

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)

Murdo M.-Keep First
Things First
Group(Austin)

Herb E.-Into Action (Elgin)

Jason I.-Hope Group
(Cedar Park)

Norma A.-Single Purpose
Group(Austin)

Rebecca W.-Hope Group
(Cedar Park)

What is a Three Legacy AA group?

A Three Legacy group can only be understood when you know what our three legacies are. On many of our birthday chips, there is the Circle and Triangle which represents these three important aspects of our lives: Recovery, Unity, and Service. Bill W., in a Grapevine article in 1960, called these the “three impossibilities”, as it was impossible for decades, even centuries, for anyone to get sober at all, until the miracle of AA came along, by one alcoholic talking to another, offering our first legacy, Recovery- through the 12 Steps. Then, when AA groups across the country were formed, another impossibility arose-that of unity. Bill said the fact that we were all so different, coming from all walks of life, “a group of people that normally would not mix”, could affect our success. As groups emerged, so did their problems, born out of the alcoholic’s drive for money, acclaim, and prestige. It was clear that guidelines to assist with group problems were needed, and with help from friends and mentors like Father Dowling, Earl T., Jack Alexander, and others working side by side with Bill, the second AA legacy, Unity, through our 12 traditions, were presented to the AA groups and unanimously accepted by AA in 1949. The third legacy, how to carry the AA message to the world, appeared later, as Bill and Bob dropped the

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The Last Laugh

A man in a hot air balloon realized he was lost. He saw a person on the ground and yelled down to him, "Can you help me? I don't know where I am." The man replied, "Sure, I'll help you. You are in a hot air balloon hovering 30 feet above the ground...between 40 and 41 degrees North latitude and between 59 & 60 degrees West longitude."

"Wow, you must be an AA sponsor", said the man in the balloon. "I am", said the man, "but what gave me away?"

"Well", answered the balloonist, "everything you told me is technically right but I am still lost. Frankly you're not much help at all and you might even have delayed my trip."

"You must be an AA sponsee", replied the man. The man in the balloon was amazed and said, "I am, but how did you know?" The man on the ground said, "Well, you don't know where you are or where you're going. You have risen to where you are due to a lot of hot air. You are expecting other people to solve your problems and the fact is that you are in exactly the same position you

were in before we met, but, somehow now IT'S MY FAULT" !

What is a Three Legacy AA group? (cont.)

reins of the AA movement and transferred the stewardship to the General Service conference, which became the guardian of the traditions and the voice of the group conscience on a world level. This allowed the voice of AA's all over the country to be heard, on all matters of policy, finance, publishing, public relations, and more. In short, AA makes the decisions, and the Trustees and General Service employees carry out our wishes. Another impossibility transcended!! Service-carrying the AA message worldwide-solved!! So, a Third Legacy AA Group is one that perhaps has literature based meetings for recovery, welcomes newcomers but honors oldtimers, respects the traditions, yet informs rather than legislates these things, in a manner that all will feel welcome to promote unity..As one of our

Trustees, Bill N., shared last month in Rye, New York, "Just like a newcomer looks to the more experienced member for help with our Traditions,.....to set an example. A.A.'s leaders have a sacred duty to above all else embrace all Twelve Traditions. I do not believe we should ever look for a way around a Tradition,

or try to make something work if it does not feel right. I firmly believe that you can't ask a newcomer to observe one Tradition while you ignore a few others. I believe it is time for many in Alcoholics Anonymous to stop using the Fourth Tradition to break other Traditions. History shows that the Fourth Tradition was not created to be a veto over the others, rather it was created to give group's flexibility regarding group "customs." If any group including an area assembly, area officers, the General Service Board or service corporations breaks a Tradition they are affecting other groups and A.A. as a whole. "Well said!! A Third Legacy group is also involved in service, sometimes through regular donations to GSO, sometimes by the AA member's groups organized service to those in treatment, or corrections, or the AA group doing a weekend a shift for the Intergroup hotline, or perhaps volunteering at the State Convention or Area Assemblies. Experience shows that all three legacies are important for the growth and success of AA on all levels.

Norma A., Editor



SAFETY IN AA

Service material from the General Service Office

A.A. groups are spiritual entities made up of alcoholics who gather for the sole purpose of staying sober and helping other alcoholics to achieve sobriety. Yet, we are not immune to the difficulties that affect the rest of humanity.

Alcoholics Anonymous is a microcosm of the larger society within which we exist. Problems found in the outside world can also make their way into the rooms of A.A. As we strive to share in a spirit of trust, both at meetings and individually with sponsors and friends, it is reasonable for each member to expect a meaningful level of safety. Those attending A.A. meetings derive a benefit by providing a safe environment in which alcoholics can focus on gaining and maintaining sobriety. The group can then fulfill its primary purpose — to carry the A.A. message to the alcoholic who still suffers. For this reason, groups and members discuss the topic of safety.

