

Pass it on



From the Birmingham Intergroup Central Office of Alcoholics Anonymous

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The Great Email Address Hunt

Intergroup needs email addresses for newsletter subscribers and group contact people! The editors would like to email them each edition of *Pass it On* since paper copies are not available at this time. We have some addresses but are missing many. Please ask your friends to write to passitonbirmingham@gmail.com. We need their names, the names of the groups they represent, and the best email addresses for receiving newsletters and other information from Intergroup.

Service: Lessons and Spiritual Growth

BY: Anita M., Intergroup Chair

From crisis in our steering committee through response to Covid-19, I have been the chair of the Intergroup Committee for Districts six and seven. Events have often seemed beyond me, but my higher power and other recovering alcoholics have always shared knowledge, direction, and support. Here is my story about serving in this time of change.

After living in sobriety for four years, I became Chair for my Home Group. This small group with a lot of service history helped me BEGIN to learn about Business Meeting procedures to prepare me for later. Of course, procedures were simple, and many experienced members helped keep any order we needed.

Next, I started attending Intergroup meetings as an observer and interested party. Soon, I was nominated and elected to chair the Intergroup Committee. After asking, "What do I have to do?" I received a meeting outline and instructions to sit at the head table and call for reports at monthly meetings. "Pretty simple stuff" said this naïve, but willing servant. "LOL!" said my Higher Power.

I started chairing in January 2019. Our first workshop was scheduled for February and I was "asked" to sit on a panel defining the differences between Intergroup and District. Clueless, I asked around, surfed the web, and came to a basic understanding. Again, others in the program helped me. While learning the organizing vocabulary of AA, I began attending District Meetings to report on Intergroup and especially Central Office, which supports the whole District fellowship. This led me to become even more interested in service: AA has a **SERVICE MANUAL!** AND information kits for all service positions! I even attended the Southern States AA Service Assembly (SSAASA) last November. It was awesome! Even this background did not prepare me for recent events.

Continued to Page 2...

AA Terminology Terminal

BY: Sarah M.

AA works through representatives to serve each of the following types of groups and committees. The Home Group is the governing foundation of each of the committees.

Home Group: Individuals chair, make coffee, and take care of their meeting's needs. They send representatives to *District Committees* and elect one representative (GSR) to attend *District Meetings*.

District Committees, such as Public Information and Treatment/Corrections, carry the program to the Birmingham community and send representatives to:

Intergroup: The association of all *District Committees*. It maintains the Central Office, produces the newsletter, and oversees the Steering Committee.

District Meetings: Your group is part of a District that belongs to one of 93 *Areas* that make up the US/Canada General Service Conference. Your group's representative (GSR) attends District Meetings, discusses community concerns, and helps elect a *District Committee Member*. That person goes to the *Area Assembly*.

Area Assembly: the District Committee Members elect one person from the *Area* to go to the **General Service Conference**

Step Six: Became willing to have God remove all these defects of character.

Tradition Six: The AA group ought never lend the AA name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property, and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.

Service, Continued.

This March (2020), the Chair of the Answering Service was unable to complete his term. That seemed manageable because we already had volunteers to take after-hour calls, and I could distribute information packets to new people at the April Intergroup meeting. Unknown to me, however, the Steering Committee was in crisis related to accounting and other problems. That committee is largely responsible for the Central Office. It closed just as Birmingham went into Corona Virus Shutdown, and there was no one to answer the phones during the day. Fortunately, I could still help callers because the “Safer at Home” orders led to my transfer from an RN outpatient day job to a flexible night position. This gave me time to answer the phone. When it was time for the April Intergroup Meeting, however, I could not distribute information packets because in-person meetings were suspended, and we could gather only via Zoom. Despite those difficulties, individuals stepped in to take calls. I am grateful in two ways: for people who help, and for seeing first-hand how important the phone is to helping other alcoholics.

My role drastically changed by the middle of April. The Steering Committee dissolved when seven of nine members resigned; there were no longer three people to provide the quorum our bylaws require. That committee (also known as BICO for Birmingham Intergroup Central Office) is responsible to Intergroup, so as Chair, I was suddenly responsible for its duties. How was I going to keep the phones answered and literature available? Who would pay rent on the office and the copier? I spent SO MUCH time on my knees, asking for direction from God. I reached out to others with service and life experience in the Fellowship. God sent support and direction when I felt too new and unqualified to be credible.

