

# Area *H*ighlights

Winter 2015  
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## 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**

This year's World Service Conference theme reminds us that the discussions and decisions of the Conference are the result of expanding our vision.

In the highlights of her Delegate report to the Assembly, Tarcila F., Tennessee Delegate, noted, "Each member was encouraged to write his/her personal Conference goals and read them every day before the Conference reconvened.

"My personal goals were: To listen, participate fully, voice my thoughts if necessary, and to bring back the love and enthusiasm shown to me at this Conference to my Area."

The following excerpts are from Panel 53 Delegates' three-minute talks at the 2015 WSC.

"The spiritual principles of Al-Anon are like windshield wipers clearing my vision as I drive my car of life. Applying the principles lets me see clearly both what is here and now—the corn fields, lakes and streams, forests and even desert flora—and what may come—the mountains in the distance, the first glimpse of the ocean as I approach the top of a hill. And so, my vision expands: I see new possibilities for myself, for Al-Anon, and for the larger world. At the same time, I am reminded that I am in the car, right here, right now, and that my job is to steer, to see the possibilities, and to have faith that God knows what is around corners and is guiding Al-Anon and me safely there."

—Vali F., Arizona

"Each morning, I ask God what His will is for me. Sometimes I argue and let Him know He is getting us into trouble. The spiritual principles define eternal truths, enlarge my world, and expand my vision of hope for the future of Al-Anon as a whole.

—Sue C., Washington

"One night after a meeting, I was walking across the street with a friend, and I said, 'I think I am ready to do some service outside the group level.' He responded, 'It's funny you should say that because I am Chair of the Information Services, and we need a Vice Chair for the Al-Anon participation in the A.A. Convention. Will you take the position?' After consulting with my Sponsor, I said, 'Yes.' I was worried that I did not have enough experience, but he said, 'Don't worry, you are only Vice Chair and will have a year to learn the position.' Two weeks later, the Chair quit Al-Anon and by default, I was the Chair.

"I learned to accept that I was Chair, and I learned that in Al-Anon I had the support of many members. My recovery soared. I learned that by giving it away, I got to keep it. I started living the spiritual principles of the Steps, including gratitude. We had a great Convention. I felt better with each position I served in. I expanded my vision by participating in six Al-Anon skits, and I was able to develop new hidden talents by risking failure."

—Rich M., New Jersey

“As I became active, I began to develop a vision of Al-Anon beyond the doors of my home group through continued activities involving working with others. I feel service has enhanced my program and has given me the opportunity to give back.”

—Lisa B-C., Oklahoma

To all the Delegates whose term ends on December 31st, thank you for all you have done for Al-Anon Family Groups.

For a complete text of the three-minute talks, see the 2015 World Service Conference Summary (P-46) on-line at [al-anon.org/members](http://al-anon.org/members).

## Did you know . . .

. . . that all 55 editions of the Conference Summary are posted on the Members' Web site? That's right—from the first Conference in 1961 to the latest Conference in 2015! Check out the 2015 World Service Conference Summary at [al-anon.org/members](http://al-anon.org/members) and read the complete report of the 2015 Conference—or another other Conference—for free!



## *In Loving Memory*

We lovingly remember these members who served our fellowship as World Service Conference members:

### **Maxine K. H.**

Panel 25, Illinois North Delegate  
Past Trustee  
November 2014

### **Mary T.**

Panel 37, Indiana Delegate  
February 2015

### **Jo W.**

Panel 19, Manitoba/Northwest Ontario Delegate  
March 2015

### **Virginia M.**

Panel 11, North Carolina/Bermuda Delegate  
March 2015

### **Phyllis O.**

Panel 28, Quebec West Delegate  
April 2015

### **Barbara McK.**

Panel 45, South Carolina Delegate  
May 2015

### **Louise B.**

Panel 14, Virginia Delegate  
Past Trustee  
August 2015

### **Mayme S.**

Panel 5, Oregon Delegate

### **Phyllis Q.**

Panel 8, Oregon Delegate

### **Betty W.**

Panel 14, Oregon Delegate

# How are Trusted Servants chosen?

Laurie K., Past Delegate  
Round Robin, Missouri, August 2015

The first step in becoming a trusted servant in Al-Anon might be that thoughtful nudge from a fellow member who has our good and the good of our fellowship at heart. Long before I thought I had anything to give to Al-Anon, a fellow member was urging me to become the group's librarian, treasurer, Intergroup Representative, and then Group Representative. If she saw ability in me, I was pleased and she always supported me, offered to show me how to do it, and took me to my first meeting when the position meant going outside of my home group.