Autonomy and Group Action

Because A.A., as such, ought never be organized, as indicated in Tradition Nine, it is individual members and groups who ensure that all members feel as safe as possible in A.A.

There is no government within A.A. and no central authority, legal or otherwise, to control or direct the behavior of A.A. members. As embodied in the Fourth Tradition, the formation and operation of an A.A. Group resides with the group conscience of its members. A.A. groups and service entities such as areas, districts, inter-group/central offices are autonomous.

Recognizing that safety is an issue of importance to its members, many groups have taken actions to keep distractions and disruptions to a minimum within the context of the group.

A.A. Membership

A.A. membership has never been contingent on any set of behavioral or moral standards — beyond those founded on common sense, courtesy, and the timeless values of kindness, tolerance and love.

A.A.'s Third Tradition states that the only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking. This brings an openness that helps to define our character as a diverse Fellowship; yet it also requires us to be mindful of our group and individual safety.

Some people, however, come into A.A. without an understanding of the type of behavior that is appropriate in meetings or in the company of other members. A person can be sober in A.A., yet still not understand what is acceptable.

Dealing with Disruptions

While most groups operate with a healthy balance of spontaneity and structure, there are a number of situations that can threaten group unity and challenge the safety of the group and its members. Often this can center on disruptive individuals, those who are confrontational, aggressive, or those who are simply unwilling to put the needs of the group first. Such behavior can hijack the focus of a meeting and frighten members, new and old.

Some groups have developed plans for addressing disruptive behavior and have established procedures through their group conscience to ensure that the group's welfare is protected. In many cases, disruptive behavior is pre-empted by having the chairperson state the expectations for behavior in the meeting.

Some groups include in their opening announcements that illegal and disruptive behavior is not tolerated. Still other groups have asked disruptive members to leave the meeting. Additionally, groups and members always have the option to call the appropriate authorities if disruptive behavior continues or anyone's safety is at risk.

Group Safety and Unity

Situations that groups have addressed through their group conscience include, sexual harassment or stalking; threats of violence; bullying; financial coercion; racial or lifestyle intolerance; pressuring A.A. members into a particular point of view or belief relating to medical treatments and/or medications, politics, religion, or other outside issues. In addition, there may be other behaviors that go on outside of typical meeting times that may affect whether someone feels safe to return to the group.

Some groups have to help keep the speak to those who Situations can be come to a group situation. As a last be asked to stop period of time. do it in order to the group and to



their own guidelines or procedures meeting safe. A.A. members can are acting inappropriately. discussed at business meetings to conscience about how to handle a resort, the disruptive member may attending the meeting for a specific Groups that take this drastic action preserve the common welfare of maintain A.A. unity.

In any situation, if a situation breaches

take appropriate action to ensure their safety. Calling the proper authorities does not go against any A.A. Traditions. Anonymity is not a cloak protecting criminal or inappropriate behavior.

person's safety is in jeopardy, or the the law, the individuals involved can

Inappropriate or predatory behavior, such as unwanted sexual attention or targeting vulnerable members can be especially troublesome. These behaviors may go on outside of typical meeting times. While A.A. members can be caring and supportive to those affected, we are not professionals trained to handle such situations. Law enforcement or other professional help may be necessary.

Victims of inappropriate behavior, harassment or predators can let the group know about such situations, often through a sponsor or trusted friend. This way the group is informed, and members can help address the situation and curtail further problems. Group discussion should be focused on creating an environment where all alcoholics can find and maintain sobriety.

A.A. and the Law

Common sense and experience suggest that A.A. membership does not grant immunity from local regulations and being at an A.A. meeting does not put anyone beyond the jurisdiction of law enforcement officers. As individuals, A.A. members are also “citizens of the world,” and as citizens we are not above the law.

Through the group conscience process, many groups have established guidelines regarding when it may be appropriate to call authorities and handle a given situation within the legal system. No A.A. group has to tolerate illegal behavior and any activity within an A.A. meeting is subject to the same laws that apply outside the meeting. The nature of illegal acts that groups have faced include violence, embezzlement, theft of property, drug sales at a meeting, and more.

Emergencies

Injuries, accidents, fires, etc., sometimes do occur during meetings. To accommodate these situations, groups can also develop plans and procedures, often in consultation with their landlord or local authorities. Addressing an emergency situation is more important than continuing the meeting, and members should not hesitate to call emergency personnel in critical situations.