Much has changed since April, and much continues to change. By the time District met on April 25, word of the crisis had spread, and we had tremendous participation. After several Intergroup and other meetings along with much consultation, we found a way for the committee to reform. This temporary committee includes members who returned and agreed to complete their terms. The membership did not intend this originally, but as the current bylaws are written, the membership has no voice in this decision. Regardless, BICO is working to create more transparency, keep any one person from assuming too many duties, and otherwise prevent future collapse. Intergroup is seeking resumes from people interested in serving on a new, permanent steering committee. For now, however, we can breathe.

Thank you: all who have served, have returned to service, have attended (sometimes marathon!) meetings, who have shared, been humbled, made amends, forgiven, and been forgiven in this challenging time. SO Many have helped! I owe my life to the Fellowship, and therefore to each of you, and especially to our Higher Power who leads us when we are open minded and willing!

We still have much work to do. People in this Fellowship have greatly encouraged me by helping to solve the problems we found when this crisis began. Many may have taken the Central Office, Steering Committee and Answering Service for granted; that work is not glamorous! Perhaps God has done for us what we could not do for ourselves by creating a situation that requires input from our whole membership and reminds us of our guiding principles. Our Primary Purpose is “to stay sober and help others to achieve sobriety.” In addition, “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” Remember: “hand” includes the organization beyond our home groups.

Service History Resume for Steering Committee Nominees

Name: _____

Sobriety Date and Home Group:

Group Service positions with years of service:

District Service positions with years of service:

Area Service positions with years of service:

Special skills, education, and/or business experience that will make you a suitable candidate for the Steering Committee:

12th Step work including: Carrying meetings to facilities, 12th step calls and sponsorship (this can be a yes or no) can be listed if you like.

Interested candidates should submit their Service History to the Central Office no later than **June 21st, 2020**. Service Histories can also be submitted to the Steering Committee members or returned via email. For mail in, please send the Service History to:
Birmingham Intergroup Central Office
RE: Service History
242 West Valley Avenue, Suite 211
Homewood, AL 35209

Seats being filled include:
Two Class A positions (Remainder of the term is 6 months)
One Class B position (Remainder of the term is 1.5 years)
One Class C position (Remainder of the term is 2.5 years)

Self-Supporting: Something to think about?

BY: Mary G (Updated by Sarah M.)

Much literature discusses the 7th Tradition: “Every group ought to be self-supporting, declining outside contributions.” Though money is secondary to spirituality we need to remember that it takes money to provide all the services we use in AA; Needs have only grown since I served as District Treasurer (2017-2018).

It starts with all members helping their HOME groups to be Self-Supporting. We provide money for:

- Rent--Zoom Rooms now and (we hope) physical ones soon.
- AA literature--for personal distribution now, and in meeting rooms later.
- Bills for P.O. Boxes now and soon for phones and utilities.
- Coffee and cleaning supplies. Several groups have kept or resumed in-person meetings.

However, we need to think further. Are WE supporting our District? It has the same general expenses as the groups, and it supports six service committees:

- * Archives
- * Grapevine
- * Treatment/ Accessibility Corrections
- * P.I. (Public Information) – C.P.C.
(Cooperate with Professional Community)
- * Web
- * Area—reimbursing D.C.M.’s for travel to Assemblies.

Our contributions fund **Intergroup**, the committee responsible for the steering committee, the newsletter, and the answering service. Though Intergroup gets some money from literature sales and special events, individual and group contributions are by far the most important.

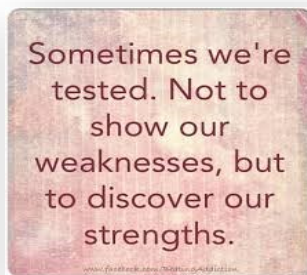
Home groups need to help outside Birmingham: Think about Area and the General Service Office (G.S.O.) They also need to be free from outside contributions. How and where do they get the money they need to supply all the services we AA members use?

It comes from Individuals and Group contributions.

When I was district treasurer, ONLY 40% of all groups in Districts 6 and 7 contributed.

During this pandemic, contributions have been down so much that General Service Office had to lay off many workers and take \$3 million from its Prudent Reserve Fund. For details, read the attached letter.

If you have an income, please help! You can find more information about Intergroups, Central Offices and Service Centers at www.aa.org.



Letter from the General Service Office, May 12, 2020

“These are the facts of our history that show the need at all times for a safe reserve fund in the Foundation. This is the money that guarantees the operation of A.A.’s world services, rain or shine.”

Language of the Heart, 139

May 12, 2020

Dear Conference members,

With so much happening over these past few weeks – including intense preparations for the 70th General Service Conference, committee meetings, board meetings, and other ongoing work in the office (in a virtual/telework environment) – the landscape across our organization seems to change every day.

