



A collection of useful information for new group representatives

Welcome new EVI Representatives

We are very glad to have you and your group participating in Emerald Valley Intergroup. Your presence is a sign that AA is working for you, your group, and in our community. The EVI Business Meeting is where the groups get together to support the variety of service committees that require combined effort, resources and support to carry the message of AA to the public, and to alcoholics. How best to do this, where we can improve, and getting people together with the work that needs done are our primary tasks. We also must deal with funding and finances for keeping the Intergroup office and our service committees functioning.

Where to find information about Intergroups

At the EVI Office, we have copies of the GSO guideline on Intergroups and central offices. We also have news letters from Intergroups in various parts of the country. The Grapevine often has articles on Intergroups. The EVI web site, www.efn.org/~eviaa has minutes from previous meetings, our bylaws and group contributions. There are hundreds of Intergroup web sites up around the country. If you are traveling, stop in and visit the local Intergroup – you'll see a bit of how its done there, and probably get directions to a meeting.

Where to find information about AA service work.

Take a look at “The Twelve Concepts for world service.” There are pamphlets at the office, its on our web site, and the full text is in “The AA Service Manual”. AA pamphlets also have useful information in them, both for those new in service, and those who have been around awhile.

What you can contribute

Your effort, skills, work, energy. We hope that you become so enthusiastic about doing service work that you drag your friends, spouses, and sponsor into it too.

Don't be shy about volunteering to serve on an EVI service committee, none of us knew how to do this stuff when we started, we learn by doing.

Take back to your group a clear report of EVI business, and keep them informed about volunteers needed. Also be sure and take enough copies of the EVI News to go around your home group.

If your group is having an event let us know, and contributions to the newsletter are always welcome. The Office also has bulletin boards and flier racks of upcoming events. If your group is changing location, or meeting time, let us know so the meeting book, news letter and web site can be updated. A big part of Intergroups responsibility is communication, and the EVI representative is the vital link in the chain.



AA: How can We help You?

*Paragraphs reprinted from a December 1994
AA Grapevine special feature on Intergroups -
Also in "Best of the Grapevine, Vol III"*

...That night, the woman walks into a beginners meeting. The room is full of warm light and laughing people, and she is indeed welcome there. For her, as for thousands of people, the first extraordinary piece in the mosaic of a sober life began with a phone call to a local intergroup .

It wasn't always so, however. In AA's infancy, questions from alcoholics seeking help were directed to "Headquarters" in New York City, where cofounder Bill W. and a few others answered the mail. But as the Fellowship grew, so did the need for local offices to handle requests for information. As Bill later put it, "Goaded by the sheer necessity of the situation, responsible old-timers in such areas would often hire a small office and a paid secretary."

Cleveland formed one of the earliest intergroups. Dr. Bob and the Good Oldtimers reports that by October 1939 a committee of seven was meeting once a month "to coordinate efforts regarding hospitalizations and sponsorships." Another early intergroup was in Chicago, where an AA named Sylvia used her \$700 alimony payments to rent a one-room office in the Loop and pay the (nonalcoholic) secretary. From there, Sylvia directed a stream of prospects to AA. Many groups within several hundred miles can trace their origins to the work of the Chicago Central Office -- including those in Green Bay, Milwaukee, and Minneapolis.

Today there are over 400 intergroups or central offices in the U.S. and Canada; ten new intergroups were formed in 1993. An intergroup acts as a clearinghouse for information about local groups and meetings, and is directly responsible to the groups it serves. In turn, these groups offer financial support, provide a volunteer base for Twelfth Step work, and -- through their intergroup representatives - - supervise policies and procedures.

RINGING OFF: THE HOOK

Intergroups are on the front lines of carrying the message to the alcoholic who still suffers. Here, the vitality of AA's Traditions is renewed on a daily basis as fundamental



questions are asked with incredible frequency: "Do I have to sign something when I join!" "What are the rules and regulations!" "Do I pay a membership fee!" "Do I have to give my name!" "Don't you AAs have to believe in God!" "I've been in prison -- does that matter!"