Keeping the Focus on Our Primary Purpose

It is hoped that our common suffering as alcoholics and our common solution in A.A. would transcend most issues and curtail negative behaviors. As noted in the Big Book, Alcoholics Anonymous, “Love and tolerance of others is our code.”

Safety, however, is important to the functioning of the group. By maintaining order and safety in meetings, the group as a whole will benefit and members will be able to focus on recovery from alcoholism and a life of sobriety.

Ultimately, the experience of how these situations are handled can be as varied as our Fellowship. Good judgment and common sense, informed by the Twelve Traditions, seem to provide the best guide.

What Can Groups and Members Do?

Groups and members can discuss the topic of safety, to raise awareness in the Fellowship and seek through sponsorship, workshops and meetings, to create as safe an environment as possible for the newcomer, and other members or potential members. This can be the subject of sharing among groups at the district or area level.

Archives: Past and Future

A contribution from K.C. H., Area Archives Chair

I have found that when I ask A.A. members what they think of when they are asked what Archives in Alcoholics Anonymous does, it's usually giving history talks. However, that is actually a small percentage of what A.A. Archives is all about.

The Archives committee is responsible for establishing policies and procedures, and undertakes and maintains final responsibility and authority for the use of the archives, and exercises its group conscience in regard to matters of general policy. One of the most important functions of the archives committee is to establish creative parameters for the selection of material to be collected. These parameters will guide the committee in gathering material of historical significance and will reduce the time and space of preserving random bits and pieces of dubious value. It is helpful for the committee to meet on a regular basis to aid the committee chair and to become familiar with the maintenance of the collection. The Area Archives committee has met at every Area Assembly for this term and has been very productive in its work. The Archives committee is also responsible for ensuring the protection of the anonymity of members, and the confidentiality of all A.A. records as well as following the copyright law of the United States (Title 17, United States Code).

However, history talks are a part of what we do so I would encourage everyone to become familiar with our history books as well as what our early members read. I would also encourage those that want to do this to create their own talks and presentations. This gives one a sense of accomplishment and ownership.

As always, I'm relying on God's continuing grace. K.C. H. SWTA Area Archives Chair





Service: The Third Legacy

“A.A.’s Twelfth Step, carrying the message, is the basic service that our fellowship gives; it is our principle aim and the main reason for our existence. A.A. is more than a set of principles; it is a society of recovered alcoholics in action. We must carry A.A.’s message; otherwise we ourselves may fall into decay and those who have not yet been given the truth may die. This is why we so often say that action is the magic word. Action to carry A.A.’s message is therefore the heart of our Third Legacy of Service.

“Yet some of us are still a bit confused about A.A.’s Third Legacy. We still ask, “Just what is this Third Legacy business anyhow? And just how much territory does ‘service action’ take in?”

“The answer is simple. An A.A. service is anything whatever that legitimately helps us to reach fellow sufferers. As we have seen, the Twelfth Step call is the greatest of A.A.’s services. But the publicity that caused the prospect to get in touch with us, the car we rode in, the gasoline we paid for, and the cups of coffee we bought him—all of these aids were necessary to make our call possible and effective. And this is only the start. Our services involve meeting places, hospital co-operation, Intergroup offices, and pamphlets and books. Services can require committees, delegates, trustees, and conferences. They include small voluntary money contributions so that the group, the area, and A.A. as a whole can function. They range all the way from the cup of coffee up to A.A.’s General Service Headquarters for national and international action. The sum of all these services is A.A.’s Third Legacy. Such services are utterly necessary to A.A.’s existence and growth.”

-Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age, Bill Wilson, Pg. 139-140



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 HCIA!!

Rosie S.. Special Events Coordinator

What is your name and your service position?

Rosi Sparmann, HCIA Board, Events Coordinator

How long have you been in AA?

25 years & 5 months

What is your home group?

Single Purpose Group

Who is your sponsor and why did you pick her?

Norma A., I chose her (or God chose for me) because I was attracted to her devotion to AA & God. I wanted what she has in regards to her spirituality; her experience of AA traditions, concepts, the BB, service work, and, emotional sobriety.

What other types of service- past or present- have you been involved in?

I served as a GSR, group secretary, Hospitality chair for PI/CPC area conference, District Archives chair, District committee hospitality chair for Area assembly, SWAARSA Co-chair for hospitality hosted by area in Corpus Christi, Area Archives Chair, and presently as District Newsletter chair and HCIA board member as events coordinator.

Do you think sponsoring makes a difference in your program?

