

Hill Country A.A.®

Intergroup Connection

Manager

Gary H.-Northland Group
(Austin)

HCIA Board

Reed McL.-Georgetown
Group (Georgetown)

Larry D.-North Austin 24
Group (Austin)

Debi G.-Georgetown
Group (Georgetown)

Rosi S.-Single Purpose
Group (Austin)

Lake W.-Allandale Group
(Austin)

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(Elgin)

Jason I.-Hope Group
(Cedar Park)

Norma A.-Single Purpose
Group (Austin)

Rebecca W.-Hope Group
(Cedar Park)

A.A. History - What is Intergroup?

The first forerunner to today's Intergroup / Central Offices, the Central Committee, was established in Cleveland Ohio in October 1939, four years after AA's co-founders Bill W. and Dr. Bob met. At that time a committee of seven – five men and two women – began meeting in Cleveland once a month. Cleveland's Central Committee was established only five months after Cleveland's first AA group started on May 11, 1939. The Central Committee was utilized "to coordinate efforts regarding hospitalizations and sponsorship," according to Clarence S. "We met once a month, and then we decided to open an office," Clarence said in later years. "Up to then, we had a post office box and telephone." As Dorothy recalled, "When those articles hit Cleveland, people simply besieged the place. Our phone never quit ringing for about a month, and I did nothing but sit by the telephone and take inquiries." (*Dr. Bob and the Good Old-Timers*, Chapter 15) In 1942, the first New York City Central Committee was formed to handle inquiries from new prospects. They hired two (2) secretaries who were responsible for answering letters and phone calls.



Here's to a Sober 2017!

"Twas the Night Before and
AA Christmas"

Twas the night before
Christmas, we were all in the
club, Enjoying a meeting,
instead of the pub.

The ashtrays were clean, and
the coffee was made, The Big
Books were out and we all
had prayed.

When out in the lot, there
arose such and clatter, We all
jumped up to see what was
the matter. The chair with his
Big Book, and I with my
smokes, Headed outside to
find these two blokes.

They came on inside and sat
at the table; And said that
they'd chair, as soon as
they're able. To start with they
said, "It's more than not
drinking; It's doing your best
to fix your sick thinking."
"Think, think, think!" and the
slogans were used; Help
keep the newcomer from
getting confused.

Step 1 is a start, they said we
should know, But after Step2,
we'll be all aglow.

We make a decision when we
got to Step 3; Step 4 was real
tough, we all could agree.
Step 5 is the one where we
let it all out, And after Steps 6
and 7, we're left with no
doubt. When we got to Step
8, we made out list; And then
with Step 9, we have to
persist



A.A.[®] History-What is Intergroup? (cont.)

The New Jersey meetings were also using the Clubhouse on West 24th Street as their headquarters. AA grew in New Jersey until it was necessary to form their own Central Committee in 1944. In Columbus, Ohio a service center was started in 1943, today called the Fellowship Intergroup. Los Angeles opened a service center a year later, in 1944. Colorado and Maryland opened service centers by 1946, followed by Massachusetts, Michigan, Mississippi, Wisconsin and—Canada's first—Alberta. At least 16 service centers existed by the time the first General Service Conference was held in April 1951. An Intergroup office in Akron, the birthplace of AA, was opened in April 1954. Now there are countless Intergroups and Central Offices across the US and Canada, helping one alcoholic talk to another!

Later, in the 1950's, Bill W. introduced the idea of a Service Structure, which would accomplish on a National Level what many were doing on a local level through Intergroups- finding ways to make service effective, as some Intergroups were forming committees for Treatment centers service, Corrections service, Newsletters to communicate on service events, and Public Information Committees, and more. But, the service structure Bill W. proposed would allow for group representation: a voice and a vote, something outside the responsibilities of most Intergroups. So while Intergroup is today is still outside the service structure of AA (work done by Districts, Areas, and the General Service conference) it was the historical forerunner to the service structure, and has an important role in helping others find AA-AA meetings, groups, sponsors, and fellowships. Intergroup has been dubbed 'first contact' for many alcoholics looking for a way out of the alcoholic insanity of their lives.