Among these shifts have been the realities of our own financial situation. It’s no secret that businesses and organizations from every sector have felt the economic impacts of this global health crisis, and we are no different. As a result, due to steep declines over the past two months in revenue from group contributions and literature sales, management and the boards have increased our focus on costs and expenses of office operations.

To that end, on April 22, the General Service Office made a request to the Trustees’ Finance and Budgetary Committee and its chair, Leslie Backus, for an emergency drawdown of \$3 million from the Reserve Fund. This request was due to the decrease in book sales and contributions caused by the global pandemic. After a review of the cash flow analysis, the committee agreed to forward the request to the General Service Board. On Thursday, April 30, the General Service Board approved the \$3 million Reserve Fund drawdown. Over the past week the office has begun that process and will continue to access funds as they become liquid in our bank accounts.

The decision was made after reflecting upon the primary principle behind the prudent Reserve Fund that A.A. has maintained for decades: “To provide the financial resources necessary to continue the services of G.S.O. and the Grapevine in the event of emergency or disaster...” (The A.A. Service Manual, page S72). The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, especially in New York City and the downstate region, is a true public health

Letter, Continued

emergency. State and City regulations have restricted the operations of non-essential businesses since March. Our office at 475 Riverside Drive has been shut down to the nonprofit tenants since Friday, March 27, when we moved to 95% telework status for our employees, and there are no immediate indications of when this will change.

Further, the unexpected financial situation brought on by the public health crisis has required several layoffs or temporary furloughs of workers in roles that can no longer be covered by salary continuation. While this has been an incredibly difficult decision, our goal and responsibility is to maintain a sustainable, responsive organization to serve A.A.'s needs and requirements.

In addition to the objectives noted above, we are now focused on providing support for our General Service Conference, which will take place Saturday, May 16 to Tuesday, May 19. We will be utilizing a virtual platform to conduct Conference business, and our team has been demonstrating an "all hands on deck" approach to ensure that the event is successful for the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous. While this is not something we envisioned even a few months ago, I am so proud of the resiliency and incredible work that has gone into planning. More discussion and reports on G.S.O. and AA Grapevine finances will be shared with you at the Conference.

This information and all that will be reported at the Conference are intended to be shared with the Fellowship, to keep the groups informed on Seventh Tradition funding of needed services, so that a true group conscience can be achieved in this difficult time for all.

Sincerely, in love and service,

G. Gregory Tobin General Manager

Contact Information:

www.aa.org

Phone: (212) 870-3400

Fax: (212) 870-3003

P.O Box 459

Grand Central Station

New York, NY 10163

**Birmingham Intergroup Central Office, Inc.
Profit and Loss, May 2020**

Submitted by Mary G.

Income

400 Sales - Books & Literature	1,841.00
413 Sales - Variety Store Items	3.93
415 Sales - Miscellaneous	1,291.60
420 Revenue - Donations	1.50
Sales of Product Income	37.50
Total Income	\$3,175.53

Cost of Goods Sold

500 Cost of Sales - Books & Literature	1,563.25	
Cost of Goods Sold	Cost of Goods Sold	25.50
Total Cost of Goods Sold	\$1,588.75	

GROSS PROFIT \$1,586.78

Expenses

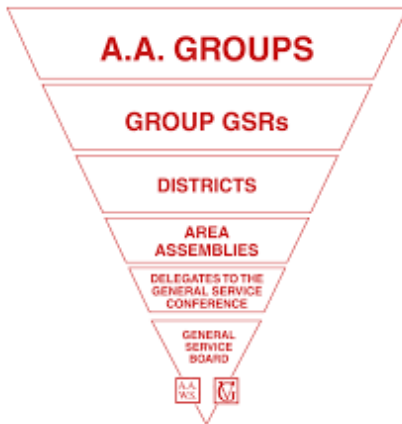
635 Dues & Subscriptions Expense	146.50
650 Office & Supplies Expense	
Copier Use	107.78
Total 650 Office & Supplies Expense	107.78

Continues on Page 5

Profit-Loss Statement, Continued

Expenses, Continued

660 - Rent	
660 Rent Expense - B&B Limited	495.00
Total 660 - Rent	495.00
680 Telephone Expense	133.62
QuickBooks Payments Fees	4.70
Uncategorized Expense	77.00
Total Expenses	\$964.60
NET OPERATING INCOME	\$622.18
Other Income	
700 Interest Earned	0.08
Total Other Income	\$0.08
NET OTHER INCOME	\$0.08
NET INCOME	\$622.26



From Home Group to World Service (Service Manual)



2020 GROUP INVENTORY

“The emphasis on inventory is heavy only because a great many of us have never really acquired the habit of accurate self-appraisal. Once this healthy practice has become grooved, it will be so interesting and profitable that the time it takes won’t be missed. For these minutes and sometimes hours spent in self-examination are bound to make all the other hours of our day better and happier.”