Intergroup phones are not only a direct link to the Fellowship for the still suffering alcoholic but also a lifeline for the traveler alone in a strange town and for those needing a meeting at an unforeseen time or place.

Like everything else in AA, intergroups manifest a great range in practice, policy, and procedure. What would be called inconsistency in a corporate entity is, in AA, a healthy diversity. Once a year, some of these diverse organizations rub elbows at the Central Office/Intergroup Seminars, instituted in 1986 by GSO and now sponsored by the intergroups themselves.

Intergroup Seminars often help to open up lines of communication between intergroups and the area general service structure. In theory, the work of intergroups runs parallel to the AA area service structure and operates in a spirit of cooperation not competition. In practice, relations between the intergroup and the area service structure may be congenial, cordial, or strained, depending on the locale. At issue are responsibilities and territories -- for example, of such standing committees as CPC, PI, or Corrections -- though in most locales, an attempt is made not to duplicate the work of committees. One intergroup office manager said that sometimes "there's a them-versus-us



mentality. The fear is -- don't step on my territory. Fortunately, service work gives us the chance to work through our fears!"

Mixing business and recovery is not always easy. Intergroups have many of the responsibilities and problems of other small businesses: hiring and firing of personnel, paying bills, maintaining inventory, buying supplies, and caretaking of facilities and equipment. But while businesses can be guided by questions of profits and marketing, intergroups must be guided by the Twelve Traditions and the group conscience as expressed by intergroup representatives. An intergroup's nonprofit status is not just a legal category; it's a spiritual requirement for an organization whose primary goal is helping AAs carry the message.

One of the difficulties about running an intergroup, explains Peggy B-C. of the Middle Tennessee Central Office, is that the intergroup "can't generate income as an ordinary business does. We have to maintain self-support status but we're required by the Fellowship to fit within spiritual guidelines." Baltimore's Susan K. points out that other nonprofit organizations have the ability to raise money -- an activity that alarms some AA members. Susan says, "Money is a dirty topic in AA. But it costs money to carry the message."

A work base that is primarily volunteer offers its own special problems. There is always the need to replenish the volunteer pool; recruitment and training are ongoing. WAIA's Lee D. says, "It's a constant challenge to find volunteers. Then it's mostly on-the-job training volunteers work alongside somebody else until they're ready." However, Cheryl S., assistant executive director of the Boston Central Service Committee, says that finding volunteers is rarely a problem: "Somebody's always out of work!"

Many intergroups find themselves struggling to maintain financial solvency, much less stability. Intergroup budgets generally derive from two major sources: group contributions and literature sales. One much-debated issue is whether intergroups should sell non-Conference-approved materials - for example, medallions (which are popular in many groups as a way to celebrate time in the program),

non-AA literature (such as that published by Al-Anon or Hazelden), or a wide variety of recovery items, such as jewelry, lapel pins, mugs, key chains, bumper stickers, and "birthday" cards. Many intergroups say that without the income from these items, they couldn't continue to operate. An informal survey of those present at the most recent Intergroup Seminar showed that about half sold non-Conference-approved material.

The Washington Area Intergroup Association is one of the intergroups that has chosen to sell a commercial item. Last year, although its prudent reserve was in good shape, its finances were "down." Manager Lee says: "We were afraid of a deficit. To earn more money, we decided to sell chips." The decision wasn't reached overnight; the issue had been in discussion for several years. Houston's Dick P. says that between sixtyfive and seventy percent of his total sales are of non-AA items. "We would just close our doors if we did not sell these items. And the groups want them -- they prefer one-stop shopping." Omaha Central Committee's office manager Bill S. estimates that one half of his sales are from non-AA items; only one-tenth of the intergroup's income derives from contributions.

REACHING OUT FOR HELP

Why should intergroups be struggling to keep in the black! Don't most groups contribute to their local intergroup!