Following in the footsteps of experienced members has always made the work easier and encouraged me to step forward when an opportunity came. I've been fortunate that any job I stepped into had been pioneered by others in my home group and district. If that hadn't been true, I'm sure my Higher Power would have put some other member in my path as a good example.



Every member is equal in the program, we are told, and the outcome of each group conscience or election decision is in the hands of a Higher Power. Therefore, we say we are "standing for a position," rather than campaigning or "running in an election." Any member who is interested, is eligible, and feels he or she has the potential to serve may "stand," tell us his or her experience, and be part of our elections—in the group, district, or our Area.

All of us who are eligible to vote are asked to consider ability rather than popularity or familiarity when we cast our ballot (or raise our hand) to choose which member will serve us in whatever capacity. That requires me to be present to observe members and listen to their sharing over time so I will have a feeling for those with ability and potential. I need to be there in my group or at our district meetings or in our Area Assemblies if I want to vote responsibly for the benefit of this wonderful program.

Then, if I am elected or you are elected to a position, we get to be "trusted servants," doing the footwork, consulting with other members, and, in turn, trusting that a Higher Power will put in front of us the guidance we will need. I remember being pretty tentative about serving you as Delegate to the World Service Conference some years ago, asking for my Higher Power's help, and somehow feeling that after listening to the discussion, I was ready to

vote each time. I believe you will have that gift too when you step up and serve us as one of our trusted servants.

## What it's like to be Area Chairperson

Rita, Area Chair  
Communicator, Oregon, June 2015

In those situations where someone is not meeting the requirements of his/her position, it is the Chairperson's responsibility to counsel them. While every aspect of serving as Chairperson has enhanced my spiritual growth and given me opportunities to use Al-Anon principles, it is dealing with someone who isn't performing his/her job that has brought me the most growth, because it is here where I have spent the most time in prayer and communication with my Higher Power. This helps me to be sure that I know what it is that I am supposed to say and do.

Are there times when this job feels like too much? You bet. But at such moments, my Higher Power reminds me why I agreed to do this and how I will grow spiritually by persisting even when things get tough.

## Worldwide Al-Anon

Debbie H., Delegate  
The Province Wide, Manitoba/Northwest Ontario, Autumn 2015

Attending the World Service Conference provided me with an opportunity to see the work Al-Anon does worldwide. The policies, guidelines, and decisions made by the Conference Delegates, staff, Trustees, and Executive Committee members have a global impact on our program. Many decisions are not made at just one Conference, but rather are debated and well thought out, using Knowledge-Based Decision-Making. This ensures everyone has a voice and presents information that offers opinions that provide positive responses or present concerns related to the questions at hand. Some discussions may continue for the full term of the Delegates, which is three years. The growth and stability of the Al-Anon program depends on all of us practicing our Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions.

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

# News from a few districts in California South

*The Bulletin*, Volume 57, Number 2  
May 2015

We have started something new at our monthly district meetings. Each month, I ask a different Group Representative to research a topic to bring back to our district meeting for discussion. The first topic was “What is a Group Inventory?” The second topic was to discuss a group challenge and how that challenge was met. In addition, I’d like to have a monthly report from a GR on a new piece of Al-Anon literature. I want to raise awareness with our GRs with the hope that these ideas go back to their groups for further discussion and individual enrichment. Our district is seeing growth with our Alateens. I attended an open Alateen meeting with over 50 people attending.

I realize the challenges I have as a District Representative; but, I’m also realizing that I am not alone and can lean on my GRs for strength.

—Kirk S., DR

District 51 is working to include its Spanish-speaking members by having the district meetings translated into Spanish. One of our goals is to have all meetings in our Area represented at our district meetings. We are planning our Alathon. We have a great theme planned and are sure that this event will be a great success. District 51 is also interested in being of greater service to the Alateens in our Area. We are still in the brainstorming part of this goal, but hope to have a plan of action before the year ends.

