

Area *H*ighlights

Summer 2015
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areahighlights@al-anon.org

WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE: **Living Our Spiritual Principles:** *Expanding Our Vision*

Viviendo nuestros principios espirituales
– Ampliando nuestra visión

Vivons nos principes spirituels
– Élargissons notre vision



Suzanne M., Associate Director of Member Services—Conference

Throughout this year's World Service Conference (WSC), members explored ways in which the 2015 Conference theme affects worldwide Al-Anon. All of the WSC sessions illustrated the theme—from the Policy discussions on memorial contributions to the Finance Committee's presentation. The talks by the International Representative and the outgoing Conference members did so as well.

Connie W., the Panel 53 Delegate from Montana, shared the following:

“I was encouraged to become involved in service fairly early on. I began service within my group, then district, and on to Area meetings. My life expanded as I met more and more wonderful people in recovery, and I learned more about the tools of this program and how to use them in my life. My life and my family life improved in amazing ways.

“At one time, I thought I could keep my home and my profession separate, however, you all know that is not possible. Therefore, I took these tools and principles, especially the Traditions, into my professional life too. It was demonstrated to me over and over again how these principles work in all of our affairs!

“There came a day when my husband and I decided that we were able to retire and enter a new phase of life. When he asked me what I would like to do in retirement, I replied that I would like to be of service to Al-Anon.

“So, I asked God to help me be of service in Al-Anon. I truly had no expectations of what that would look like. My Higher Power decided to continue to expand my vision and the ride began. There were opportunities within the district level, then at the Area level, and on to the World Service Conference. Being here has expanded my vision to really see the worldwide fellowship of the Al-Anon and Alateen Family Groups.

“My God and the Al-Anon Family Groups have given me a life and gifts beyond anything I could ever have imagined. I am looking forward to learning what God has in mind as He continues to demonstrate how living these spiritual principles enhances life for all of us who love Al-Anon.”

I found the continuing Finance Committee Presentation breakout discussion intriguing. It is an incredible experience to witness our Higher Power's presence in the business of Al-Anon's World Service Conference.

I invite all members to show their support by attending their Area Assembly and listening to their Delegate's report on this year's World Service Conference. Members can also read a full report of the Conference in the *2015 World Service Conference Summary* (P-46). The *Summary* will be available on the Members' Web site, www.al-anon.org/members, in August.

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Each year, outgoing Delegates are invited to share on the Conference theme. The following are excerpts from some of the sharings. For the complete stories, and for the other talks, please see the 2015 World Service Conference Summary, which will be available on the Members' Web site, www.al-anon.org/members, in August.

Heard at the 2015 World Service Conference

“I learned that in order to change, I would need to have an open mind. Because I was taught as a child that things should be a certain way, this principle was difficult for me to grasp. Since I am a rule follower, I faithfully attended meetings. I sat silent for a couple of years because I had lost my voice.

“I did not know that God would use our program to begin to expand my vision and show me how to find my voice. I remember sitting at my first couple of Assemblies looking at the table of officers and thinking to myself, ‘I would *never* sit up at the front of the room and be one of *those* people.’ Al-Anon worked miracles in my life, stretching me and allowing me to blossom in ways I never thought imaginable. Growing up, I learned the principles of honesty, hope, faith, integrity, humility, forgiveness, acceptance, service, and gratitude, and Al-Anon gave me tools to apply those principles to my life. To this day, I still struggle with issues of self-esteem, but those moments occur less frequently and my voice is stronger.”

—Cathy O., Panel 53 Delegate, Georgia

“This year’s theme really had me looking at my Al-Anon journey. When I walked through the doors of Al-Anon, I did not have any self-esteem, and I felt like if you knew me, you would not want me there. I wanted what some of you had, and I was told to get into service if I really wanted all that Al-Anon has to offer.

“It has been such a wonderful journey—and to think I never wanted to volunteer for anything. I felt I was not good enough or qualified, but I was encouraged by many to volunteer for service positions. They could see in me what I could not.”

—Doris K., Panel 53 Delegate, Minnesota North



“When I was just a few weeks into the program, I made a conscious (I think) decision to say ‘yes’ to service. When I arrived at my first meeting, I had run out of any good ideas about how to live a meaningful life, and I adopted this simple principle so that there would be none of that wishy-washy wavering between ‘should I or shouldn’t I?’ that marked my life to that point. It was that moment when ‘yes’ became my default, that my self-narrowed world started to widen and take on purpose and meaning. . . .

“ . . . Over the years, I’ve been to too many funerals and not enough weddings. I’ve been to too many hospitals and not enough fundraiser picnics. But for all of that, I can honestly say that the journey has been impossibly rich and deeply rewarding. Somewhere along the way, I came to understand that service was an attempt to express my gratitude through action, and that my heart continues to be filled with gratitude for all the gifts that have come from my spiritual journey in the Al-Anon fellowship.”

—Bud S., Panel 53 Delegate, Vermont

“My journey towards recovery has always been linked with service. I was fortunate to find a Sponsor who ‘took me along.’ Early in my Al-Anon life, she was asked to make a presentation to a church group about Al-Anon. All she asked was that I keep her company. She always gently nudged me to stretch my wings by saying, ‘I think it’s time for . . .’ Before I knew it, I had taken on roles in my groups, at our Al-Anon Information Service, in our district, and then at the Area level. I am sure that it was several years before I realized that this was ‘service’ work. I just thought that what I was doing was how you worked toward recovery.”

