

# NEWSLETTER

Coalition News

Vol V. #7

**Coalition Coordinator :** Al Bashevkin 664-4511 x519; 802-442-5200.

**Coalition Address :** NASC Box 9075 North Adams, MA 01247

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.

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March 1991  
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## March Coalition Meeting

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

**Friday March 8th 10:00 AM to Noon**

### Meeting Agenda

- I. Welcome
  
- II. Introduction of Participants : **Who's here today**
  
- III. What's Happening : **Announcements by Coalition Membership of interest to all**
  
- IV. Coalition Topic : **Fifth Annual Coalition Legislative Forum :**  
State Senator Jane Swift  
State Representative Dan Bosley  
State Representative Shaun Kelly
  
- V. Other Business
  
- VI. Adjournment and Conclusion

**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 membership and friends (over 310 at this point). Announcements submitted to the newsletter will reach our entire mailing list. So, take advantage of this unique, free mechanism for informing our membership 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, your announcements should reach Al Bashevkin by March 28th.

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## What's Happening I

- February's Events

### **February Meeting**

February's Coalition meeting featured a discussion about hunger and its definition in the Northern Berkshire area. This topic is a difficult one as it has different meanings to different people. Coalitioners did a little of their own soul searching of their own as they talked about hunger and the needs in Northern Berkshire. A special thanks should go to Arlene Reilly, new director of the Berkshire Food Project, Lt Kevin Stoops of the Salvation Army, Theresa Louison of Northern Berkshire Community Action, and Shirley Clapper of Berkshire WIC who are all working hard in Northern Berkshire nutrition programs and who led our discussions.

Are people in Northern Berkshire really going without food? When we talk hunger, what do we mean? Are some times of the month more difficult for Northern Berkshire families? Are there enough services in the area to adequately address hunger?

Coalitioners heard stories about individuals who would not eat if not for the Berkshire Food Project and the various food pantries around town. People are having a more difficult time as the end of the month draws near and checks are spent down. Budgeting resources to last the whole month is needed skill for some families in Northern Berkshire. The Family Life Support Center places a focus on budgeting, but not all from Northern Berkshire utilize their services. Single parents are having a particularly difficult time stretching their resources.

In defining hunger, Theresa Louison talked about how families are starving for more than just food, and that area programs like the Berkshire Food Project offer food and a place to meet others to help nurture area residents. Coalitioners looked at both sides of the fence of hunger. Some at

the meeting wondered if families should be forced to be more accountable. Others believe that times are so difficult now that households do not have enough money to make it through the month, so to force accountability is unreasonable. Most agreed that at-risk area residents do not learn about basic nutrition and budgeting. The Family Life Support Center can do this for its clientele, but they do not serve all in need of these resources. The Cooperative Extension Service has the tools to teach these areas, but the Governor is threatening to eliminate that program. Any ideas on how we can provide this information to families at risk? If so, contact Al Bashevkin!

**Government Transition Information**

Remember to work with our local legislators. They will be in attendance at the March Coalition's Legislative Forum and should bring information about the new thinking in Boston and how the Northern Berkshires will fare.

Rep Dan Bosley	- 3 Elmwood Ave	North Adams	01247	663-7486
Rep Shaun Kelly	- 30 Florence St	Dalton	01226	684-4418
Sen Jane Swift	- 8 Bank Row	Pittsfield	01201	442-5240

The Coalition and the entire Berkshire County area suffered a tremendous loss with the death of our Congressman, Silvio Conte. Congressman Conte successfully advocated for funding for the Family Life Support Center's Transitional Housing Program (Louison House). He has fought hard for government funding for fuel assistance for the New England area. He believed in the Berkshires and made Washington recognize it. Congressman Conte's shoes in Washington will be big ones to fill.

Once again, the State is facing some serious financial difficulties. The Governor is opposed to instituting the tax on services that could raise revenues to cover the budget gap. Governor Weld scrutinized his new budget to be sure that cuts would not affect the "truly needy". We should help by examining the State budget in a similar fashion. For comprehensive information about the Governor's budget and its impact on health and human services, contact the Massachusetts Human Services Coalition (482-6119) and ask to subscribe to *State House Watch*. Highlights of the Governor's budget include:

- \$850 million cut from our present FY91 budget and \$1.8 billion cut from FY 92 budget.

- EOCED programs of housing services (homeless prevention) and operating CEED grants to Community Development Agencies (North Adams CDC) likely to be history if the Governor's budget goes through.

- Sliding fee schedule attached to all EOHHS programs. Presumably programs like respite care, abuse and neglect services, battered women's shelters would be included in this sliding fee schedule.

- Teen Pregnancy Prevention (PASS), Family Health (including Early Intervention), WIC programs, and AIDS programs to receive funding increases in the Governor's budget.