The answer is no. Contributions are voluntary, and a contribution is not a requirement for being listed in an intergroup directory. Meanwhile, revenues to many branches of AA have decreased -- from group contributions to Grapevine subscriptions -- perhaps because of the economy.

In some areas, group contributions are down because the growth of new groups means smaller memberships which cannot support donations. Small groups may also have difficulty electing service workers -- including intergroup reps and this means the group doesn't get news about its local intergroup. Marlene S. of the Brevard (Florida) Intergroup says, "A lot of the meetings we list in the directory aren't actual groups they aren't registered, and they don't support the service structure or donations to New York or intergroup." Marlene hopes that one answer to the problem is to encourage DCMs to get groups registered.



Emerald Valley Intergroup Service Committees:

Our roster of committees; and their chairpersons. All our committees meet once a month, times and locations vary, ask at the office or call the chairperson if one sounds like your service opportunity.

For current contact names and phone numbers, please see the latest copy of the EVI News

Office Volunteer Coordinator

It is no small job keeping volunteers trained and scheduled to fill shifts at the office.

Service Openings: 4 hr shifts, once a week. Requires training session. The front line: handling calls and visitors, books and literature. You may be the first face in A.A. that a person looking for help sees.

Literature

Our Shipping and Receiving Department. Handles orders of Big Books, Pamphlets and other conference approved literature for groups, treatment centers and inventory at the office.

Service Openings: Committee members.

Answering Service

Whether it is a gal just rolled into town and needs a meeting, or a gruff, slurry voice calling AA for the first time, someone needs to answer the phone. When the EVI office is closed that person is a Diverter volunteer. Calls after office hours are diverted to a volunteers home. They answer questions, find meetings and arrange for someone on the twelve step list to call. Groups volunteer to take shifts in this vital work.

Service Openings: Call if you want to be added to the 12 Step List: In particular, we need folks available for calls/12 Step calls during the day, especially women.

Activities

Organizes the popular speaker meeting/dance events, picnics and whatever else may occur to them. Can use only energetic help!

Service Openings: Committee members.

Public Information

Lets the public know that A.A. is in our community. Places discrete ads in print and radio. Also goes out to our High Schools and Middle Schools to give kids the straight dope on alcoholism and A.A. Volunteers are always needed.

Service Openings: Committee members to take/go on informational meetings to schools. Also, if you have a knowledge of or enthusiasm for getting some public service announcements on TV/radio, we could use your help.

Cooperation with Professional Community

Informs Doctors, Lawyers, Counseling Professionals, etc. of what A.A. does (and doesn't) do to help alcoholics.

Service Openings: Committee members.

Outreach Committee

Visits meetings, helps new groups become informed about Intergroup, and local service

Service Openings: Committee members.

Communications: (coordinating Newsletter, Website, and Meeting Book / Publishing.)

Newsletter: Content always welcome; list your event, notices of new meetings, stories, etc. Could use reporters. We will be working on circulation, so look for it at meetings - ask for it!

Service Openings: Reporters and production help

Website: Maintains our Intergroup website, a resource for those looking for AA, up to date meeting info, etc.

Service Openings: Contributors, and web saavy (we train) help.

Meeting Book, and Publishing: Keeps track of meeting changes, and prepares the type setting for printing the meeting book, and other EVI publications.

Service Openings: Desk top publishing knowledge helpful, good eye for detail important.



Service Committees, continued

H & I (coordinating Hospitals and institutions - CTF, Corrections)

Hospitals

Brings meetings into the following:

Lane Psychiatric Hospital

Johnson Unit, Sacred Heart Hospital

VA Clinic

Service Openings: Speak at a meeting. Simple and effective service work.