—Lois K., Panel 53 Delegate, British Columbia/Yukon



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Service— a wonderful way to grow

Janis A., Alternate Delegate

BC/Yukon Bulletin, January 2015, Volume 5, Issue 1

The benefits of service are vast. I encourage all of you to find a place to be of service to Al-Anon. Just like it was hard to believe sitting in a meeting could help change our lives, it can be equally hard to believe that service can make a difference.

Believe me when I say that service to Al-Anon is a wonderful way to grow skills and abilities. Learning with supportive people standing beside me has improved my home life as well, as my work life, in ways I couldn't have imagined.

Here are some opportunities to get involved in service:

1. Help reach new members (Public Outreach—Step Twelve).
2. Open the doors to a meeting and welcome members.
3. Fill a role within your meeting—literature, coffee, Secretary, Treasurer, or Group Representative.
4. Fill a role within your district—Secretary, Treasurer, Public Outreach, or District Representative.
5. Once you have service experience, apply for a position as a Coordinator or Officer.
6. Accept an invitation to speak at Al-Anon or A.A. events.
7. Submit your written sharing to the WSO for *The Forum* magazine or for new books being developed.
8. Apply to be an Al-Anon Member Involved in Alateen Service (AMIAS).
9. Bring ideas to your group for meeting topics.
10. Organize a workshop, speaker meeting, or potluck.
11. Volunteer for the host committee for the Area World Service Committee or Assembly.
12. Use your creativity to benefit Al-Anon in some way.

Things to think about when you plan an Area Archives Committee

Joyce R., Area Archives Coordinator and Task Force
Chairperson, Tennessee
The Tennessee Traveler

1. What has prompted the creation of this committee? (i.e. the Area needs to preserve documents, as well as make the collection easy to store and accessible.)
2. What is the committee's charge?
3. When will the committee report to the directing body?
4. Who will appoint another member if someone resigns?
5. What needs to be included in reports?
6. Will there be expenses?
7. Who are the members of the committee?
8. Who will the Chairperson be?

For more information on Area Archives, please review the *Area Archives Guideline (G-30)*, which is posted on the Member's Web site.

Al-Anon guidelines
The Shared Experience of Al-Anon and Alateen Members.

Area Archives G-30

One of the best ways to protect the future of the Al-Anon fellowship in an Area is to look to the past. Of course, our primary purpose remains to carry the message of hope to the families and friends of alcoholics. The collection and preservation of our past remains our most precious asset and serves as the thread that links the generations of those that are to follow.

SCOPE: The purpose of the Area Archives is to preserve our experience, history, and memorabilia of the Al-Anon fellowship from the beginning of the 1950s through to the present. This history should be preserved as it is available to the membership and the service members within the framework of our Tradition, for the good of Al-Anon as a whole.

Area Archives Coordinator
Archivist and Archives Committee

In cooperation with the Area, the Archives Coordinator or Archivist serves as the link between the World Service Office and the Area. In addition, this position, along with the Archives Committee, is responsible for the preservation and maintenance of the Area Archives.

In most Areas, the Archives Coordinator is elected or selected for three-year terms. The coordinator may choose to establish a committee to help with long or labor-intensive projects. Members who are selected are usually familiar with the Area history and interested in the preservation.

In other Areas, the Archives Committee is appointed by the Assembly for three-year terms. The Area Coordinator then chooses an Archivist, who oversees the Archivist officer and serves as the Archives Coordinator.

The Archives Committee is responsible for establishing policies and procedures, as well as budget requirements which are approved by the Area World Service Committee (AWSC). The Archives Committee maintains that responsibility and authority for the use of the archives in compliance with all matters of general public of the AWSC.

Location

An Area Archives might start in the home of the person interested in assuming the responsibility of collecting the materials. Some Areas have the Archives of Alcoholics as an Al-Anon Information Service (AIS) or Literature Distribution Center (LDC) under the Archives Coordinator's name. The Archives might be placed in a centrally located Al-Anon office.

Whenever the Area decides to keep the material, remember the following:

- store items into acid-free folders, boxes, and photo albums
- store in a cool, dry place
- protect the ownership of all members.

What to Keep and What to Build on

Possible categories are:

- Minutes of the Assembly and district meetings (list the meetings separately for quick reference)
- Reports: Committees, Coordinators, and Delegates
- Group histories
- Long-term committee reports
- Districts—world, Area, and local
- Editors of Area and local newsletters
- Group, Assembly, committee, or event flyers
- Publications and literature produced locally for presentation or educational purposes with distribution within or outside of Al-Anon
- Programs of conferences or conferences
- Photographs of important events
- Book of remembrances of deceased persons
- Relevant correspondence with discussions on public concerns during the Conference or workshops inside or outside of the Area
- Papers, notes, etc., from travel records
- Area articles that are selected for use in WSO publications such as *The Forum* or *Area Highlights* with content specific to the Area
- Scrapbooks of newspaper clippings
- Memorabilia, gifts, or mementos
- Conference Approved Literature with proper copyright and consentation book copies or references

The extent of archival holdings depends largely on space. Consideration is a key factor in determining what history to take will be history in the future, and what can be discarded.

This guideline may be photocopied. This paper may be copied by a general release member and distributed within that member's Area.

Goals for reviving the district

Kathy W., District Representative

Texas West Pipeline, Volume 50, Issue 1, January 2015

I have set several goals for reviving the district. Since the district has been without leadership or meetings for several years, it is imperative to start at the base level—the groups and their Group Representatives.

My first objective is to make contact with or visit as many of the groups as possible. By doing so, I can extend an offer of help and information, and I can establish connections in places (or cities) without Al-Anon in the area. The district is very large and spread out, with long distances between towns. Travel times and costs are significant. By using computer technology, cell phones, and traditional mail, we can more readily make those connections.