Absolutely!! I give back what has been given to me freely and ensures one more day of sobriety. I grow in effectiveness and understanding walking hand in hand as we travel our spiritual journey. They bring joy, hope and the grace of God in my life as I see each one of us grow.

Was there a turning point in your sobriety that you think was significant?

Yes! After 19 years of sobriety I was diagnosed with Breast Cancer, which spiraled me down into a deep hole of self pity, resentment and fear. God intervened and brought me to my sponsor and her husband who pulled me out of the deep and lonely hole I put myself in. The next thing I knew, I became the GSR of the group, and I began to recover spiritually, mentally, and physically through the 12 steps and service to gain serenity and walk again in the sunlight of the spirit. I was reborn for a second time! A whole new chapter in my sobriety began in service!

Do you think there have been any changes in AA since you've been sober?

Yes! We've expanded our message to more and more countries/ cultures and continues to grow worldwide. But contributions have grown flat at every level in AA. AA is strong and healthy but we have a responsibility to support at every level with our monetary contributions, service, and to share our experience with members on the three legacies. Technology has provided information at our fingertips that, in the beginning of AA took weeks or months to

receive. However, social media has presented problems with honoring the traditions with instant photos and last names posted as members of Alcoholics Anonymous. In AA's experience this can be detrimental to our fellowship. In some cases we have neglected or been misinformed what our primary purpose is to help another alcoholic. Our experience makes us uniquely qualified to help another alcoholic. We speak with the language of the heart which we can relate to as an alcoholic. When a group diversifies to help those with other addictions or problems the magic & miracles dissipates, our message becomes watered down, and no longer carried with depth and weight. It is our responsibility to inform members and groups—we are not professionals or a program we can be finished and done with but rather a spiritual fellowship. It is a way of life in spirituality bringing us sobriety, happiness, joy, and a wonderful new life with miracles taking place all around us and for us!

What do you hope would be the best thing to come out of your service to the fellowship as an Intergroup Board member? -

As the coordinator of events, I hope to inform members in fun and exciting workshops we have planned to open our minds to all aspects of AA as a whole. Our first workshop of the series focused on the 7th tradition which was a huge success and very well attended. My hope is the presentations brought awareness to members and groups for the need to support all our service entities. The second workshop will pertain to treatment centers and our role to cooperate but not affiliate. Details and plans are still in the works.

We had the the Annual Old Timers Banquet on May 13th to honor our old timer members. There was a have a beautiful dinner (complimentary to those with 25 years or more), sobriety countdown, fellowship, and an excellent speaker. We head nothing but good things about this event.

As a board member I hope to support and foster the growth of HCIA. Intergroup is an important integral part of our fellowship in our community; it's the heart of AA in Austin and the surrounding area! My hope is that we continue to provide the myriad of services to Austin AA; most importantly to carry the message of hope and grace that we have been given for free!

Thank you,
Intergroup Volunteers!
May 2017

Office Volunteers:

Annika Z
Charles M
Charles McC
Dan H
David C
Glenn S
Jack W
Jeff K
Jill F
John B
Marty C
Murdo M
Nancy W
Norma A
Pat F
Pablo H
Robert C

Hotline Volunteers:

David S
Jeremy F
Christin C
Gordon K
Randy R
Laura M
John F
Mary T
Fred J
Reggy T
Tom K

Thank you, AA Groups!!
May 2017 Contributions

Allandale Group -	330.17
Bridge to Shore Group -	607.45
Central Group	110.00
Courage to Change	226.00
Driftwood Group	51.68
East Austin Group	128.00
Friday Nite Alive	26.55
Georgetown Group	256.36
Hair of the Dog	50.00
Into Action Group	35.00
Lakeway Group	138.62
Lighthouse Group	200.00
Marshall Ford Freedom Group	300.00
New Beginnings	214.00
North Austin 24 Hour Group -	150.00
Reading Is For Quitters	66.01
Reading Rainbow -	46.20
River Group	50.00
Sunshine Group	25.00
The Five Thirty Group	15.00
Western Trails	26.25
Westlake AA	300.00
Wimberley Group	180.00
Birthday Club Contributions	
Allandale Group - 3B	20.00
Birthday Club	164.40
Lambda Live and Let Live	36.00
Wimberley Group	10.00



Thank you, AA Groups and Individuals!!

Deaf Access Contributions

DAC Contribution Can	10.00
Allandale Group	50.00
Anonymous.	10.00
Anonymous.	10.00
Anonymous.	10.00
Anonymous.	10.00
Bridge to Shore Group	150.00
Georgetown Group	128.18
Lakeway Group	15.40
North Austin 24 Hour Group	50.00
Reading Rainbow	19.80
Westlake AA -	50.00
Wimberley Group	120.00

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