Cooperation with Treatment Facilities

Brings meetings and informational panels into

Carlton House, Willamette Family Center and

Serenity Lane treatment centers

Service Openings: speakers, committee members

Corrections

Community Corrections Center/Job Release [5th Avenue, Eugene]

Lane County Jail Proper [5th Avenue, Eugene]

Pathways [Centennial Blvd., Eugene]

Alma Forest Work Camp [Alma]

Serbu Detention Center

Service Openings: All above facilities can use speakers, weekly secretaries. Check with the Committee Chair or Outside Sponsor for requirements, and if clearance forms are required. For some of them you might want to be warrant free.

Federal Corrections:

Service Openings: Organizes teams to take meetings to the Federal Penitentiary in Sheridan.

EVI Archivist

Keeps track of meeting minutes and collects and maintains local AA historical materials, printed and some taped stories from some of our old timers

EVI Speaker Meeting

Brings in outside speakers, and a few locals who can talk to share their experience, strength and hope. 2nd Saturday of the month at Grace Community Church.

Service Openings: help with the Speaker Meeting.

Steering Committee

Prepares agenda for meeting, oversees day to day functioning of EVI, deals with particulars not requiring group attention (printing meeting books, cash flow, etc.) Also seeks input for larger issues facing EVI, and refines or implements proposals for the business meeting.

Gratitude =
participation





What you can contribute:

We also need your ideas and enthusiasm for how local service to the alcoholic who is still suffering may be improved. Suggestions accompanied by willingness to pitch in and help are especially valued.

What your group can contribute

In a word, volunteers. Finances are always tight at EVI, but are not in as short a supply as tireless, enthusiastic volunteers willing to work unacknowledged at humble tasks for the benefit of the alcoholic who still suffers. In particular, we need both folks with a year or three of sobriety, and those with ten or twenty. If you are getting a little used to being sober, and life has lost some of its luster – volunteer! Many of us have found our gratitude in participation.

At your home group business meeting:

Ask your home group members to read (or reread) the pamphlet "The A.A. Group".

Elect an Intergroup Representative to attend and report back on EVI meetings. Elect a G.S.R. to attend and report back on District and Area meetings

Explain in your home group business meeting what Intergroup, District and Area are, and what they do, for the benefit of your newer members.

Take an inventory of service work your group is doing, and encourage home group members to participate in specific areas of service your group is not represented in or pick an area of service to focus on as a group.

If you see a service need that someone in your home group, or one of your sponsees would be good at, encourage them ... heck, bully them!

At your home group meeting:

Have your EVI Rep, and GSR announce service openings at both your home group business meeting, and at the end of your regular meetings.

On your literature table, have copies of The EVI News, Oregon Area Newsletter, and Box 459, as well as current fliers. Many groups keep meeting books on hand for newcomers. Also check the EVI web site www.efn.org/~eviaa/ for current service openings, as well as new meetings, etc.

In announcing the seventh tradition, be clear that the money goes to pay rent, provide literature, and support A.A. Service locally and nationally. If your meeting is small, and barely makes its rent out of the basket, pass the basket a second time for Intergroup and Area, or sign up home group members to become EVI Faithful Fivers. (Individuals who support Intergroup with a \$5 a month donation.)

Communicate!

The phone is our friend. If you or your group have any questions about intergroup, or service opportunities, please call. Our Intergroup chairperson, vice-chair, and at-large steering committee members can be reached at their home numbers, and will be happy to field a call. If you need more information or have general questions on a specific committee, feel free to call the committee chairperson, or attend their committee meeting.

Emerald Valley Intergroup Office
1259 Willamette St. Eugene, Oregon 97401
Mon/Fri 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM
Saturday 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM (541) 342-4113

Emerald Valley Intergroup Business Meeting
Second Monday Monthly
6:30 PM, EVI
1259 Willamette St.



What you can contribute, continued

Diverter and 12 Step List:

Answering the AA phone after office hours. This is usually taken on by a group, one evening every two weeks. The person answering the phone handles routine inquiries about meeting times, etc., and takes a name and number to pass on to someone available on the twelve step list. We also need people on the twelve step list who are available during the day for calls that come into the office. This may be the first time someone has called AA. That we are there and ready to provide help is essential.