Where would we be without the Intergroups of our nation today? The link between AA and the alcoholic would be broken, and isolation would rule. Thank God for the volunteers at the end of the life-line of AA, answering the phones when someone calls for help, and fulfilling our responsibility statement, "I am responsible, when anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of AA, always to be there, and for that, I am responsible.

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World Services, Inc.

Dear Alkie,

Here's to a Sober 2017!

(cont.)

As to their names, we only could guess;

Must have been Bill W. and Dr. Bob S.

The two men hopped into a '35 Ford,

And as they pulled out, one of them roared, "We leave this message, for our sisters & brothers: Trust God, Clean house and be of service to others.

And for all of you people, I just want to say: Have a nice holiday, but don't drink today!

The Last Laugh

Q: How many sponsors does it take to change a lightbulb?



A: One, but the bulb has to really WANT to change!!

I've been sober for over a year. When I first started in AA, I was on a pink cloud, and I felt great! But now, I feel kinda burnt out and restless. Everyone in the meetings say the same old thing, and I'm bored. Do you think I missed something when I worked the steps? Should I ask my sponsor to take me through the steps again?

Yours truly,

Irritable, Restless, and Discontent

Dear IRD,

Have you read the story of AA # 3? In it, Bill W. talks a lot about gratitude, and telling others about everything God has done for him, curing him of this terrible disease!! I've heard people say that service is gratitude in action. Have you considered taking someone else through the steps, going to a group conscience and seeing how you can help your home group, or volunteering at Intergroup? Ask your sponsor for other suggestions, and don't forget to tell God about your problem, too!

Love,

Alkie

**Easy Does
it!!**



What's New at Intergroup!!

Starting Jan 7th, Hill Country Intergroup has begun to open the office on Saturdays from 10:00 am -2:00 pm for sales of AA approved literature. Come on by!! HCIA
1825 Fortview Road, Suite 102, Austin, TX 78704

®

Where to find it: A.A.® News!!

Intergroup: austinaa.org

For news, conferences, workshops about local groups, meeting information, and more!

Deaf Access Committee: austindac.org

For the current calendar of interpreted AA meetings, and info on the Deaf Access Committee, and contact info.

District 3b/3c: district3b3c.org

For information on District meetings, District Committees, and other things going on and

Southwest Texas Area: aa-swta.org

For news about Southwest Texas Area Assemblies, Area sponsored events, and what SWTA is all about!!

Can't find what you're looking for?

For even more links to A.A. websites, go to the Resources tab on the HCIA website!!

Have an AA Group event coming up?

**Make sure it gets on the Intergroup website under News and Events!!
Are you a new group or has your group info changed? We'll spread
the word!!**

Just e-mail the Intergroup Manager Gary at austinaa@gmail.com

ON TRADITION ONE

"Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon A.A. unity."

Editorial by Bill W.

A.A. Grapevine, December 1947

"Each member of Alcoholics Anonymous is but a small part of a great whole. A.A. must continue to live or most of us will surely die. Hence, our common welfare comes first. But individual welfare follows close afterward."

Our whole A.A. program is securely founded on the principle of humility--that is to say, perspective. Which implies, among other things, that we relate ourselves rightly to God and to our fellows; that we each see ourselves as we really are--"a small part of a great whole." Seeing our fellows thus, we shall enjoy group harmony. That is why A.A. Tradition can confidently state, "Our common welfare comes first."

"Does this mean," some will ask, "that in A.A. the individual doesn't count too much? Is he to be swallowed up, dominated by the group?"

No, it doesn't seem to work out that way. Perhaps there is no society on earth more solicitous of personal welfare, more careful to grant the individual the greatest possible liberty of belief and action. Alcoholics Anonymous has no "musts." Few A.A. groups impose penalties on anyone for non-conformity. We do suggest, but we don't discipline. Instead, compliance or non-compliance with any principle of A.A. is a matter for the conscience of the individual; he is the judge of his own conduct. Those words of old time, "Judge not," we observe most literally.

"But," some will argue, "If A.A. has no authority to govern its individual members or groups, how shall it ever be sure that the common welfare does come first? How is it possible to be governed without a government? If everyone can do as he pleases, how can you have aught but anarchy?"