—Sandy M., DR

District 60 had a successful fundraising workshop on the Twelve Traditions with over 173 years of recovery shared. It was exciting to hear how the Traditions can be applied to our *Conflict Resolution Wallet Card* (S-71). During our April district meeting, we prepared over 150 packets of public information for hotlines, District Attorneys’ offices, and a police department. After reviewing the results of the recent membership survey, we are planning an outreach project to all senior centers in our district. In future district meetings, we will also be looking to reach younger Al-Anon members at colleges.

—Marlene M., DR

## Heard at the 2015 World Service Conference:

“God is constantly expanding my vision by giving me more than I believe I am capable of having or doing. I begin each day on my knees asking God for knowledge of His will for me this day and to give me the courage and power to carry that out.”

—Christine S., West Virginia

“Service helped me to feel like I was a part of an ongoing solution to the maddening disease of alcoholism; that I was helping others as I had been helped and that my participation had value.”

—Bud S., Vermont

“Service is like prayer and meditation—if you make it a habit, you cannot go without it.”

—Solange R., Quebec East

“‘Living Our Spiritual Principles: Expanding Our Vision’ for me means using the Steps, Traditions, and Concepts in all areas of my life. The longer I am in Al-Anon, the more I am able to use these, sometimes without knowing I am doing it. I use them when dealing with my family and the many issues and problems that arise. I try to remember that God put the people and problems in my life for a reason and try to be thankful that I am well enough to handle everything He puts in my life.”

—Cathy T., Wisconsin and the Upper Peninsula of Michigan

“My first Sponsor told me never to think of Al-Anon as only the four walls of my home group.”

—Elin E., North Carolina/Bermuda

“When I walked through the doors of Al-Anon, I did not have any self-esteem. I felt that 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 Al-Anon has to offer.”

—Doris K., Minnesota North

# Visiting Committee is Out and About

St. Louis Al-Anon Information Service, Missouri  
Missouri Round Robin, October 2015

The Al-Anon Information Service (AIS) Visiting Committee members will be visiting Al-Anon meetings. Several goals of the Visiting Committee are: 1) Confirm current contact information for the groups; 2) Educate members about the AIS office and the services provided; and 3) Learn how to enrich your Al-Anon program by getting involved in the Intergroup (coordination counsel for St. Louis area Al-Anon groups).

## A Letter from the Intergroup Chair

Lisa K., Sacramento Intergroup Chairperson, California North  
*Share & Care*, Volume 50, No. 11, November 2015

Dear Al-Anon Members D6-10,

As some of you may have already heard, the AIS office has a surplus of funds. Some folks have been wondering how this came about and the answer is simple—we are no longer paying an employee to run the AIS office. Thanks to amazing and dedicated volunteers, the AIS office has become a “well-oiled machine” and a paid employee is not currently needed. This has resulted in the office’s overall expenses going down, with the income staying relatively the same from literature sales and donations.

As Chair of Intergroup, one of our goals is to build a good relationship between the Intergroup, the AIS office, and the members of Districts 6-10. We want transparency, good communication and for all the members to know they have a voice. Thus, we have been announcing that a Thought Force is being formed and chaired by the Intergroup Treasurer. Anyone is welcome and encouraged to be a part of this Thought Force. As members you should be a part of this decision-making process of how best to spend this surplus of funds because the money is a direct result of your support of the AIS office. The excess funds do not affect previously-budgeted-for Alateen special events and Institutions service.

In Al-Anon I have learned that I don’t have to rush to make a decision. I can pause, pray, ask for help, reason things out with someone else and make knowledge-based decisions. While some members may want the Intergroup to spend the money quickly, we have decided that we can use our program, the Steps and Traditions, and figure out what the best decision is “for the greatest number.”

Intergroup has a wonderful opportunity to “dream big” as to how the money can be used, with the mission of bringing the message of Al-Anon to friends and families of alcoholics. My hope is that on this very emotional topic of *money*, we can come together to do great things, put principles above personalities, and continue to build bridges with our members, the AIS office, and Intergroup.

With Gratitude in Service,  
Lisa K., Intergroup Chair

# Recovery Takes a Village

Laryn X., Seattle Al-Anon Information Service, Washington  
*Bits Newsletter*, October 2015

A busy mom of a two-year old is a member of a local Al-Anon group in the Seattle area. The child care offered there costs the group \$25 a week, collected from the Seventh Tradition envelope. Why should groups offer child care? This young mother thinks that more young parents would come to meetings if it were offered and that it affords an opportunity for parents to interact with each other in recovery. While the biggest reason to offer the service is that many folks simply could not afford to attend without the service, the reality is also that other members do complain when children are in the meeting room.