My second objective is to have at least two district meetings or events per year prior to the Assemblies. We may combine them with the Al-Anon Information Service (AIS) to more efficiently use members' time and resources.

Third, as one result of the meetings, we hope to encourage more Twelfth-Step participation and more contributions to the World Service Office, the Area, the district, and the AIS. To ensure the viability of the district, we are currently seeking members to volunteer as district officers. We also plan to arrange at least two Al-Anon outreach projects to treatment centers, schools, clinics, or family support organizations in the area.

Finally, as a result of the meetings and outreach, we will work with the AIS to distribute Al-Anon information, such as *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism* and newcomer packets. By extending the hand of help in Al-Anon Twelfth-Step work, we can pass on the program of recovery to those in need in our district.

Please photocopy Area Highlights and share it with other members.

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Getting on the World Service Office Web site

Laurie, District 14, Missouri
Al-A-Nonsense, February 2015

First, go to the Members' site (al-anon.org/members) by typing in the name of your home group ending with afg, no spaces.

On the Home page, one can select information from the Individual, Group, Service Structure, WSO, Alateen, or Public Information navigation tabs. One can order literature on the WSO Web site, make a contribution, or read the Alateen's newsletter *Alateen Talk*.

The Forum used to have a listing of conventions and other big meetings each month; now I can go to the WSO section and get a list for any month of the year. I checked out events in May when I will be traveling.

Under "Groups," I also clicked on "Blogs and Podcasts;" then a podcast on "Group Concerns." I found two sets of podcasts, each one featuring three or four Al-Anon members on the following topics:

- The Structure of the Al-Anon/Alateen Fellowship
- How to Become a Group Representative
- The need for GRs and GR Duties
- How My Group Functions as a Community

Additionally, there is a whole set of podcasts on sponsorship available:

- The Role of a Sponsor
- Becoming a Sponsor
- Choosing a Sponsor
- What is Sponsorship
- The Sponsor-Sponsee Relationship

If you are new to the podcasts, you might read the Introduction first.

On the "WSO" tab, under Board of Trustees, I also read the report of the October Board of Trustees meeting to get up-to-date on recent discussions and decisions of the Board which impacts worldwide Al-Anon. I'm looking forward to seeing the Chairman of the Board's letter for the January meeting.

WSO NOTE: The Home Page featured items are changed several times a year to make it easier for members to locate current and/or time-sensitive items. Currently, the Home page features *The Best of Public Outreach* (M-41), a collection of how-to-do-it activities for every member who wants to do public outreach; Members Interested in Speaking (G-1), a guideline for all members; and ordering information for the 2016 *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism*, Al-Anon's public outreach magazine.

Insurance for groups

Orange County Intergroup Liaison, California South
The Bulletin, February 2015

The Orange County Intergroup has been able to arrange for group meetings to be covered by the Intergroup's insurance policy, subject to policy restrictions such as prohibiting the serving of alcohol. The coverage is at no cost to the group, unless the meeting requires a document verifying that it has coverage. When such proof is required by a meeting, the meeting is charged a \$50 fee. The policy does not cover or non-Al-Anon group meetings or other activities and events in which Al-Anon members participate.

The coverage resulted when a meeting was facing the loss of its meeting place because insurance was required as a condition of rental. A task force was formed, options were studied, and coverage was put in place.

Importance of Office Volunteers

Anonymous, Baton Rouge Al-Anon Information Service, Louisiana
The Caterpillar, January 2015

I was the AIS volunteer one day when a long-time friend entered the office close to 11:30 am to get some literature.

Her face brightened up as she recognized me sitting at the desk. It was like old home week! I showed her the literature rack. I told her if she stayed for the noon meeting, then she'd get a newcomer's packet with all sorts of great information in it as well as the book *How Al-Anon Works for Families and Friends of Alcoholics* (B-32). She hesitated and said something about time. I then found out she was fully retired and went on to show her the remainder of the office. Others started pouring in for the noon meeting. I kept introducing her to folks, and she stayed for the meeting. Best of all, she has come back for more meetings!

Wow! That's what happened to me a number of years ago. I, too, went to the AIS office late one morning just to get some literature. The office volunteer encouraged me to stay for the noon meeting. I reluctantly stayed for that first meeting. I came back, though, for another meeting on my own and am still going to Al-Anon.



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Al-Anon food for thought...

Al-Anon Members in Australia
Austra-Link, Australia, March 2015

Sometimes we may think that our group is the only one discussing ways to stay invigorated and keep members engaged. Conversations may range from looking at the format of the meeting to welcoming new members. Be assured that Al-Anon members in other countries are exploring similar topics! Below are two questions and sharings from members attending meetings in Australia:

How long should our Al-Anon meeting take?

“Each Al-Anon group is autonomous and as such, may decide the length they prefer for their meeting. However, the usual duration of a meeting in Australia is an hour and a half, with the additional half hour made available for more informal Al-Anon interaction while sharing refreshments.”

When sharing about holding business meetings the statement was made:

“Some groups hold these meetings with their scheduled meeting time or they may choose to use the informal time at the end of the meeting to discuss group matters. This is the group’s decision. Some groups have a specified time limit for their business meetings because their meeting venue has imposed time restraints or certain terms and conditions.”

Is your group welcoming to newcomers?

“When newcomers are present, the group may spend some of the meeting time specifically welcoming the newcomer. One or more members may take the time to share their reasons for coming to Al-Anon and how it has helped them.

