interesting one, so join us !

## **N. BERKSHIRE RESOURCES FOR PARENTING SKILLS**

### **1. Parent's Anonymous: SELF HELP GROUPS:**

**Contact** : Crystal Scholtz, Woods Rd, Clarksburg 01247 664-8300

**Descr** : Self-help support group for parents at risk of becoming or are abusive towards their children. Groups meet weekly, facilitated by: one or two human service professionals to support parents in different aspects of their lives. Support is available to parents on around the clock basis. Children's groups are run for the children of group members.

**Hours** : Tues AM: 9:30 - 11:30, Mon's 7-9 PM

**Cost** : Free. Childcare provided, Transportation may be arranged.

### **2. Pregnant Adolescent Support System (PASS)**

**Contact** : Maggie Bittman Haskins Community Center 210 State St, North Adams 01247 664-6104

**Descr** : In addition to referring its adolescent clients to the several agencies that deliver parenting skills services, PASS's counselor offers education to include parenting skills in the broader counseling context.

**Hours** : 37 hours/week, Mon - Fri.

**Cost** : Free

### **3. VNA of Northern Berkshire : MATERNAL/CHILD HEALTH NURSING:**

**Contact** : Pat Campbell, 283 Cole Ave, Wmstn 01267 458-8042, 664-4536

**Descr** : They provide nursing and home health aid services to mothers, babies, and families both during pregnancy and after birth. No limit of service due to age or length of time on program. Provides technical services to high risk moms to prevent miscarriage as well as providing counseling, education, emotional support and physical assessments for high risk parents and children. Also provides well baby services and immunizations at walk-in clinics in North Adams and Wmstn.

**Hours** : 8 AM to 9 PM 365 days/year.

**Payment** : Medicaid, commercial insurances, sliding fee, and charity care service. One time visits to post-partum families who are not high risk are free as a community service.

### **4. Child Care of the Berkshires : SERVICES FOR TEEN PARENTS AND THEIR CHILDREN.**

**Contact** : Donna Brule', P.O. Box 172, No Adams 01247, 663-6593

**Descr** : This program (formerly called the Young Parent's Program) offers day care and counseling. Parents are encouraged to spend a minimum of two hours/week in the family day care home or group center to observe the provider interacting with the children. Parent education and support groups are also offered where a variety of topics and issues are discussed. Case manager and Program Director also meet individually with parents to assist with parent's own needs. The parenting skills portion of the program is required.

**Hours** : 9 AM - 5 PM.

**Cost** : None

**5. Northern Berkshire Comprehensive Care : MATERNAL CHILD HEALTH NSG**

**Contact :** Vicki Llana 19 Depot St Adams 01220 743-2960

**Descr :** Home nursing visits, prenatal, post-partum assessment and care. Works with teen parents in conjunction with PASS. Infant lead testing available

**Hours :** 8 AM - 4:30 PM, nurse on call 24 hours/day

**Payment :** Insurances, sliding fee scale, free one time visits to new moms.

**6. Programs by Northern Berkshire Mental Health Association, 85 Main St, No Adams 01247 664-4541. Contact :** Jean Morandi, Client service Coord.

**Overview :** The Association provides parenting skill in the programs described below. Because they offer seven programs, it is common for families to access one or more of the programs offered, as appropriate. Their clinical staff meet across program areas several times / week to assure that all treatment components within the agency and community are serving the families' needs.

**Cost :** Sliding Scale, 3rd Party, and contracted services.

**Hours :** 40/week, some evening groups, 24 hour emergency service.

**A. Family Treatment Project Contact :** Barb Cece

**Descr :** The Family Treatment Project serves victims and perpetrators of physical and sexual abuse via family, group, and individual therapy. The Parent and Child Interaction Group (with DSS) is for parents and children aged 0 - 5. Outreach is part of this program as therapists can meet with clients off site as appropriate. Other groups include : treatment activity groups for children and groups for family members involved in sexual abuse

**B. South Forty Program Contact :** Gavin Behrens

**Descr :** Target population consists of hard to reach adolescents and their families. Individual, family, and case management services are available to teens and their families who are best served by non-traditional services. Parenting skills are taught in therapy and case mgmt contacts. Much outreach as staff serve as liaisons to local schools, the legal system and social service agencies.

**C. South Forty School Contact :** Guy Patalano

**Descr :** Monthly meetings with parents of the adolescents in the alternative school. Parent skills reviewed in a group modality. Individual and family treatment is given to parents to help them with parenting skills.