Speaking at facilities, H & I:

This is service work people can do once, or twice a year, or once or twice a month. There are opportunities for men, women, young folks, old folks, people who have spent a little time as a guest of our state, federal or local government, etc. In short, we need all sorts of AA members who are willing to take a little of their time to share their experience with those in need. Some of these seeds planted take root, and many of us who are sober have someone to thank for taking the time to share their hope.,

Speaking at Schools, P. I.

Many kids have experience with alcoholics - not necessarily pleasant. It is important to share our experience with them. The response can bring tears to ones eyes.

Volunteering at the Intergroup Office:

Volunteering at the office is easy and rewarding. We are looking for folks who can put in a four hour shiftevery week, morning or afternoon. If you have between three weeks and thirty years of sobriety, you may be eligible to serve in this important work.

A few office notes:

All our committees have mailboxes just inside the back office. If you leave something for someone, be sure and call them to let them know it is there, as not everyone checks their mailbox frequently.

We do try and keep track of copies made on the copier, if you are doing committee work, note number of copies and committee on form provided.

If you have committee work that needs a flier, etc. you can use the office computer. If you need help, ask please! You may have to arrange a time with someone. Computer is for EVI/AA business only..

Stop by for a cup of coffee!

The EVI web site:

If you have access to the internet, the Intergroup web site has several pages up, including:

- Current (updated) meeting list
- Statewide meeting info or links
- EVI business meeting minutes
- EVI Newsletter
- Events and Literature
- Service Committee Information
- and a good bit more.

The web address is

<http://www.efn.org/~eviaa>

For most browsers you can skip the "http://" part. The squiggle (~) before eviaa ~ is called a tilde, and is the key in the upper left corner of the keyboard right next to the exclamation point (!). If you are not computer equipped, you can check it out at the office, or the local library.

What is Emerald Valley Intergroup?



A.A. Central Offices or Intergroups trace their origins to the early 1940's. The Saturday Evening Post article in 1941 launched a flood of interest in A.A. and some way of responding to requests for help and information was needed.

Today there are about 450 intergroups in the U.S. Half of all conference approved literature printed is distributed by intergroups. When an alcoholic picks up a phone to call A.A., it is usually an intergroup volunteer who answers. Intergroups serve a vital and recognized role in A.A. Working together, groups and individual A.A. members ensure the hand of A.A. is there.

Emerald Valley Intergroup was formed to coordinate service in the Lane County and Eugene Springfield area, comprising portions of Districts 6,19,20,33, and 34. It is supported by group and individual contributions and volunteers from our area. The services it provides reach still suffering alcoholics of our area and visitors to our community.

EVI, in common with most intergroups in the country, has had its growing pains. Intergroups occupy an uneasy ground between the ideals and traditions of A.A., and the necessity of paying rent and bills, and supporting the many service activities that require funding to function. It is a complex small business, run by volunteers and the group conscience of EVI reps. It shouldn't work. None are more aware of the conflicts than those of us who volunteer at EVI. It is an easy situation to armchair quarterback, not so easy to find substantial agreement on solutions.

Each Intergroup wrestles with these issues, and solutions vary widely. Some Intergroups sell large amounts of non-conference approved books and merchandise, others (like us) none at all. Some areas pass a second basket at meetings for intergroup contributions, others have subscription drives to solicit individual monthly contributions. Money is a difficult topic in A.A. - . Maybe together we can get an active enough A.A. Community that answers come a little easier, and the burden rests lightly on more of us.

We need your participation, your trust, and your input on an ongoing basis. We who serve are glad of what has been accomplished. We appreciate the efforts of those who served before us. We are mindful that there is much more that could be done to reach alcoholics locally.

I am responsible...

**When anyone, anywhere,
reaches out for help, I want the
hand of A.A. always to be there.**

And for that: I am responsible.