“It was suggested that “Beginners” meeting topics might include a discussion of one of the first three Steps, detachment, the Serenity Prayer, or a slogan.”

No matter where we attend meetings, in Al-Anon service, when we share our experience, strength, and hope, all groups benefit. So what ways can your group stay invigorated and keep members engaged?

A technique for making the Traditions relevant to my personal life

By JoEllyn P., Literature Coordinator Illinois South
News-O-Gram, Winter 2015

This past fall, I participated in an Al-Anon Festival with a panel that shared on how to incorporate Al-Anon’s Twelve Traditions into one’s personal life. I was inspired by those who shared, and decided I wanted to grow in this area. In this past year, I finished reading *Paths to Recovery* (B-24). I discovered that the sharings in this book helped me think about the Traditions and Concepts of Service in a new light. I’ve struggled with how to apply the Traditions, and decided to work with my Sponsor to explore them more deeply.

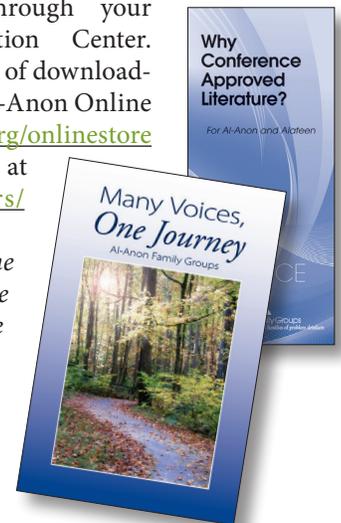
A sharing stood out for me in the Epilogue of *Paths to Recovery*. The member said that his Sponsor suggested that he learn the Steps, Traditions, and Concepts horizontally, rather than vertically. This helped make all of them relevant in his life. I like that idea, and encourage us all to think about this way of sharing our experience, strength, and hope.

Using only CAL in meetings

By Gail G., British Columbia/Yukon Territories Literature Coordinator
BC/Yukon Area Bulletin, Volume 4, Issue 10, November 2014

Do you know why we only use Conference Approved Literature in our meetings? You can find the answer in our pamphlet, *Why Conference Approved Literature* (P-35). It is available through your local Literature Distribution Center. You now also have the option of downloading the pamphlet from the Al-Anon Online Store at www.al-anon.org/onlinestore or the Members’ Web site at <http://al-anon.org/members/pdf/P35.pdf>.

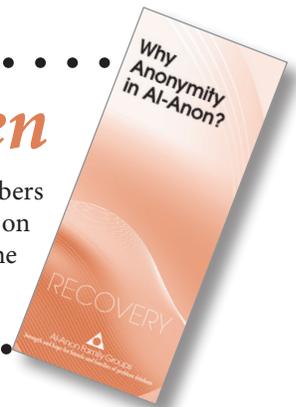
[For information on the development of Conference Approved Literature, see *Many Voices, One Journey* (B-31)]



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Not just *why* anonymity, but *when*

The recently revised *Why Anonymity in Al-Anon?* (P-33) can answer many questions members have about anonymity and confidentiality within Al-Anon and at the public level, including on the Internet. Available through your local Literature Distribution Center or the Al-Anon Online Store at www.al-anon.org/onlinestore.



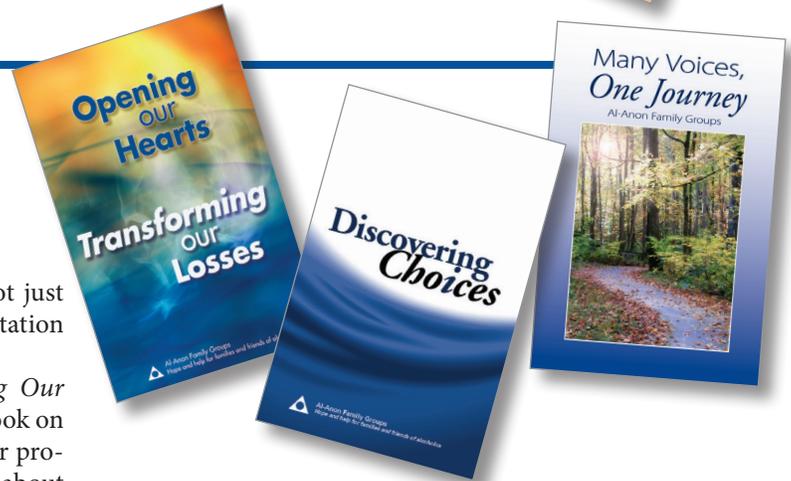
Using all our resources

By Cheryl C., Texas West Literature Coordinator
The Pipeline, Volume 50, Number 1, January 2015

I encourage everyone to use all the literature—not just the three Al-Anon daily readers—in personal meditation and in meetings.

We have a book that focuses on grief: *Opening Our Hearts, Transforming Our Losses* (B-29). We have a book on improving our relationships by using the tools of our program: *Discovering Choices* (B-30). We also have a book about Al-Anon's own story of growth, challenges, and change, with personal stories spanning 60 years: *Many Voices, One Journey* (B-31).

And I say once again that our stories—our CAL—come from us. If someone thanks you for sharing at a meeting, please write it down and send it in. If you hear something that touches your heart, encourage the member who said it to please write it down and send it in.



To submit your sharing online, just follow these steps:

- Go to the Members' Web site: www.al-anon.org/members.
- Enter your password—any variation of your group name followed by AFG.
- Click on the "Individuals" tab.
- Click on "Features Publications."
- Click on "Send Your Sharing."