The young mother has been in Al-Anon since May 2014 and has found that meetings with child care are hard to find, but oh-so-important to her recovery. That freedom also allows her to be active in service in her group and participate more fully in sponsorship. Sometimes mother really does know best!

## Coordinator's REPORT

Judy P., *Forum/Literature Coordinator*, District 6, Texas-East  
*District 6 Newsletter*, Winter 2015

This quarter, I will be highlighting the booklet *Groups at Work* (P-24). This is the only booklet you need at a meeting as it has all the latest wording for the various readings each group has adopted. It can be a great substitute for that outdated notebook many groups are still using. If you are reading the "Suggested Opening," the Steps and Traditions, and/or the "Suggested Closing" from something someone typed up or copied a while ago, your group may not have the correct or current wording. It is also important for members to know that there are restrictions on copying Al-Anon Conference Approved Literature (CAL). See "Copyrights" on page 106 in the *2014-2017 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27).

*Groups at Work* (P-24) is sent to each new group in the U.S., Canada, Bermuda, and Puerto Rico that registers with the World Service Office (WSO). This booklet is available in English, French, and Spanish and is often carried by our members when they visit a new area or country where Al-Anon does not have a presence. Just think, every meeting, every day, around the world opens the same; we read the same Steps and Traditions, and we use the same Closing, even though our closing thoughts or prayers may differ. In the "Suggested Meeting Format Readings," there is a time for optional readings, which are all included in this booklet and can be wonderful topics for discussion. They include "Anonymity," "The Three Obstacles to Success in Al-Anon," "Four Primary Ideas," and "Understanding Alcoholism" and "Understanding Ourselves" from the pamphlet *Understanding Ourselves and Alcoholism* (P-48). You might be surprised at what is not recommended that meetings often use!

I encourage each group to purchase enough for every member to use to follow at meetings, as well as a few extras for members to purchase. I have sold out of this piece at the last two district meetings! This booklet is also available to print or download in PDF format to your electronic device. Both are free. To download or print this booklet, log on to the Al-Anon Members' Web site: [Al-Anon.org/members](http://Al-Anon.org/members). The Members' password is your home group name followed by AFG. Once on the site, click on the "Individuals" tab, and then on "Member Resources." Click on the P-24 publication icon to select either the print or download icon. You will see other items for download or print, including, but not limited to, the entire *Service Manual* and the WSO Guidelines.

# Alateen News

Area Alateen Coordinator, Indiana  
Area 17 Lifelines, Indiana, August 2015

KOMIAC 2015 was fantastic! Thank you for all of your support in helping to make sure these teenagers get to attend their annual conference. A weekend away from home may not seem like a big deal to some people but it can be life changing to a child of an alcoholic. Just to find out that there are other teens living through some of the same or even worse situations and seeing how they apply the principles of this program to their life and survive, gives so much hope. It sometimes is also an opportunity for them to find out that there really are adults in this world that truly care about them. It is a weekend of miracles.

We can all be very proud of our Indiana Alateens. Our teens stepped up to the plate to do service work whenever they had the chance to chair meetings or work security. I can't tell you how many times I saw them sitting with other teens having an impromptu meeting during their breaks. They didn't hesitate to participate in the workshops and activities. We have some amazingly talented Alateens. It was such a blessing to see a kid who is shy and bashful actually have the courage to stand up before 200 other teens and sing, dance, play an instrument, share poetry they had written, or many of the other great talents that we get to see that first night. It is an excellent ice breaker to put them all at ease.

Indiana Alateens walked away from this year's KOMIAC not only tossing around ideas for when they get to host it in two years but also talking to me about things like how to get meetings started closer to their home or where they will be attending college, how they can reach out to newcomers, service opportunities, how they were finally brave enough to ask someone to sponsor them, ideas for meeting topics, and how to apply the Steps and Traditions to personal situations. I even had one group of teens talk to me about how they wanted to start learning about the Concepts in their group!