The answer seems to be that we A.A.s cannot really do as we please, though there is no constituted human authority to restrain us. Actually, our common welfare is protected by powerful safeguards. The moment any action seriously threatens the common welfare, group opinion mobilizes to remind us; our conscience begins to complain. If one persists, he may become so disturbed as to get drunk; alcohol gives him a beating. Group opinion shows him that he is off the beam; his own conscience tells him that he is dead wrong, and, if he goes too far, Barleycorn brings him real conviction.

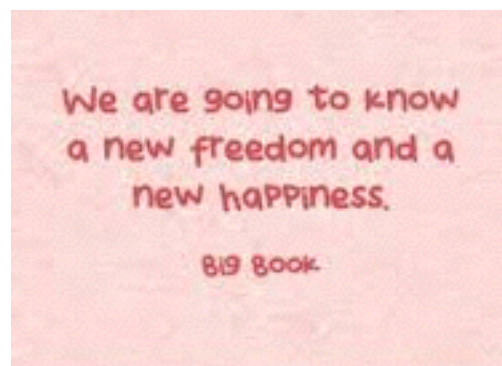
So it is we learn that in matters deeply affecting the group as a whole, "our common welfare comes first." Rebellion ceases and cooperation begins because it must; we have disciplined ourselves.

Eventually, of course, we cooperate because we really wish to; we see that without substantial unity there can be no A.A., and that without A.A. there can be little lasting recovery for anyone. We gladly set aside personal ambitions whenever these might harm A.A. We humbly confess that we are but "a small part of a great whole."

Deaf Access Committee: Past and Future



AA has always been one alcoholic talking to another, and this is embodied in the creation and continuation of a unique service committee, the Deaf Access Committee. How did this committee come about? The same way everything else in AA came about: a need expressed, a need met, in carrying the message from one alcoholic to another. An AA member who happened to be Deaf came to Austin, and at the time there were no interpreted AA meetings. There were meetings of all kinds here-women's meetings, Spanish meetings, meetings with babysitters, young people's meetings, men's meetings, and more. The needs of most AA members were being met. But, there were no meetings in ASL or interpreted meetings for Deaf AA members. The Treatment and Accessibilities (then called Special Needs) Committee Chairperson was approached for a solution. Information was shared on how others across the US had solved this problem through 7th tradition contributions used toward hiring Special workers (ASL interpreters) through a special accessibility committee that was organizing efforts to make the AA message and meetings available to all alcoholics, specifically Deaf AA members, and as two alcoholics put their heads together, things began to change. The Treatment and Accessibilities chair took this information to some past DCMs and Intergroup Board members for suggestions and input, and they all felt it was good idea, within our traditions, and in line with our primary purpose. From there, a small group of AA members banded together to form the Deaf Access Committee, began to find ways to become self-supporting, and to make a beginning. Because the Deaf Access Committee has continued to follow the traditions, focused on its service as an AA Committee, and found support from Intergroup, the District, and the AA fellowship, the Deaf Access Committee will soon celebrate 5 years of successful experience in providing ASL interpreted meetings for our Deaf AA members. Who not only have access to the AA message and meetings, but also give back to the fellowship by sharing their own experience strength and hope, by sponsoring others, and by being part of and serving their home groups. The committee has also assisted other Deaf Access committees across the country to make a beginning, and several members of the committee have shared at Area Workshops, at the local groups speaking, and even at the International Convention!! The committee continues to serve AA in the Austin area, and continues to rotate service positions. The DAC committee includes men and women of various age groups, both long term sobriety and newcomers serving, and AA members of various cultures and linguistic backgrounds. The future for AA in Austin is looking bright, as we continue to work together to make sure that the needs of every alcoholic is met, that the message is carried in every way possible, and that all have an opportunity to serve our fellowship!!



From the editor

To Be or Not to Be: Is that the question?