- AFDC payments for pregnant women in their first six months of pregnancy eliminated.

- Office for Children will lose its status as an independent agency and will move in FY 92 to EOHHS. Increased fees for licenses issued by OFC (day care, etc.) FY 92 budget eliminates funding for childcare resource and referral networks (Resources for Child Care in Pittsfield).

- General Relief (GR) to be eliminated for high school students (FY 92)

- GR to be limited to twelve months (FY92)

- Limit AFDC / GR Emergency Assistance to prevent homelessness to one month (presently pays 3 - 4 months back rent or utility bills) (FY 92)

- stricter control of nursing home rates / count the home as an asset if it were determined that person would not leave the nursing home / eliminate state contribution to nursing home resident's personal needs allowance (FY92)

- Consolidating public health hospitals

- repeal Chapter 23's mandate to extend Universal Health Care coverage / fold the Department of Medical Security (created to implement Universal Health Care coverage) into EOHHS (FY92)

- vast changes in DMR, including transferring 300 state school residents to the community, initiating a fee for turning 22 clients, making the transportation system for DMR clients a "needs based" system rather than an entitlement, and eliminating service coordinators for clients in full-time residential placements

- Volunteer Adult Literacy Campaign eliminated/ Adult Basic Skills Program cut by 10%.

- Scholarships for higher education eliminated and become loan programs / drop out prevention programs (Essential Skills, School to Work) are eliminated.

### **Task Force about Volunteerism**

The Task Force on Volunteerism is planning a Volunteer Fair to be held at the Concourse, 85 Main Street in North Adams, on April 25. We plan to have tables at the Concourse from 11 AM to 2 PM. Organizations that would like to participate in the Volunteer Fair must attend a mandatory

meeting, **Friday, March 15 at 9 AM** at the office of AdLib, 85 Main St, Suite 304. We look forward to working together for a concerted effort at recruiting volunteers.

### **Federal Budget Priorities Coalition**

This Coalition has been able to look at the new federal budget and the spending priorities it has shown. After hearing information about the cutback in federal spending for health and human services, one doesn't need to look too far to find reasons for the State's fiscal mess. More of our tax dollar is going towards defense, while our infrastructure is going without. See graphic later in newsletter for better explanation of the re-priorities in spending. For more information about this Coalition, contact Judy Grinnell at 458-5509.

### **Neighborhood Focussing**

The River/Hall/Bracewell Neighborhood Association's February 7th meeting had a good turnout. Neighbors are seeing some positive effects of their joining together. The next meeting of the Neighborhood Association will be Thursday, March 7th at the Salvation Army. It will be a pot luck dinner/meeting. Residents will hear about code enforcement, building inspections, and housing rehab programs. What can be done? Can you help? If so, come to the meeting, or contact Al Bashevkin, 802 442-5200.

### **Berkshire County Partnership Against Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse**

A kick-off meeting for this county-wide partnership will be held on Thursday, February 28 at 3 PM at the ITAM Lodge on Waubeek Road in Pittsfield. This meeting will set the directions for the partnership. For more information about this endeavor, contact Bob Hulse, Project Coordinator, at 447-2417.

### **Information / Outreach Task Force**

Information / Outreach folks are looking to solidifying some of their ideas. You too should be a part of their exciting endeavors. The next meeting of the Information / Outreach Task Force will be **Thursday, March 7th at 2 PM** at the office of **Northern Berkshire United Way, 85 Main st, North Adams**. Be there and be creative!

### **Task Force About Violence**

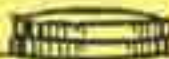
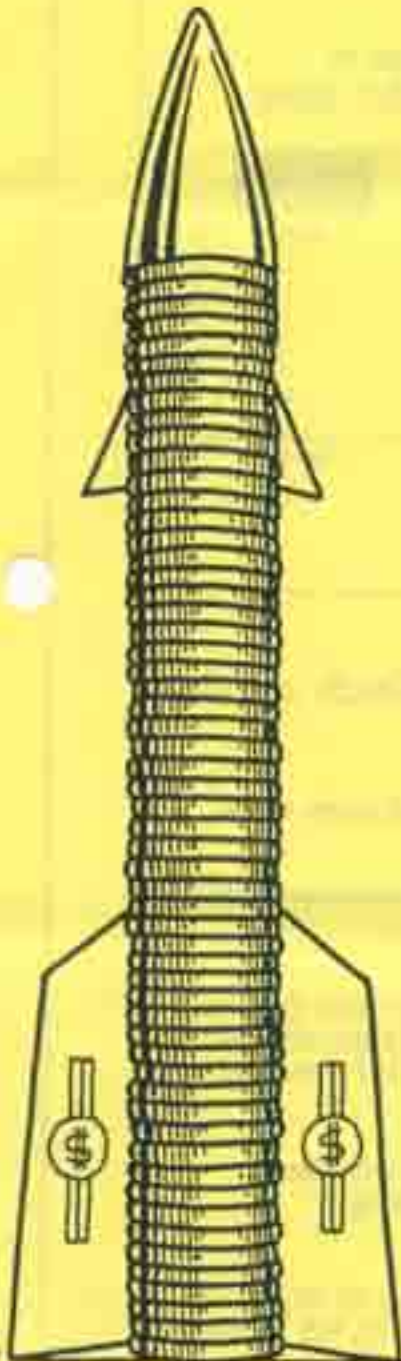
Solutions will come through community discussions. The last meeting of the Task Force about Violence looked at a number of community issues. The committee discussed corporal punishment and the need for community education about alternatives to it, the community non-violence award, and athletic competition among area schools that may foster bad feelings. This group is taking an honest look at a most difficult problem. For questions, call Maggie Bittman at 664-6104. The next meeting of the Task Force About Violence is scheduled for **Thurs, March 14 at 10 AM** at Haskins in North Adams.