If you have Alateens in your district, please consider inviting them to your Al-Anon meetings to share about their KOMIAC experience. If you are having an event in your district where there are A.A. and Al-Anon speakers, please consider inviting one of the teens to speak as well. They don't have to give a full lead if you don't have time in the schedule. You can just have two to three teens share one thing they've gotten from Alateen and one thing they got from KOMIAC this year. It might take about ten minutes, it gives the teens an opportunity to do some service work, and it just may help another teen in the crowd to know they are not alone.

## Getting an Alateen Event Approved Following the NCWSA Safety Requirements

StephanT., District 6 Alateen Process Person, California North  
*Share & Care*, Volume 49, No. 10, October 2015

When is approval required?

- When there is Alateen participation:
  - ◊ Alateen Speaker
  - ◊ Alateen Fundraiser
  - ◊ Alateen appears in the name of the event
- If Alateens are attending but not participating, no approval is required

What are the requirements?

- Two currently certified AMIAs must be identified as Event Sponsors (preferably one male and one female);
- The NCWSA Safety Statement must appear on the flier: "This Event Abides by the B-17 NCWSA Requirements for Alateen Safety." It must be these words or contain the name of the event. "This District abides..." or similar terminology will not be accepted;
- Must be approved by the Area Alateen Process Person, not the District Alateen Process Person;
- Flyers that aren't approved may not be distributed.

## New workshops to resolve conflict!

Four new workshops are now available to use in conjunction with the *Using Al-Anon Principles to Resolve Conflict Kit* (K70)! These workshops provide opportunities for members in service to learn new ways to avoid—as well as resolve—the types of conflict that can arise in their groups, districts, Al-Anon Information Services, and Areas.

Find these Conflict Resolution Workshops on the Members' Web site, [al-anon.org/members](http://al-anon.org/members). From the home page, click on the "Service Structure" tab. Then click on the "Area Resources" tab, followed by the "Presentations, Workshops, and Skits" tab, where you will find the following workshops:

- **Group Conflict Workshop: Debate or discuss?**
- **Workshop for Resolving Conflict in the District**
- **AIS/LDC Training Workshop for Office Volunteers**
- **Workshop for Area Members in Service**

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## A Seventh Tradition Story

Anonymous, Australia  
*Austra – Link*, April 2015

No matter where we are located, each of us in service has stories to share about trying to encourage members to think differently about how much they are putting in the basket. Over the years, expenses for the group have increased and/or our financial commitments to our districts and Area. One such story was shared from Australia.

“I’ve been going out for a coffee and cake after the meeting each week, spending over \$10.00, and walking away with little to show for it! Yet every week I walk away from my Al-Anon meeting so full of gratitude, awareness and new tools, having only left a few measly coins in the basket as my token of thanks. Gulp! It made me think: what would I pay a professional for the pearls of wisdom I have learned in Al-Anon? How many years would I need to go to a therapist to find peace of mind and new ways of responding to life? How much money had I already spent on trying to find a solution before I found Al-Anon?”

I want my Al-Anon family to always be there—not just for me but for all of those who are yet to find what I have found. The café will survive without my \$10.00 every week, but will my Al-Anon group?

## Joys of service

Sulata L., Area Archivist, Georgia  
*Georgia on Track* 2015, Volume 36, Issue 6

We are over halfway through our three-year term. Rotation of service means that just as I figure out how to do my job, it will be time to step aside and let someone else try it. This is part of how Al-Anon as a whole avoids dominance: “Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.”

As archivist, I love the interactions I get to have with program folks. Sometimes those interactions come through reading an old letter. Sometimes they occur through the somewhat weird process of a Task Force conference call. Then I experience the pleasure of seeing those Task Force members in person, after they had been just voices. Discovering things in the archives has been a blast. It’s funny that I’m the archivist who has begun the scanning process. I like old pieces of paper much better than the electronic screen.

There are so many things I hoped to do as archivist. My day (and night) job sometimes gets in my way. No matter what I have accomplished, I have felt so much support and cheer from everyone. Al-Anon service has been a great antidote for my creeping perfectionism. As one of the speakers in the latest World Service Conference Summary said, “If a thing’s worth doing, it’s worth doing badly!” I wish for all of our trusted servants that we dare to muddle through, instead of waiting to be perfect.

Thank you for allowing me to serve. It is a joy!