**D. Early Intervention Program Contacts :** Beth Kleederman/Sue Mead

**Descr :** The EI program serves children 0-3 and their families for children at risk due to biological, physical, or environmental factors. Services include : diagnostic developmental assessments, special groups for children with identified problems, community child playgroup, young parent groups, parent support groups, speech, physical, and occupational therapy, and psychology services. Parent education and support is a primary focus of the program provided through home and center contacts.

**E. Family Therapy, Family Consultation, Parent Counseling.**

**Contact :** William Goodman

**Descr :** The NBMHA Counseling Center serves families with young children and adolescents, and provides both individual and family therapy, as well as parent education. They provide a parent group for parents with children aged three to five years. The focus of treatment is generally intended to enhance a child's emotional well being as well as assisting parents in handling difficult behaviors, usually related to mental health difficulties.



NORTHERN BERKSHIRE COMMUNITY ACTION, INC.  
FAMILY LIFE SUPPORT CENTER

85 MAIN STREET • SUITE 410 • NORTH ADAMS, MA 01247

N.B.C.A.

TELEPHONES:

F.L.S.C.

(413) 663-3014 or 663-9807

(413) 664-8279 or 664-9572

Dear Coalition Members;

I have received some very devastating news tied in with State Budget Cuts, affecting our agency.

As most of you may or may not know, Northern Berkshire Community Action is heavily volunteer oriented. The actual operation of the overall agency has depended upon a State Volunteer Program called Commonwealth Service Corp. This program had been implemented in the State of Massachusetts as a tribute to the late John F. Kennedy at the time of his assassination (1964). N.B.C.A. has had seven volunteers assigned to our agency. Throughout the State there are 400 Volunteers. The volunteers work thirty hours per week or one hundred twenty hours per month and receive a work related stipend of \$120.00 per month. Equivalent to \$1.00 per hour.

As N.B.C.A. has three full time paid staff including myself you can see how dependent we are upon this group of volunteers.


As of April 20th this program will end and we shall lose all of the volunteers.

When we talk of priority setting on the part of the State Government while they attempt to balance the budget, this cut represents a poor sense of priorities.

Once again Human Service cuts are extremely heavy at a time when we have more families in need of our services, but at the same time the State Budget continues to pay for barbers and beauticians to serve State employees.

Thank you for allowing me to vent my frustrations through the newsletter.

Sincerely,

  
Theresa B. Louison  
Executive Director  
N.B.C.A.

# NEWS AND VIEWS

\*\*\* *And Now, here's Ken!* **Northern Berkshire Tonight**, the talk show of the Coalition (in its third season) will be airing its March show, **Monday, Mar 5 at 7:30** and repeating **Friday, Mar 9 at 8 PM**. The March show is about a very successful hunger project in North County, the Berkshire Food Project. Special guests were Russell Holland and Bill Hoke of the Berkshire Food Project. The Berkshire Food Project celebrated its third anniversary on Friday, Feb 23, serving anywhere from 60 to 100 meals to Northern Berkshirites on Mondays, Thursdays, and Fridays at the First Congl Church in North Adams. Join thousands of others who watch the Coalition on TV and enjoy the opportunity to watch Northern Berkshire Tonight on channel 7, Northern Berkshire's local access channel.

\*\*\* *Need a Word Processor?* The Berkshire Area Health Education Center would like to donate a DecMate Wordprocessor to a non-profit organization. The unit is ten years old and in good working condition. It is complete with two drive (8 inch disks) unit, monitor, keyboard, daisy-wheel printer, printer cover, disks, and full documentation. For more info call 447-2417 and ask for Neil.

\*\*\* *Can you plan someone else's future?* . . . One of the gaps in services noted at the January Coalition meeting was for career assessments for hard to employ persons in the Northern Berkshire area. If an agency or individual has the capability to perform a career assessment and would like to do just that, contact Al Bashevkin. (802 442-5200)

\*\*\* *Do Breakfast?* The Northern Berkshire Chamber of Commerce sponsors a monthly breakfast meeting. This is an excellent opportunity to network with Northern Berkshirites from the business community. Interested? Call Tom King at the Chamber of Commerce. 663-3735.