# IS THIS HOW BERKSHIRE COUNTY

## SHOULD SPEND ITS FEDERAL TAX DOLLARS?

In 1990, the average **BERKSHIRE COUNTY** household spent \$3,183 in federal income taxes, including:

\$1,598.26 on the Military  
 \$283.36 on Health Care  
 \$89.15 on Education  
 \$49.99 on Housing  
 \$20.25 on Environmental Protection  
 \$13.37 on Job Training



**50.2¢**  
MILITARY

**.4¢**  
EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS

**.6¢**  
ENVIRONMENT

**1.6¢**  
HOUSING

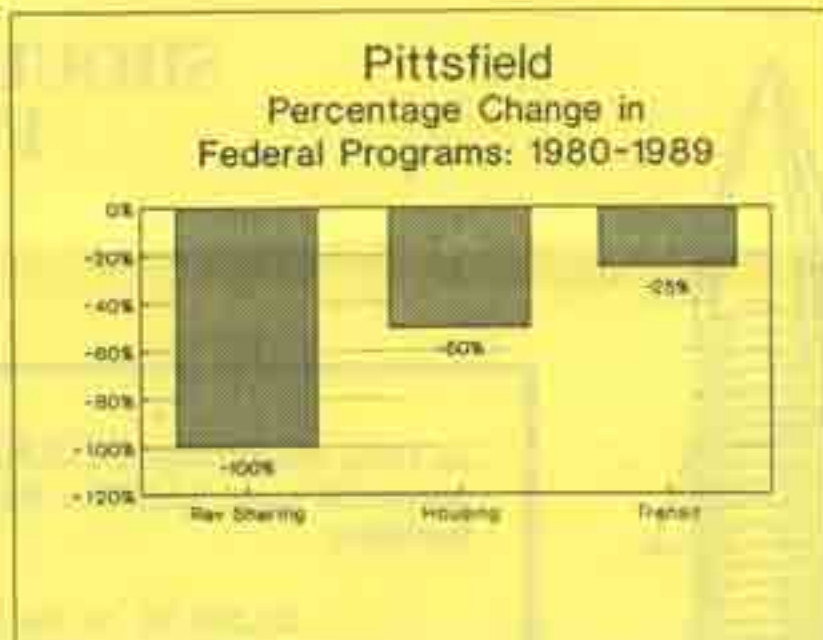
**2.8¢**  
EDUCATION

less than **10¢**  
HEALTH CARE

# WHY BERKSHIRE COUNTY NEEDS NEW NATIONAL PRIORITIES

## Because BERKSHIRE COUNTY Has Lost Valuable Federal Resources

During the 1980's, major cuts in domestic spending went to finance record increases in military spending. Listed to the right are a few of the many federal programs cut back.




## Because BERKSHIRE COUNTY Spends Too Much on the Military

In 1990 the people of BERKSHIRE COUNTY paid \$316 million in federal taxes to the Pentagon, 43% more than in 1980.


### *BERKSHIRE COUNTY'S ONE YEAR SHARE OF:*

The B-2 Stealth Bomber, Star Wars, and new nuclear bomb production (\$10 million)	would finance	⇒	2,100 Headstart slots for pre-school age children, and job training for 2,050 teens and adults.
A 50% cut in forces in Europe (\$111 million)	would finance	⇒	5,560 units of rehabbed affordable housing.
The war in Iraq (\$40 million)	would finance	⇒	the weatherizing of 24,741 homes, saving 71,748 barrels of crude oil a year.

