



THE WINNER'S CIRCLE

www.aarichmond.org

Richmond Intergroup Monthly Newsletter

Richmond, VA

My Experience as Intergroup Chair

Anna H. has been the Richmond Intergroup Chair for the past two years; her term ends this month. Sober since July 18, 2008, her home group is Bon Air Big Book.

I first got involved in Richmond Intergroup service through the usual way—a resentment.

It was early 2010. As an Intergroup rep for my home group, I had spent a few months now packed into the old meeting location on Broad Street listening to the same serious, soft-spoken man repeatedly attempting to pass the torch on his Treatment Chair commitment to no avail. He explained that he should have rotated out a few months ago but had not found a successor. He was willing to continue the important role until one could be found, but he looked around earnestly, encouraging people to consider taking on the commitment. The room kept falling silent and he kept nodding and walking back to his seat encumbered. My irritation grew as I thought about how unfair and silly it was that no one was willing to step up. So, one night, I did. I became the new Treatment Chair that night and probably felt pretty good about myself, notwithstanding the accompanying fear. I had previously volunteered with the food committees for an Intergroup dance and picnic, but I had never done anything approaching leading a large committee like Treatment. What had I gotten myself into?

Fast forward 14 years and it seems I have gotten myself into a long relationship with Richmond Intergroup that, like the best relationships, has challenged me, comforted me, and enhanced my sobriety in ways both expected and unexpected. Having gone on to serve as the Intergroup Vice Chairman, Activities Chair, and two tours on the Steering Committee, I have most recently had the privilege of serving as the Intergroup Chairman for the past two years. It seems that I am coming to an end of sorts, at least for now, from this quirky institution I love so well, so it's a good time to reflect on everything it's taught me.

Intergroup is an interesting place. With its position outside the AA service structure, but ever-ready to help groups do things better done on a centralized level, I like to think of Intergroup hovering somewhere on the threshold of a door or on the outskirts of the crowd, much like my awkward alcoholic self. Kind of a misfit, maybe, never in the spotlight, but definitely here when you need us! The vice principal of RVA alcoholics.

But jokes aside, an intergroup exists, as the GSO pamphlet says, as part of a “partnership among groups in a community . . . to carry out certain functions common to all the groups – functions which are best handled by a centralized office . . .” It is “usually maintained, supervised, and supported

NOTICE!

THE WINNER'S CIRCLE is Published Online the 1st of every month.

Email the WC editor with any questions or story ideas:

winnerscircle@aarichmond.org

And PLEASE Spread the Word!

Please let your home groups know that the Winner's Circle is available online.



Click triangle for Richmond area meetings on the Intergroup website

All stories in The Winner's Circle are original and written by Greater Richmond Area AAs

'... and with the help on an impeccable team'

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by these groups” and serves to “aid the groups in their common purpose of carrying the A.A. message to the alcoholic who still suffers.”

MEMBER DISTRICTS: 18, 29, 36, 37, 43

So, Richmond Intergroup exists to support its member districts—currently Districts 18, 29, 36, 37, and 43. It pools resources to do things that are easier to collectively for a metropolitan area than they are at the group or district level. This includes Intergroup’s 24-hour hotline where callers can always reach an alcoholic; its website at aarichmond.org; the Winner’s Circle newsletter; publication of “Where and When” paper meeting directories; sale of books; storage space and maintenance of Richmond AA historical material; and an office with a full-time employee where people can – and often do – show up as newcomers just to speak with another alcoholic.

As a result of the business functions that Intergroup undertakes, it is organized as a business entity—a non-profit corporation. This status allows Intergroup to do things like pay an employee and enter into contracts for a website, office space, etc. It also comes with the responsibilities of running a small business. Intergroup has to file income and sales taxes, have unemployment, maintain a business license, requires liability insurance, and needs to manage and pay its employee and his healthcare stipend. Most of the work of “running the business” is done by trusted servant volunteers, including Intergroup’s officers and its Steering Committee.