Page 89-90, *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* .

2020 District Inventory

On February 22, 2020, Linda W., Panel 67 Area 1 Past Delegate, facilitated a Districts 6 & 7 inventory. In the spirit of transparency and hope to use this information to grow as a community, I have provided some of the recommendations below.

Unique situation/Strengths

- Each district has positive attributes, and we are strengthened by our combined efforts.
- Be vigilant about separation of clubs, facilities, organizations, and
- A.A. As well, the difference between district and intergroup. **“Stay not affiliated with anything else.”**
- We have core A.A. members who remain involved even with spirit of rotation.
- Be sure to accommodate Spanish-speaking A.A. groups/members. **“Recognize and help by slowing down for translator/other language member.”**
- Understand the roles of different facets of structure (i.e. Central Office, Intergroup, Steering Committee, District) by reading literature, knowing bylaws, checking www.aa.org website. **“Intergroup and Steering Committee are interwoven...still have to function under Traditions.”**

Group participation

- Each group needs business meetings and a Group Service Representative (GSR). Try to get district meeting minutes to every GSR/group. Every GSR needs a kit. Ask DCM if you don't have one
- Each group needs a representative for each committee. These service positions include: Intergroup, Literature, Archives, PICPC, Web, Treatment and Corrections.
- Groups need to learn the importance of service structure and role of groups in survival of A.A. as a whole. **“The biggest thing is communication, both directions.”**
- Share the need for service positions in regular meetings and business meetings. **“Use the opportunity when asked for announcements.”** Announce that anyone interested can come to district, intergroup, and committee meetings.
- Groups can ask any committee chairs, DCMs, GSRs to come to meeting and share experience, strength, and hope.
- We need to do a better job of explaining service positions to newcomers and those interested. **“They need to Know what they are signing up for and its foundation in the Traditions.”**
- Encourage younger members and old-timers to get involved more. **“Willingness is required.”**

Personal Involvement

- Know your strengths. You may be better at some positions than others.
- “Go or grow.”**
- “Alcoholics need to know they're needed.”**
- Service work is important to all three legacies: service, unity, and recovery.
- Need to stay in “middle of boat” in A.A.
- “If you don't like the way something is, get in there and change it.”**
- Previous position holders can mentor new members. Our community acknowledged apathy.
- The group shared experience, strength, and hope about coordinating A.A. position with work commitments.

Sponsorship

- Most people are “Sponsored into service work.”
- Take sponsees to your service commitments. **“My sponsor took me to Area Assembly, and I was hooked.”**
- Offer to carpool, include sponsees in all opportunities. **“Treat them like sidekicks—let them feel invited.”**
- Improve your program while helping sponsees. (Continued)

District Inventory, Continued

Conclusion

- We need regular inventories in district and individual groups.
- On average, 50% group participation is normal (but we are below this). “Aim for half or a little more for group participation (at district level).”
- District needs more participation from groups and individuals.
- DCMs can make more effort to encourage group participation. “I went to every group...called DCM...called every committee chair, GSR.”
- Offer a workshop on Legacies.
- Make service work fun! “People need to want what we have.”
- **“Pretending to be perfect is not what A.A. is.”** Know your needs and strive to include everyone. Find out why people are not getting involved.

If you have any questions, feel free to reach out to your DCM. Michael S. is District Committee Member for District 7, and Russell M. is DCM for District 6. Their contact information can be found on www.birminghamaa.org.

In service,
Adrienne C.
District 6 & 7 Secretary

ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM PASS IT ON NEWSLETTER EDITORS:

- We are sorry that you did not receive a May *Pass It On* Newsletter. We hope to be able to send one each month from now on. The COVID-19 Pandemic and the local BICO concerns left the newsletter short handed and unable to publish an issue. Please feel free to contribute ideas and content as well as help with publishing and editing the newsletter. We can never have too much help!
- If you are interested in serving on Steering Committee, please fill out the Service History Resume (snapshot on Page 2) by June 21st. Here is the email for Central Office: alcoholicsanonybham@gmail.com
- If you are struggling to stay connected during the COVID-19 pandemic and want information on in-person and Zoom meetings, please email passitonbirmingham@gmail.com. The Bham Recovery page on Facebook also provides regular updates to Zoom and in-person meetings.



Photo taken from Beverly Hutchingson McNeff's email to Course in Miracles students