The new conflict resolution tools are now available in Spanish and French!

To offer assistance in dealing with conflict situations that occur in Al-Anon groups and service, the following tools are available:

- *Loving Interchange to Resolve Conflict* wallet card (S-71, SS-71, FS-71)
 - ▶ Provides tips for group discussions as well as questions for individual personal reflection.
- *Conflict Resolution using our Twelve Traditions* card set (S-72, SS-72, FS-72)
 - ▶ Provides a review of the Traditions in light of how they can be applied to resolving conflicts.
- ****New**** *Talk to Each Other—Resolving Conflicts within Al-Anon* booklet (S-73, SS-73, FS-73)
 - ▶ Pulls together knowledge in the above two items with examples of their direct applications in Al-Anon conflict situations.
- ****New**** *Using Al-Anon Principles to Resolve Conflicts* kit (K-70, SK-70, FK-70)
 - ▶ Contains the three items above.

To purchase Spanish and French versions of any of the products in the conflict resolution series, members can check with their local Al-Anon Literature Distribution Centers. Additionally, the products can be purchased by downloading the Spanish order form (SS-16) and the French order form (FS-16) from the Al-Anon Online Store, www.al-anon.org/onlinestore.

Alateen e-Public Outreach

Help reach out and attract teens affected by a relative or friend's drinking by clicking on "like" or "share" on the Alateen WSO Facebook page. Quotations from the *Alateen Talk* newsletter, the Alateen section of the WSO Public Outreach Web site, and Alateen public outreach materials are used to provide information about Alateen and its purpose.

Here's how:

- Visit Alateen WSO on Facebook.
- Click "like" or "share" so the message reaches your friends and their friends.

Members' anonymity is protected on Alateen WSO Facebook page because the WSO does not allow "friending" and posting comments.

'Keep Coming Back' with AFA magazines and local meeting schedules

Professionals value the copies of *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism* magazines brought to their offices by members. Please order enough copies to replenish their supplies. Orders must be received at the WSO by Wednesday, July 8, 2015, 5 p.m. ET.

District plans a 'Public Outreach Day with AFA'

By Sandy F., District Representative, Oklahoma
This Day Newsletter, March 2015

Although there are only five groups in District Four, we ordered a case of *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism* (AFA) magazines. Then, we will plan where we are going to distribute them.

Thinking about outreach with highway signs and posters

By Nancy W., Area Public Outreach Coordinator, Utah
The Alanews, March 2015

During our Area public outreach conference calls, topics recently discussed included highway billboards and posters in higher education facilities, recovery, and adult/children abuse centers. It was determined that highway billboards are more costly than expected, and there was not enough time for adequate fundraising. So, we are looking into using vinyl signs on high traffic overpasses as an alternative. Members are submitting suggestions for sites throughout the area. I think the idea of placing posters in higher education, healthcare, recovery, and other locations is a marvelous idea. Similarly, having Al-Anon and Alateen represented at recovery, abuse, and treatment centers is a positive action.

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Technology and cooperation with professionals makes an Al-Anon meeting possible in remote communities

By Kerry L., Area Chairperson, Manitoba
Canadian Delegate Newsletter, 2015

I would like to share with you the progress of our Telehealth Conference meetings in the northern communities in Manitoba. Our northern members have to go to the hospital, nursing stations, or reservations where there is Telehealth equipment available. We meet the second Wednesday of the month and have 12 northern communities registered. We've had 16 people join our meetings. I had said that when my Delegate term was over I would help them, so there are several of us in Winnipeg who go to the Children's Hospital and join them for their meetings.

We had our first business meeting this month and it was decided that each community would pass the basket and send the money, twice a year, to our Northern Coordinator. Our Winnipeg group is going to have a raffle at our Conference and the money will be sent to our Northern Coordinator to help her buy literature for the communities she visits. Her allotment barely covers the cost of attending our two Assemblies. We are slowly "Expanding our Vision" for our northern communities.

Note: Kerry L. is available as a resource regarding the monthly Al-Anon meeting using the Telehealth system. Telehealth is also available in the U.S. Contact Claire R., WSO Associate Director—Professionals for further information.



District 14 orders 400 *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism*