SUPPORT NOT DUPLICATE DISTRICTS

Intergroup also has several committees, most of which are designed really to function as liaisons with the corresponding district committees. Our Treatment Committee, for example, doesn’t go out and create treatment connections and meetings in addition to or in competition with district treatment meetings. Instead, it serves to connect the treatment committees of our five districts together, helping them to share ideas, resources, and plans. Intergroup’s Treatment Committee also assists districts with events, when asked. It serves as a central messaging board to communicate treatment news and requests for volunteers from one district to the other districts in our community and to the groups at monthly meetings. Intergroup does have some committees, such as Activities and Archives, that operate independently—the former planning Intergroup events like our Founders’ Day Picnic and New Year’s Eve Dance, and the latter pre-

serving and showing local AA archived memorabilia. But most of the committees are contemplated to be a sort of “super-committee” that brings all the district committees together.

So, would you say that a lot more is going on behind-the-scenes than the once-a-month Intergroup meetings might have you believe? I would agree wholeheartedly. The meetings are a great way for the groups to participate and be represented. We have lively discussions and votes on issues ranging from Intergroup’s yearly budget to updating Intergroup’s website. But, there is a lot more in store for those who venture into committee and officer work.

For example, I lovingly refer to my last two years as Intergroup Chairman. I have had a lot of experiences to learn, to grow, and frankly, to freak out. But, I’ve been left with a deeper appreciation for my sobriety, my understanding of the Traditions, and my sober relationships.

HAD SOME ‘ISSUES’ TO SORT

When I first came on as Chairman, we had a couple of issues to sort out. Intergroup had inadvertently missed a rent increase and had been paying at a lower rate for a year, resulting in a new, large bill. We had issues with both our sales tax and income taxes having been filed late for a time, resulting in late fees. We needed to renew our business license. Our newly elected Treasurer had significant medical issues arise and had to step down. Our business books got interesting. It was a big crash course in turning it over, to be sure. This kind of problem, where information and organization get muddled, seems to have beet Intergroup over the years – why? Probably a number of factors but mainly that the main job of running the corporation falls on the Treasurer and the Chairman, who are volunteers, not necessarily savvy small-business people. It is a big job and we can always use more experienced people to lend a hand.

In any event, with the help of an impeccable team of officers and Steering Committee members, we meddled through it. We are alcoholics after all, and in my personal experience, I generally get mad, but not absent. If I left, how would I keep my resentments fresh and make sure y’all were doing it right? Just kidding (sort of).

WHAT WE ACCOMPLISHED

But, seriously, we got a lot accomplished as an Intergroup these past two years and I am proud of our community.

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... results of our Intergroup Inventory

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We managed to get all the aforementioned problems resolved and to avoid IRS late fees. Our new Treasurer, Sara R., cleaned up our books with awesome precision. We determined that we were paying an unnecessarily high amount to process credit cards for books sales, got out of that contract, and started using a much cheaper Square device. We cancelled a lease with a large printer/copier that we don't need these days, post-COVID, when we don't print as much. We started inviting our district DCMs to some of our Intergroup Steering Committee meetings, to encourage dialogue. We held our first Intergroup Community Day event, where we had current VAC Cooperation with Intergroup Chair James G. speak to about his service history and John B. of District 29 leading a Traditions talk. Four of our area DCMS attended. Our Winner's Circle took off under Sandra H., who worked hard to get the stories of local AAs into our hands each month. Following the final two fabulous events orchestrated by our outgoing Activities Chair Sam M., we had our new Chair Sarah W. step in to run her first event, taking our Founders' Day Picnic to Byrd Park for the first time. Our Archives Chair Ben A. communicated with the VAC Archives Office and made a nice display at District 29's Old Timer's Breakfast.

NEW WEBSITE

Further, after approximately 20 years without a major upgrade, we also overhauled our Intergroup website. This process was spearheaded by a motion from the floor of an Intergroup monthly meeting. The amazing efforts of Karen H. and Rad T. of our Web Committee have led to a site with some great new features, a focus on the newcomer, and an easier-to-use, modern look. We also have added Google analytics for directions to meetings. Importantly, because the site was built using Word Press, it is a more accessible system not only for users, but also for volunteers who maintain it. It won't require complex coding knowledge to run, making it easier to support. Because Intergroup now has control of our domain and our own account with a web host, we also don't have to worry about being financially self-supporting. While there continue to be kinks to work out with the new site, we are excited to have a system that will more closely reflect the types of websites that newcomers are used to seeing and using these days.