## NEWS AND VIEWS


 *In times of war, people have to come together . . .*


Northern Berkshire Mental Health Association is offering a support group for all community members concerned about the Gulf crisis. The groups will run on Tuesday and Thursday at 7 PM at NBMHA's office, 85 Main Street, North Adams. Please call Bill Goodman, 664-4541, for more information.


 *Workshops in the area about violence . . .* May 8, Reading, Writing, Arithmetic, and Safety. A workshop about managing violence in the schools will be at the Parsons Child and Family Center, 9 AM - noon. For more information call them at 518 426-2600.

Third Annual Bridgewater State Hospital Conference on the Study of Violence: A Clinical and Forensic Perspective, April 4-5. For more information contact Goldberg Medical Associates, Inc. Bridgewater State Hospital Conference 20 Administration Rd Bridgewater 02324.


Drury High School is hosting an opportunity for students from the Northern Berkshire area to attend a Middle East Peace Conference, Thursday March 7 from 9 AM to 2 PM. They will be discussing the Palestinian problem and Peace and Stability in the Post War Middle East. Students from each school will represent Israel, Palestine, the U.S. Coalition, and Iraq. Sounds bold and exciting for students. For more information, contact Jay Gramolini, the advisor to the Peer Educators at Drury High School, 663-6584.

 *Ziti for a good cause . . .* The North Adams Rehabilitation Commission Annual Marketing Event this year is going to be a Ziti Supper to benefit the Louison House on Thursday, March 14th from 4 to 7:30 PM at the American Legion in North Adams. Tickets will be available in advance or at the door. Contact Mary Daniels at 663-5391 if you have questions or are willing to assist with the event.

 *Welcome Aboard!* . . . There will be a welcome reception for Denise Gore, new Community Coordinator at Women's Services. The reception will be Friday, March 8 from 4-6 PM at Women's Services office, 146 First St in Pittsfield.


 *And Now, here's Ken!* Northern Berkshire Tonight, the talk show of the Coalition will be airing its March show, Monday, March 4th at 7:30 and repeating Friday, March 8th at 8 PM.

The show's topic is the new **SSI Aware Program**. Host Ken Swiatek will have Dave Stevens of Families USA to talk about his efforts through the SSI Aware program to link potential SSI recipients with the program. Tune into **Channel 7** and join thousands of others who watch the Coalition on TV.

 **BOOK REVIEWS** . . A new feature of Coalition News is your chance to review some of the current books that may be of interest to readers of the Coalition News. Please submit your reviews to the NEWS c/o Al Bashevkin, NASC, North Adams, MA 01247. Our second review is submitted by Al Bashevkin.

***Within our Reach***: Breaking the Cycle of the Disadvantaged. by Lisbeth Schorr, Anchor Books, \$9.95.

In this most readable version, Lisbeth Schorr gives an optimistic account of how she believes America can change its cycle of poverty. She draws from her own experience working during Johnson's War on Poverty, and also from her involvement in present day anti-poverty work. I must say that as I finished reading this book, I felt good about being a social worker and saw hope for the future. Many successful programs of the present day are cited and discussed, so it may also serve as a useful reference for new program planning. ***Within our Reach*** is available at local bookstores.

 The Alzheimer Information and Support Group of Northern Berkshire meets the first Tuesday of each month at 7:30 PM at the Downtown Adult Day Health Center, adjacent to the Center Street Parking lot (rear of 107 Main St). Next meeting will be Tuesday, March 5. If you need transportation, call Esther Tauber at 458-5216 or Henry Contois at 662-2984.

Go to the people,  
live among them,  
learn from them, love them,  
start with what they know;  
but of the best leaders,  
when their task is accomplished,  
their work is done,  
the people all remark,  
"We have done it ourselves."  
- Ancient Chinese Poem

# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- Jan 28** - **Berkshire County Partnership against Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse** ITAM Lodge, Pittsfield 3 PM
- Mar 7** - **River / Bracewell / Hall Neighborhood Meeting**  
5 PM Pot luck dinner Salvation Army
- Mar 7** - **FACT Meeting:** Haskins Community Center Noon
- Mar 7** - **Information Outreach** Northern Berkshire United Way  
85 Main St 4th floor 2 PM
- Mar 8** - **All Coalition Meeting :** Legislators Forum  
Baptist Church North Adams 10 AM to Noon.
- Mar 14** - **Task Force on Violence :** Haskins Community Center  
Conference Room North Adams 10 AM
- Mar 15** - **Volunteerism in the NB's :** Office of AdLib 85 Main St  
Room 304 North Adams 9 AM
- Mar 21** - **Steering Committee** NA City Hall 1 :30 PM
- Mar 28** - **America for Disability Act : Chamber of Commerce**  
**Breakfasters** Call NA Chamber of Commerce for more details

**YES, SIGN ME UP AS A COALITION SUPPORTER for 1990-91 |**

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