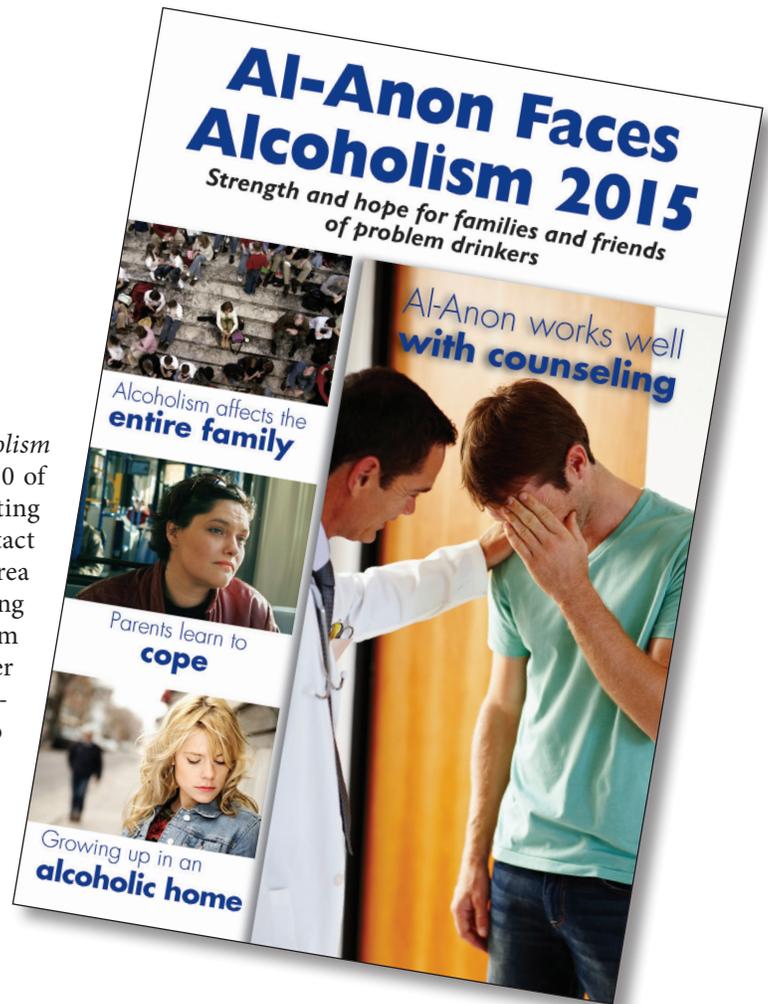
Al-A Nonsense, St. Louis, Missouri

Four hundred copies of *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism 2015* were ordered by our district for distribution to professionals who could recommend Al-Anon and Alateen to their clients or patients. The booklets can be picked up at the district meeting. Hopefully, each group will help distribute copies at doctor's office, counselor's office, or wherever they think they will do some good. Some groups choose to pay for their copies, but our plan is to provide them to groups that want to spread them around. District 14 members are creating a recommended script to use when addressing people who will spread the Al-Anon message.

Outreach as a group project

By Ginny J., Public Outreach Coordinator, Indiana
Via e-mail to WSO

My home group uses the *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism* (AFA) magazine as a group project. We order 50-100 of them. When they arrive, we come early to our meeting and some of us stamp the AFAs with our phone contact information. Some of us fold meeting lists for our Area and some of us stuff the magazines with the meeting lists. It's kind of an assembly line. We also read them before giving them out, and this has led to another use for the magazine. At our meeting, someone suggested that we should give one to each newcomer to our meeting since they are so good and cover a lot of useful information for newcomers. Then, we take the magazines to places where people wait—doctor's offices, county buildings, hospitals, etc.



Others can find Al-Anon help and hope—*only* if they know where we are

By Kay R., Public Outreach Coordinator Area 54, Texas West
Pipeline Newsletter, Volume 50, Issue 1, January 2015

Our current Public Outreach Challenge is to put our QR codes into communities so people can access our Web site. A new slogans bookmark with the reverse side showing our social media information and QR codes can be downloaded from the Texas Web site. It can be edited to show your group meeting or Web site information. Please use and lose them in your community. Others can find help and hope in Al-Anon—only if they know where we are.

Our current Public Outreach Project is to contact TV/radio stations asking them to play our public service announcements (PSAs) or saying “Thank you” for playing them. One of our 16 districts contacted every station in their district! A friend in the El Paso area hears Al-Anon/Alateen PSAs rotating on different stations during the day. Just think about Al-Anon broadcasting help and hope into Mexico!

WSO has released the *Treatment Facilities Outreach Project*, a public outreach tool showing how to provide Al-Anon information to rehab centers. It can be downloaded from the TX Web site to your laptop and carried to your next district meeting to spark interest in a new project at a rehab near you.

In 2015, a new podcast series will encourage members to be empowered to reach out in local communities. A landline phone is required for a 20-minute call for about three minutes per person. Cordless phones and cell phones are not compatible with the audio editing software.

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The Forum—a great source of meeting topics

By John I., Alternate Delegate, Nebraska
Nebraskanon, December 2014

One of the magazine features is a special department called “Instant Meeting” that covers the Step for that particular month.

Be sure your group is getting their free copy of *The Forum*. If not, contact the Area Secretary to check on who is recorded as your group’s contact person or CMA. Then, check with that person, as he or she may not realize what they are supposed to do with the magazine when it arrives in the mail.

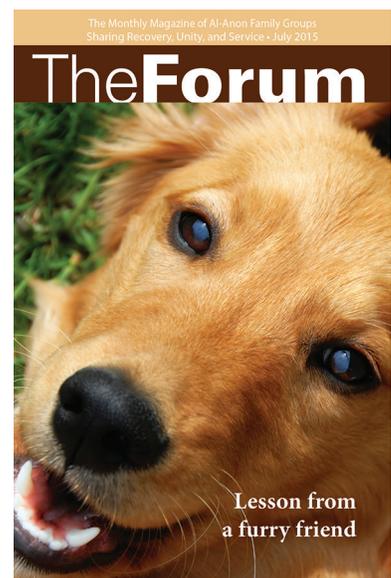
Also, please keep in mind that subscriptions to the electronic version of *The Forum* magazine are available from Nook for mobile devices.

Have you visited the *Forum* page on the Members’ Web site lately?

This page is where you can find articles from the current issue of *The Forum* magazine, as well as indexed articles from recently published issues. The *Forum* Index is updated monthly, and some of the stories are linked to the monthly Internet selections. Other convenient links allow you to submit a Forum sharing on-line, download *The Forum* Writing Guidelines (F-1), or subscribe to *The Forum*.

Find the *Forum* page on the Members’ Web site by following these simple steps:

- Go to the Members’ site: www.al-anon.org/members.
- Enter your password—any variation of your group name followed by AFG.
- Click on the “Individuals” tab on the home page, select “Featured Publications” from the dropdown menu, and click on *The Forum*.