TAKING A LOOK AT OURSELVES

Finally, a big accomplishment that leaves us the oppor-

tunity for more work and transformation was our Intergroup Inventory last month, in June. This was our first inventory since 2019. Former VAC Delegate Michaelene F. did a wonderful job serving as our facilitator, keeping us on-track and asking ourselves probing questions. A central theme that we discussed was that a lot of people do not know what Intergroup does and do not seem to feel a part of Intergroup. They might know Intergroup has an office and a phone, but don't know much else about what Intergroup does beyond needing money. It isn't clear to people why they should get involved or why they should have enthusiasm for Intergroup. Monthly meetings seem boring and there isn't a clear focus on what we are doing and why. Additionally, people don't seem to feel a part of a community at Intergroup like they do at their district. As a result, we have problems engaging people, and, in particular, in getting and maintaining active committee chairs. It was brought up that our Intergroup By Laws are also approaching 20 years old and our committee guidelines are additionally dated and need revamping.

NEEDS CHANGED AFTER COVID?

It was also discussed that maybe the needs of our districts and groups have changed since COVID. Intergroup might consider whether having committees that overlap with district committees (Treatment, Corrections, CPC/PI, etc.) is still helpful. Is the kind of liaison, all-district committee relevant today, or do districts mainly communicate among themselves without Intergroup's help? Would it better serve our community if Intergroup got rid of duplicative committees, and created a smaller number of committees concentrating on efforts that districts do not do, or that districts specifically ask for help in addressing (for example, a Richmond-wide Bridging the Gap effort)? Some people also asked whether streamlining Intergroup's other services would be helpful, like the number of office hours it offers or its book selling endeavors.

An overall consensus was that Intergroup is currently suffering from a kind of identity crisis, unsure of what it should be going forward.

We determined that Intergroup needed to make some decisions about its functions. A first order of business would be re-writing the Intergroup ByLaws to reflect current practices and any new directions decided upon in terms of streamlining Intergroup. Re-writing new committee guidelines would also be a crucial step. Work on

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'... asked what I learned as Chair ...'

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“knowledge transfer” type documents would be helpful, such as standards of procedure for our office worker and important tasks and deadlines for our officers.

INCREASE ENGAGEMENT

We discussed efforts to get new people engaged, such as “New Intergroup Rep” training nights and pizza nights. Perhaps having a liaison specifically to each district from Intergroup would be helpful. And we also discussed the issue of our hybrid meeting setup, with many people indicating that they thought a return to an in-person only monthly meeting would promote fellowship and a sense of unity. The idea that we could do more at Intergroup to promote service sponsorship was also suggested, as was the idea that we should have our old officers stay on for a period of time to train new officers. Efforts as simple as providing “cheat sheet,” simplified versions of Robert’s Rules to attendees might also give people the confidence they need to feel like they know how to participate. Another humble suggestion was that we make sure to be positive in our communications about Intergroup, drumming it up as a place where people can have fun and enhance their sobriety.

Looking at ourselves is never easy, whether on an individual basis or on a group level. But I am grateful that we took a much-needed look at our causes and conditions here at Intergroup. It is such a better way to live than the alternative I experienced for so many years, hiding from the truth and stunting myself. Our next steps will likely be to appoint ad hoc committees to look into each topic and propose solutions. So, there will be some wonderful opportunities for service coming up!

LESSONS AS CHAIR

I’ve been asked what I have learned while being Chairman of Richmond Intergroup. I know it sounds cliché, but I think that the biggest thing I have learned is how many dedicated, wonderful friends in sobriety I have around me. I have been frustrated, sure, scared even, at times, but I have never been alone. For the most part, even when I made mistakes, people didn’t make things personal; they just quietly shared experiences that helped me learn, grow, and move on. We have some amazing people around us who care greatly for the health of our community and the alcoholics we’ve yet to meet and I am continuously inspired by them. I have learned how

important it is to have events like inventories where an organization considers its purpose. I know that, early on, I never considered that maybe people weren’t sticking around in committee positions because they felt lost as to what Intergroup does and felt alienated from the whole place. I’ve learned to reflect the enthusiasm I want to see in others. It can be easy, I think, when you’ve been sober and doing service for a while, to forget that being drawn to service requires a special sense of attraction, an ability to make people feel a part of something important and shared. I can’t take for granted that everyone is going to love this weird little place like I do. I have to have my actions match what’s inside.