There has been talk among some in the Austin area that change is afoot, having to do with a new proposal to divide our existing Districts into 5 separate service entities. Bill W. said, "Let us never fear needed change. Certainly, we have to discriminate between changes for the worse and changes for the better, but once a need becomes clearly apparent, in an individual, a group, or AA as a whole, we cannot stand still and look the other way. The essence of growth is willingness to change for the better and then an unremitting willingness to shoulder the responsibility."

(Bill W., 1965, Grapevine)

So what is the needed change for us? We're talking about changing how our AA groups serve the Austin area. Currently they meet together once a month, one person representing each AA group, and discuss how to better help the alcoholic who still suffers.

The two AA communities Austin serves are divided into parts: North (3B) and South (3C). We meet together and talk about going to treatment centers, getting people qualified to go to the jails to take meetings in, new groups sharing information in the newsletters, other AA events and news also in the newsletter, information about AA history, how to reach doctors, educators, mental health professionals with the right information about AA, news from our AA magazine, the Grapevine, and what's going on at Intergroup. We also talk about how to best use the money contributed, electing new committee chairs, or solving group problems, such as too many people from treatment centers going to a small AA group, or non-alcoholics sharing in AA meetings, or how doing a group inventories can help growth.

Do we need MORE than these two AA communities or Districts?? This is the current conversation. It has been proposed that we split into 5 Districts. (Information-both for and against, and comments from the AA members, are on the Intergroup website) If so, why, and if not, why not?

Let's look at the information!

1) The problem

Is there enough time to do our AA business, enough time to visit all the AA groups to inform them about what's going on, and enough opportunity for everyone to share at our meetings?

2-Proposed Solution: Split into 5 Districts (or find a different way to solve the problem) through a vote (yea or nay) submitted by your General Service Representative

3-Will this work?

Did we look at any other solutions? Some are questioning this, and say that we are going too fast. An article from Box 459 says that redistricting (included in the opposing viewing on the Intergroup website) should this should be a last resort, not a first choice. These are some of the views, as well as the Redistricting plan, being discussed among AA members today.

4-Finances- the Redistricting ad hoc committee did lots of great work, making sure every new District would have support-including a financially able AA group for each new District-but others surmise that AA groups don't have to stay where they are. They may decide to leave and go to another District and this would change the financial situation for any new District. What about added expenses of new DCMS or Committee Chairs to be funded to go to Area Assemblies, more rent for new Districts, etc.? Are there going to be too many new expenses because of added service positions, yet no change in contributions? There is some fear that the new changes may not pan out the way things are planned. Others say not to let fear lead our decisions to problem solve. All these are certainly things to be considered.

5-Filling service positions- Currently, for the existing Districts, we have two DCMS, two Alternate DCMS, and seven Committee chairs, plus District officers (Secretary, Treasurer, Registrar). Creating 5 new districts would open up new service positions, which some people say would be great, and that more people would have opportunities to serve our fellowship. Others say we have trouble filling the ones we have, and that sometimes a position can stay open for months (I have witnessed this myself in the last ten years serving on both District and Area) and wonder if this will hamper our effectiveness to serve our local AA groups. Both of these positions have valid points.

6- Expressed concerns of the fellowship: There is a document on the Intergroup website showing the comments and questions of the AA members that showed up at the Sharing Sessions, called “Sharing Session Comments”. I recommend everyone read these, and to review all the information available on both Redistricting on the Opposing View, and to talk to other trusted servants-our past and current DCMs, Committee Chairs, and Delegates, about something that could affect us all in the future, and fully explore all the concerns expressed by the fellowship, pro and con. Everyone who has been around AA for very long knows that change is a slow process. Those of you familiar with the Twelve Concepts, which Bill W. wrote to guide us in effective service, know that Concept Twelve recommends against hasty decisions, that “ all matters of importance, time permitting, will be extensively debated” , and that these debates can continue until everyone has had a full and fair hearing resulting in a “heavy majority.”

7- Final Voting procedures

What will make the Redistricting Proposal pass or fail? Typically, a two-thirds vote, for or against. The Twelve Concepts also describes a having a quorum and a three quarters vote for any reorganization needed, but basically, a reliable cross section of AA opinion and more than a simple majority is traditional for AA. The Final vote for this proposal will be due by the last week of January and counted at the District meeting in February.