The Forum—a wealth of information for individuals and groups

By Janis A., Alternate Delegate, BC/Yukon
BC/Yukon Bulletin, Volume 5, Issue 1, January 2015

The magazine features stories written by Al-Anon members on a variety of subjects related to recovery, unity, and service. Here are some examples of what you can find within the pages of *The Forum*:

- Topics for discussion meetings;
- Up-to-date news from the WSO;
- Special highlights from Conference Approved Literature (CAL);
- Sharings about the Al-Anon Steps, Traditions, and Concepts;
- Diverse sharings from Al-Anon members throughout the U.S., Canada, and the international community, which can expand your perspective;
- Sharings from Alateen members.

A complimentary copy of *The Forum* is distributed monthly to all English-speaking groups. I think you’ll agree that it’s a great resource for your Al-Anon growth. The last page of the magazine has a subscription form. Consider ordering your own copy!

Please photocopy Area Highlights and share it with other members.
Visit us at: www.al-anon.org/members

These shared experiences, sent from around the world, came to the WSO through Spanish newsletters as well as correspondence. The WSO will continue to select service activities for these pages, so Spanish members will have the opportunity to write and read about their service projects without translation. This additional page gives all members a consistent reminder that service in Al-Anon is taking place in many languages.

Las experiencias que comparten miembros de todas partes del mundo han llegado a la OSM por medio de boletines y cartas en español. La OSM continuará publicando actividades de servicio en estas páginas, de manera que los miembros que hablan español tengan la oportunidad de leer y escribir sobre sus experiencias de servicio directamente en su idioma. Estas páginas sirven para que todos los miembros recuerden siempre que el servicio en Al-Anon se lleva a cabo en muchos idiomas.

Comentarios sobre el tema de servicio

Boletín *Serenidad*, septiembre de 2014

Año 34 – Número 138 - España

Desde que comencé a hacer servicios en el grupo o en mi Área, me ha llamado mucho la atención el servicio de Custodio. Preguntaba en qué consistía y miraba en los Manuales de Servicio, y en todas las ocasiones la respuesta era muy vaga, sin darme ninguna luz de su utilidad. Era un servicio que estaba ahí, pero que nadie sabía para qué. Eso sí, todo el mundo lo veía como algo que estaba por encima de todos los demás servicios y de los Custodios, por encima de cualquier miembro de Al-Anon.

Con el tiempo, he llegado a saber de primera mano en qué consiste el servicio, ya que actualmente soy Custodia Regional. Y como para entender las cosas las tengo que conocer, quiero brevemente explicar mi experiencia:

Normalmente voy dos veces a la semana al grupo donde me recupero, como cualquier miembro de Al-Anon, y en ningún momento “ejercicio” de Custodia. De hecho, algunos compañeros ni siquiera saben cuál es mi servicio.

Tengo contacto frecuente con las Delegadas de mi zona que me consultan sobre algo que les preocupa de sus Áreas. Tengo también comunicación permanente con la Oficina de Servicios Generales (OSG), que a su vez contrasta conmigo y con las demás Custodias las gestiones que se deben hacer en la oficina, en el tiempo que media entre una Junta y otra.

Cada tres meses asistimos a la Junta donde se trabaja a marchas forzadas para que en el término de un fin de semana se puedan despachar todos los asuntos que hay pendientes. A veces terminamos a altas horas de la noche con el fin de que todo se pueda resolver en ese espacio de tiempo.

Quiero decir que este servicio me ha enseñado a conocer lo que significa la palabra “prudencia”. Si hay algún tema que debatir referente a la inquietud planteada por una Área o grupo, en la Junta se actúa siempre mirando por el bienestar común, no porque a una Área u otra le convenga, sino pensando en la parte espiritual y también en la legal.

Por supuesto, estoy convencida de que cuando la Junta toma una decisión, está meditada y contrastada por todos los que la componemos. Eso me parece una garantía para el funcionamiento de Al-Anon. Por lo tanto, cuando se aprueba alguna medida por parte de la Junta, sepan que se ha hecho con la idea de que es lo más prudente y eficaz para llevar a cabo el propósito de Al-Anon.

Anónimo



Photo by Tom C., Texas

Mis Servicios

Boletín Trimestral *Felicidad – Voluntad – Compartir*, julio, agosto y septiembre de 2013

Número 1 - Ecuador

Desempeño el cargo de Presidenta del Comité de Nominaciones. Este servicio me permite practicar habilidades sociales y comunicativas que contribuyen a mi recuperación. A través del diálogo puedo conocer más a las personas, superar las barreras que me aíslan de los demás, comprender y aceptar a otros y a mí misma. El servicio es una experiencia que me enriquece y me ayuda a progresar en mi crecimiento espiritual.

Puedo beneficiarme de ser una fiel servidora poniendo mis capacidades al servicio de los demás. En el ejercicio de dar y recibir, las compensaciones son enormes. Generalmente la fortaleza, experiencia y esperanza retribuyen con creces el tiempo y el esfuerzo que demanda realizar una actividad de servicio.

He adquirido paciencia y humildad sirviendo al grupo considerando que no soy perfecta, autosuficiente, ni tengo la última palabra. Teniendo claridad en que soy humana, necesito de los demás, y mi punto de vista es importante pero no único.

Aprecio y reconozco la tarea de los servidores de Al-Anon, considero que dan su tiempo, dedicación y esfuerzo para beneficio de todos. Al considerar el servicio como una meta en todos los aspectos de mi vida, obtendré una felicidad segura, ya que solo por el hecho de dar, estoy siendo recompensada grandemente.