‘NOTHING LIKE RUNNING A MEETING OF ALCOHOLICS TO TEACH YOU ...’

Along the same lines, I think I have learned some things about leadership. I believe my capacity for patience has increased—which is no easy feat! I’ve learned that I get so much farther with getting people to do things if I ask rather than tell, if I make an effort to get to know them and to see where they are coming from, asking them how I can help. I’ve learned to listen more than I talk, in many situations, which is very hard for me. There is nothing like running a meeting full of alcoholics to teach you to live in the present. I’ve learned to take some of the hard tasks for myself and always be seen working along with other people. I’ve gotten better at knowing when to ask for suggestions and when to make them, particularly if there’s a bunch of different opinions going around and nothing is getting done. I’ve gotten to the brink of some anger and then remembered this is all just about sobriety and I am free today, so this is all a gift. I don’t need to take myself so seriously! I think I already had come terms with the fact that have all the answers, but I have had it drummed into me time and time again that people don’t need leaders to have all the answers. Instead, they just need leaders to be honest, patient, and willing to help work things out.

Overall, I have learned that with my higher power and Richmond AA, I can do hard things. Me, a person who never thought she’d live to see 30, can be not only sober, but relatively useful and among friends. That’s a pretty good deal. Thanks for my sobriety, Richmond Intergroup. I’ll be seeing you. #

—Anna H.

AUGUST ANNIVERSARIES

Date	Celebrant	Yrs	Group
8/23	Diana L	2	AFTW Online
8/26	Nancy C	12	AFTW Online
8/4	Lisa O	10	Belles of the Bar
8/6	Anne G	20	Belles of the Bar
8/18	Jean H	9	Belles of the Bar
8/23	Marjorie S	9	Belles of the Bar
8/31	Sadeqa J	5	Belles of the Bar
8/4	Rice S	12	Bon Air Big Book
8/12	Brian McK	3	Bon Air Big Book
8/15	Carrie R	12	Bon Air Big Book
8/5	Paula B	3	Common Bond
8/27	Nancy G	3	Common Bond
8/7	Ron S	10	Courage
8/12	Doug E	28	Hanover-Ashland Group
8/12	Lisa M	7	Hanover-Ashland Group
8/14	Vic V	7	Hanover-Ashland Group
8/15	Darren M	7	Hanover-Ashland Group
8/17	Cheryl E	15	Hanover-Ashland Group
8/18	Wayne R	36	Hanover-Ashland Group
8/27	Hollis P	12	King William Crossroads
8/3	Heather S	1	Miracles on Monday
8/3	Jamie S	1	Miracles on Monday
8/15	Marilyn I	25	Miracles on Monday
8/31	David R	4	Miracles on Monday
8/1	Steve W	12	Principles Group
8/8	Chris T	17	Recovering Parents
8/7	Heather H	2	Serenity Seekers
8/23	Mary D	10	Serenity Seekers
8/24	Becky S	19	Serenity Seekers
8/1	Mitch P	1	Suffered Enough
8/3	Penny K	10	Suffered Enough
8/8	Justin R	6	Suffered Enough
8/8	Tiffany W	27	Suffered Enough
8/13	Jane C	25	Suffered Enough



Date	Celebrant	Yrs	Group
8/15	Karen K	12	Suffered Enough
8/19	Nelson R	44	Suffered Enough
8/22	Jamie M	8	Suffered Enough
8/25	Roy E	20	Suffered Enough
8/29	James H	17	Suffered Enough
8/30	Jessica H	2	Suffered Enough
8/31	Lenny L	20	Suffered Enough
8/17	Ty B	26	Westhampton BB /12&12
8/25	Michael Sch	1	Westhampton BB /12&12
Late Arrivals			
7/15	Eric C	6	Bon Air Big Book