\*\*\* *Health News* . . . Planning is underway for the 3rd annual VNANB health fair. The fair is sponsored each year by the VNA of Northern Berkshire in conjunction with McCann Technical High School. This year it will be held on Sat, May 12, from 10 AM to 2 PM. The health fair provides a forum for Northern Berkshire health and human service agencies to highlight their services and organizations. Janice O'Keefe, Coordinator of Community Relations and Special Projects at the VNANB, invites all coalition members whose agencies would like to participate in the event to an ad hoc committee meeting on Wednesday, Mar 14, at 3 PM at the NB United Way office on 85 Main St, No Adams, 4th floor. The purpose of the ad hoc committee is to

solicit input for preliminary planning from fair participants. Only one or two ad hoc meetings are planned and attendance is not required to participate in the fair. All agencies wishing to participate in the fair should call Janice O'Keefe by Mar 30 at the VNANB (458-8042) to reserve a space. All booths must be staffed throughout the fair. The VNANB will be unable to provide television and VCR equipment for participants as they have in the past. However, electrical outlets are available by request, should you wish to bring your own equipment.

**\*\*\* Programs for Developmentally Disabled/ Mentally Retarded.**

Northern Berkshire Support Services, a subsidiary of United Cerebral Palsy, offers programs to assist area families who care for family members with developmental disabilities/mental retardation. One of the programs offered is respite care. Respite care is a planned temporary substitute care provided by a trained worker that is offered in a family's home, in the home of the worker, or in a community setting. (In some cases even certain family members, relatives, or friends can become respite workers). Respite care options include three integrated afterschool programs for children and teens, recreation programs, boy scouts, basketball, softball, bowling, swimming, dances, camping experiences, etc. and assistance in utilizing generic community activities. NBSS maintains a 24-hour emergency response system to assist families in emergency or crisis situations. Other programs offered by NBSS are case management and counseling, speech therapy, functional academics, health coordination, and advocacy under Chapters 766 and 688. NBSS also has a parent's support group that helps parents deal with stress and advocates for change to improve programming for their children. For more info on any of these programs, call NBSS at 664-9345.

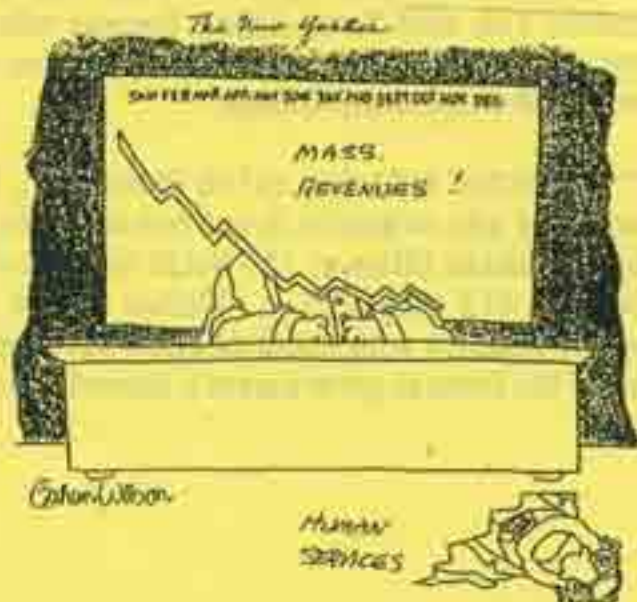
**\*\*\*Elder Services Announces /** Elder Services of Berkshire County, in conjunction with Berkshire Community College will be offering a series of workshops this Spring. **Caring for the Elderly at Home : A course for Family Caregivers**, will be offered Tuesdays in April, starting April 3 from 1 to 3 PM. The cost is \$55. On Wed, May 19th, a one day workshop entitled **You and Your Aging Parent** will be offered from 7 to 9 PM. Its cost is \$15. To register, contact the Division of Continuing Education at Berkshire Community College.

**\*\*\* Assorted Info for extra income.** . . . The Census Bureau has full and part-time jobs available in our communities. Job applicants can apply to the Census District Office at 150 North St - Suite 155, Pittsfield 01201, or call collect at 413 448-8221. . . . United Way of America is trying to let low income families with children know that they may be eligible for up to \$910 under the federal government's Earned Income Credit Program. They will

miss this income if they fail to file a federal income tax return. Sounds confusing, but it does work. For more info, contact Al Bashevkin who has a memo describing this program.

**\*\*\* First Choice I** The VNA of Northern Berkshire will introduce First Choice - a free registration program - to the Northern Berkshire and Southern Vermont community, beginning February 19th. First Choice is a program that allows you to choose a provider of home health care before you need help and registration is absolutely free. Once the registration form is completed by phone or through the mail, each registrant will receive a brochure outlining all of the VNANB's at-home and community services in addition to a membership card embossed with the person's name and patient number. Instructions on how to use the card and access services are included in the First Choice brochure. First Choice participants are also entitled to a 10% discount on all purchases at the following drugstores: Littles, Surgimed and Nassif's, North Adams; Medicine Shoppe, Adams; and Hart's Pharmacy, Williamstown. Discount limitations may apply per individual store owner. Promotion of and registration with the First Choice program will continue throughout the year. Pat Campbell, Executive Director and Janice O'Keefe, Coordinator of Community Relations and Special Projects will be on the Opinion program on Thursday, March 1st to discuss First Choice. Anyone needing more information about the program or seeking registration may call 458-8042, or 664-4536.