Mariana C., Presidenta del Comité de Nominaciones

These shared experiences, sent from around the world, came to the WSO through French newsletters as well as correspondence. The WSO will continue to select service activities for these pages, so French members will have the opportunity to write and read about their service projects without translation. This additional page gives all members a consistent reminder that service in Al-Anon is taking place in many languages.

Ces expériences partagées proviennent de bulletins et de lettres envoyées au BSM par des membres d'expression française à travers le monde. Le BSM sélectionnera pour cette page des témoignages de membres sur leur travail de service, et leur permettra ainsi de partager leurs expériences dans le service directement sans traduction. Cette page supplémentaire rappelle à tous les membres que le service dans Al-Anon se fait dans toutes les langues.

Le service

Extrait du bulletin mensuel des Groupes Familiaux Al-Anon/Alateen de France
La Chaîne, octobre 2014

Anonyme, Comité de *La Chaîne*

Voilà maintenant 20 mois que j'ai franchi les portes d'Al-Anon, pour mon plus grand bonheur. Bien que tout ne soit pas résolu au quotidien, lorsque je regarde le chemin parcouru, je peux constater à quel point ma vie est devenue plus riche, plus joyeuse, plus vivante. Miracle? De nouveaux yeux pour une nouvelle façon de l'aborder? Oui en grande partie! Et parce qu'à partir du moment où j'ai cru que le programme Al-Anon pouvait m'aider à arrêter de survivre auprès de mon mari, plein de qualités, mais dépendant alcoolique, pour vivre tout simplement, j'ai décidé d'adopter ce programme dans son intégralité. Et c'était une nouveauté pour moi qui ai toujours eu une grande peur de l'engagement. Ainsi, j'ai acheté rapidement de la littérature Al-Anon, j'ai lu chaque jour une page, assisté à presque toutes les réunions hebdomadaires (quelques empêchements parfois, mais aussi quelques mauvais prétextes) et lors des élections au sein de mon groupe, deux mois après mon arrivée, je me suis lancée : j'ai proposé de servir en tant que secrétaire.

Peut-être était-ce pour m'obliger à être présente régulièrement aux réunions, pour donner plus de corps à mon implication. Bref pour lutter contre ma propension à lâcher mes engagements. Les amis m'ont tout de suite rassurée sur ce service. J'ai été guidée, et remplacée lorsque j'étais absente. Je me sentais à la fois utile, mais non indispensable. Je pouvais être moi-même, tout en canalisant mes tendances à trop vouloir flatter mon égo. Je me suis sentie investie et intégrée. Lors de ma première réunion de Région, ont eu lieu les élections du délégué régional. Les amies alors présentes m'ont incitée à me proposer pour ce service. Je me sentais trop jeune dans Al-Anon pour ce rôle. J'allais me retrouver en présence de tous les délégués des autres régions de France, et du Conseil d'Administration. Et là encore, les amies m'ont rassurée, expliqué et fait confiance. Alors, j'ai dit oui.

Et que de choses j'ai apprises, entendues, comprises et pas encore comprises! Mais dès que le sentiment d'être perdue ou pas à la hauteur m'assaillait, je me souvenais qu'en Al-Anon, on ne me demandait jamais l'impossible et surtout pas la perfection. Alors, quand les membres du Conseil d'Administration ont demandé que les délégués s'investissent dans les comités, je me suis souvenue de cette phrase « ça commence par moi ». J'ai donc rejoint le comité de la Chaîne, avec cette fois-ci un engagement plus grand puisqu'il concerne l'intégralité des amis en France.

Mais nous sommes trois sans compter notre « marraine » et tous les amis qui vont apporter leur contribution. Les doutes et les peurs sont toujours présents, mais l'envie d'avancer et de participer à la croissance d'Al-Anon est plus forte que ces peurs. J'ai appris que l'important est de progresser à mon rythme, en restant moi-même, et en travaillant à améliorer ce « moi-même » tel qu'on l'entend en Al-Anon : avouer en toute humilité ce que je ne comprends pas et, ce que je ne sais pas faire; reconnaître que j'ai besoin des amis et de ma Puissance Supérieure pour progresser. Alors l'inertie qu'engendre la peur de l'échec se transforme en énergie puisée à la source de mes doutes pour en faire des forces. Et ce que j'aime dans notre fraternité Al-Anon, c'est cette idée que les serveurs sont au service des amis. C'est que l'effort d'humilité l'emporte sur les ego, c'est que les principes soient toujours placés au-dessus des personnalités.

Mot de la Trésorière

Extrait du journal interne des Groupes Familiaux Al-Anon et Alateen de la Circonscription du Québec-Est et du Nouveau-Brunswick
Le Contact, décembre 2014

Bernice

Personnellement, le lien avec le service m'a permis de mieux voir mes limites et me réajuster au besoin. C'est-à-dire, de voir que mon désir de bien faire me causait du stress inutile, que je devais lâcher prise et m'en remettre à ma Puissance Supérieure; de constater que ma tolérance s'était améliorée. Je suis heureuse de constater à nouveau que mon désir de rire et d'avoir du plaisir est toujours très présent.

Invitation à tous les membres Faites-nous parvenir vos expériences dans le service pour nous permettre de les publier dans cette page. En nous envoyant les bulletins de nouvelles de votre Circonscription, vous nous donnez aussi la possibilité d'y puiser des témoignages et de les partager avec tous les membres.

Visitez-nous au www.al-anon.org/membres
Veuillez photocopier *Area Highlights* et le distribuer à d'autres membres