**PLEASE SEND ANNIVERSARIES TO EDITOR AS SHOWN
—WITH THE NUMBER OF YEARS SOBER. THANKS!**

DEADLINE for AUGUST anniversaries: AUGUST 20, 2024

Send to: winnerscircle@aarichmond.org

RICHMOND INTERGROUP

TREASURER'S REPORT SUMMARY

JUNE 2024		
TOTAL INCOME	TOTAL EXPENSES	+/- NET INCOME
\$7668.62	\$7,491.64	176.98
INCOME		
Group/Individual Contributions		\$4,263.03
Sales Receipts		\$3,405.32
Current Month CC Fees		\$ -
Other		\$ -
Interest		\$0.27
Total Income		\$7,668.62
EXPENSES		
Rent		\$1,306.99
Phone		\$278.65
Payroll		\$2,681.68
Payroll Taxes		\$915.39
State taxes (Sales)		\$197.81
Health Insurance		\$700.00
Chips & medallions		\$81.00
AA Literature		\$734.32
Where & When		\$ -
Office expenses		\$111.84
Activities		\$ -
Accounting Expenses		\$41.00
CC Fees/Bank Fees		\$22.96
Other (Annual Liability Insurance)		\$420.00
Total Expenses		\$ 7,491.64
NET for Month of JUNE 2024		
		\$176.98

JUNE 2024		
DONATIONS		
Date	\$Amount	Group
6/3/24	350.00	Never Alone
6/4/24	25.00	Happy Joyous & Free
6/4/24	50.00	Glen Allen Group
6/4/24	380.82	On Awakening
6/5/24	2.00	A Faith that Works
6/5/24	70.00	Big Book Thumpers
6/5/24	30.00	Early Morning Serenity
6/7/24	81.13	The 2220 Group
6/10/24	100.00	Downtowner BYOL
6/13/24	200.00	Greenwood Commuters Group
6/13/24	20.00	Not Alone - Farmville
6/18/24	80.00	Tues/Thurs Beginners
6/18/24	50.00	Awakenings
6/19/24	200.00	Clearing the Wreckage
6/20/24	500.00	Road to Serenity
6/20/24	125.00	Dr. Bob Saw It Too
6/21/24	11.00	Happy Joyous & Free
6/21/24	45.00	Outlaw Safecrackers
6/23/24	2.00	Awakenings
6/24/24	304.00	Woodlake Group
6/24/24	391.03	Principles Group
6/25/24	100.00	St. John's Group
6/25/24	100.00	Daily Reprieve
6/28/24	318.55	Road to Serenity



Thank you!

Disbursement Info

After group expenses are met, suggested formula for disbursement is:

50% Richmond Intergroup, Inc.
5310 Markel Road, Ste 108
Richmond, VA 23230

10% Virginia Area Committee
VAC Treasurer
P.O. Box 1130
Locust Grove, VA 22508
online: www.aavirginia.org

NEW ADDRESS

30% General Service Office
Post Office Box 2407
James A Farley Station
New York, NY 10116-2407
Online: www.aa.org

NEW ADDRESS

10% Your local service district:

District **18** City of Richmond
P.O. Box 14586
Richmond, VA 23221

District **29** South of the James River
P.O. Box 36204
Richmond, VA 23235

District **36** District 36 Treasurer
5130 Double Bridges Rd
Meherrin, VA 23954

District **37** Northeast of Richmond
P.O. Box 573
Sandston, VA 23150

District **43** Northside Richmond
P.O. Box 28442
Richmond, VA 23228

District **44** West Richmond
P.O. Box 71211
Richmond, VA 23255-1211

Richmond Intergroup

Over 65 Years of Service

Established June 1955

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Office is now open normal business hours

Winner's Circle

RICHMOND INTERGROUP TRUSTED SERVANTS

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Corrections		
CPC/PI		
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12-Step Call List Ride Coordinator	Matt H.	
Treatment Facilities		
Website		web@aarichmond.org
Winner's Circle	Sandra H.	winnerscircle@aarichmond.org



Click triangle for Richmond area meetings on the Intergroup website

MEETINGS & ACTIVITIES

**FOR NEW MEETINGS
AND ACTIVITIES:
VISIT OUR
NEW WEBSITE**

<https://aarichmond.org/events/>