**\*\*\* Habitat for Humanity.** . . There's lots of excitement in the Northern Berkshire area rippling from the successes of community involvement with building Louison House. Habitat for Humanity is a group dedicated to eliminate poverty housing and to make decent shelter a matter of conscience. Dick Dassatti and Bob Buckwalter have spearheaded a drive to form a local Habitat for Humanity chapter in the Northern Berkshires. Their initial meeting saw over fifty Northern Berkshirites in attendance and a steering committee formed. There's lots of work to do, and if you want to help, contact Dick Dassatti (664-8188) or Bob Buckwalter (458-5506) for more information.



**1989 - 90 NORTHERN BERKSHIRE HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES COALITION SUPPORTERS :**

**ORGANIZATIONS**

NB Committee on Mental Retardation  
Pregnant Adolescent Support System (PASS)  
American Red Cross  
Berkshire Council on Alcohol and Addictions  
Williamstown Housing Authority  
Northern Berkshire Support Services  
United Cerebral Palsy  
Mass Society for Prevention Cruelty to Children  
Northern Berkshire United Way  
Berkshire Sane/Freeze  
AdLib, Inc.  
Northern Berkshire Community Action  
Visiting Nurse Association of Northern Berkshire  
Northern Berkshire Mental Health Association  
Williamstown Council on Aging  
AdLib North  
Child Care of the Berkshires  
Mass Department of Employment and Training  
HelpLine, Inc.  
North Adams Regional Hospital  
Women's Services Center  
Hospice of Northern Berkshire, inc.  
Adams Housing Authority  
Town of Adams Community Development Dep't  
Berkshire Food Project  
Williams College

**INDIVIDUALS**

John Howland, MD  
Al Nelson  
Pamela Knisley  
Al Bashevkin  
Steve Green  
Suzanne Walker  
Len Radin  
Diane Balduzy  
Michele Ethier  
Karen Forney Austin  
Kayte Miller  
Anthony J. Siracusa  
Bob Ronnow  
Trish Kelly

**YES, SIGN ME UP AS A COALITION SUPPORTER for 1989-90 !**

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Organization \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_

- Ind (\$10)  
 Sm Org (\$25)  
( < \$100,000 budget)  
 Lg Org (\$50)  
( > \$100,000 budget)

Checks payable to AHEC/NBHHSC. Mail to Berkshire AHEC 725 North St  
Pittsfield MA 01201

**Areas of Interest :**

**Are you willing to be listed as Coalition Supporter**  Yes  No

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- Mar 5** - **Northern Berkshire Tonight** : Berkshire Food Project  
Channel 7 7:30 PM
- Mar 6** - **Barriers to Economic Opportunity Mtg**  
Department Public Welfare 1 PM
- Mar 7** - **FACT Meeting:** Haskins Community Center Noon
- Mar 9** - **All Coalition Meeting** : Barriers to Economic  
Opportunity 1st Baptist Church of North Adams  
Corner Eagle and Main St (enter on Eagle) 10 AM to Noon.
- Mar 9** - **Northern Berkshire Tonight** : Berkshire Food  
Project Channel 7 8 PM
- Mar 15** - **Steering Committee** NA City Hall 1:30 PM
- Apr 5** - **Parenting Issues Task Force** : Louison House,  
Adams 11 AM
- Apr 5** - **Family Life Support Center Advisory Board** :  
Louison House 2:30 PM

**OK Power Lunchers, Let's do it!** . . . The Information Outreach Task Force looks forward to your attendance at a number of upcoming events. Specifically, the Power Lunch Group has had a number of successful meetings in the cozy confines of the Shipper's Room at Heritage State Park. The lunches are every Thursday from 12:05 until 12:35. Thanks go to Sinclair Hart who gave a beneficial talk on Advocacy in Human Services and then led the group in discussion after. We've heard Thorman Hulse talk about the Business of Human Services and have shared a film on time management (something we all need). Upcoming events include Jack Conklin who will give a talk on stress management (March 1), Ken Swiatek will speak about changes in the work incentive programs for the disabled (Mar 8), and a talk about Northern Berkshire teens (Mar 15).

**BE IMPORTANT, BE SEEN AT THE COALITION POWER LUNCH!**