Conclusion:

It seems that it’s not what we do, as much as how we do it that’s important. In the pamphlet, *The AA Group, Where it all Begins*, p. 30-31

”For all involved, a good sense of humor, cooling of periods, patience, courtesy, willingness to listen and wait, plus a sense of fairness and trust in a Power greater than ourselves, have been found far more effective than legalistic arguments or personal accusations.”

Norma A., Editor

For the

The Intergroup Connection



Intergroup is providing information about redistricting so the AA fellowship in Austin has a place to read accurate information throughout the process. Intergroup has no opinion on this matter and is only trying to support what the AA fellowship decides.



Meet the Board

This is a special section of the Intergroup Connection giving us information about the Hill Country Board Members. In interview style, we will get to know who our trusted servants are and why they choose to serve at HClA!!

Gary H. Intergroup Manager

What are your name and your service position? Gary H., Intergroup Office Manager

How long have you been in AA? 15 years

What is your home group? Northland

Who is your sponsor and why did you pick him? Paul R., I picked him for the quality of his program

Why did you choose this service position? Because it is where AA's twelfth step work is performed

What other types of service- past or present- have you been involved in? Currently, I take meetings to correctional facilities, at the Travis State Jail. I sponsor, and attend AA meetings. In the past, I have served on the steering committee of my home group, on the Foundation at Northland, taking meetings to Treatment facilities

Do you think sponsoring makes a difference in your program? Definitely, it where I learn the most about my character defects and how to address them.

Was there a turning point in your sobriety that you think was significant? Yes, at 7 years sober, when dealing with a self-imposed crisis, my sponsor suggested I get involved in correctional facilities service work and that has changed my recovery.

Do you think there have been any changes in AA since you've been sober? Yes-there is less of a desperation of willingness to implement all three sides of the triangle

What do you hope would be the best thing to come out of your service to the fellowship as an Intergroup Board member?-The continuation of Austin AA as a whole for our children, grandchildren, or anyone else who wants to recover from the disease of alcoholism.

Thank you, Intergroup Volunteers!
December 2016

Office Volunteers:

Bob R
Charles M
Charles McC
Dan H
Donna Jean E
Glenn S
Jill F
John B
Mark O
Marlene M
Marty C
Murdo M
Nancy W
Pat F
Robert C
Rosi S
Scott B

Hotline Volunteers:

David S
Dudley
Fred J
Reggy T
Sierra C
Smoky M
Terry S
Tom K



Thank you, AA Groups!!
2016 November Contributions

District 3b/3c

| | | |
|-----------------------|--------------|----------|
| Allandale Group | Austin-North | \$193.17 |
| Central Group | Austin-North | \$100.00 |
| New Beginnings | Austin-North | \$400.00 |
| North Austin 24 | Austin-North | \$25.00 |
| Reading Rainbow | Austin-North | \$32.90 |
| Rule 62 | Austin-North | \$112.50 |
| Solution in Sobriety | Austin-North | \$411.86 |
| What It's Like Now | Austin-North | \$134.00 |
| | | |
| 7th Street Sisters | Austin-South | \$378.97 |
| A Vision For Us | Austin-South | \$80.00 |
| Bridge To Shore | Austin-South | \$405.81 |
| Desire To Stop | Austin-South | \$25.00 |
| Primary Purpose Group | Austin-South | \$80.00 |
| Westlake Group | Austin-South | \$300.00 |

District 2

| | | |
|-----------------|------------|---------|
| Into Action | Lockhart | \$50.00 |
| The River Group | San Marcos | \$25.00 |
| Wimberley Group | Wimberley | \$60.00 |

District 5

District 13

| | | |
|----------------|----------|---------|
| Lampasas Group | Lampasas | \$52.50 |
|----------------|----------|---------|

District 22

| | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------|----------|
| Georgetown Group | | \$161.62 |
| 1825 Group | Pflugerville | \$243.00 |
| Principles Before Personalities | | \$ 75.00 |

District 29

| | | |
|------------------|---------|---------|
| Lost Pines Group | Bastrop | \$50.00 |
|------------------|---------|---------|