## November TEAM Event in London

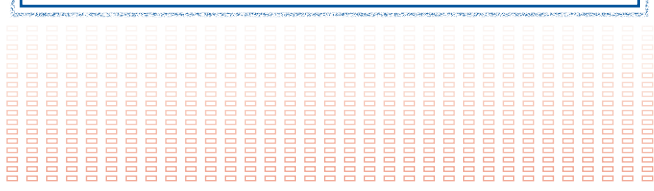
Katherine, UK & Eire  
*Al-Anon Today*, UK & Eire Spring 2015

I was lucky enough to be on the committee that hosted the TEAM Event in London, England in November (2014), and wanted to share with other members what a great day it was. TEAM stands for ‘Together Empowering Al-Anon Members’ and its aim is to inspire us with the confidence and desire to do service. I felt like I was at a wedding or a party, except all the guests were friendly Al-Anon members just like me. It really was a day to belong, to feel valued, to grow and to learn.

There were about 60 of us from all over the country, and the first thing we did was play an “ice breaker” game so we all got to meet each other. The next session was a bit like a mini convention in that there were personal shares, but what made it unusual were the really interesting presentations by members, on subjects varying from the structure of our fellowship to how to use the Members’ resources area of the (UK & Eire) Web site.

We didn’t just sit and listen, which could have become boring. We took part in various workshops. One helped us look at our financial fears, and linked how Al-Anon is financed, which everyone found really interesting. We did a workshop on unusual places to put an Al-Anon poster... the best one being, I think, on the edge of bottle recycling bank!

We laughed and cried and talked and hugged. As one member put it “I didn’t stop smiling all day.” Others said “I’m really glad I attended I learned a lot.” “It was extremely helpful” and “I liked not being talked at.” One member said to me “I had no idea it was going to be such FUN,” and I knew what she meant. Alcoholism made me so anxious and wary I never thought I’d have fun again!



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# Join us in Celebrating!

Please join Al-Anon members and their guests in celebration of the extraordinary work started by two ordinary women! In recognition of 65 years of Al-Anon Family Groups and the beginnings of the Clearing House, the World Service Office (WSO) will host an Open House followed by a banquet at the Wyndham Virginia Beach Oceanfront Hotel on Saturday, April 16, 2016.

The Open House, which is free of charge, includes tours between 1:00 pm and 3:00 pm; the office will close at 4:00 pm. The ticketed dinner banquet, from 6:00 pm to 10:00 pm, includes speakers in English. Tickets for the banquet are \$55.00 USD each—please note that space at the banquet is limited.

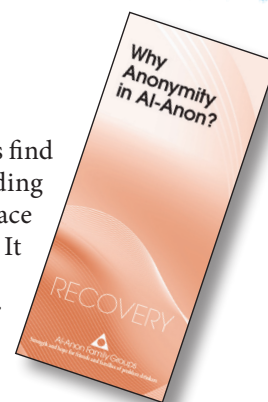
Details to come via *Group e-News*, *The Forum*, and the Members' Web site: [al-anon.org/members](http://al-anon.org/members).



## Anonymity in the Electronic Age

The pamphlet *Why Anonymity in Al-Anon?* (P-33) now includes all-new wording to help members find practical ways to apply and maintain anonymity on the Internet. It also covers other aspects, including anonymity among members, at the public level, and as an important spiritual principle that we place above personalities. The revision is easily identifiable, as its cover has the new pamphlet design. It remains eight pages long and sells for 35 cents (U.S.).

**Remember—When you buy from your local Literature Distribution Center, you support your local services.**



## Writing for the new daily reader

By Beth S., Area Literature Coordinator, Missouri  
*Missouri Round Robin*, August 2015

We continue to need sharings for the new daily reader. For most of our literature, we simply ask members to send us their recovery stories, but this new daily reader has some specific requirements. We're looking for sharings that:

- Are no longer than 275 words, so that it can fit onto a single page in the book.
- Focus on a single insight that you found helpful in your personal growth and recovery—it applies an Al-Anon principle to a real-life problem or challenge.
- Give some flavor of who you are as an individual. Give us a glimpse into your personal life and life situation. This personal perspective helps to convey the rich diversity of personal experience that we share as a fellowship. Because gender, age, relationship to the alcoholic, etc., are not always evident from members' writings, it is up to each writer to make our fellowship's diversity more apparent, and exemplify the inclusiveness of our program by revealing personal details as they focus on a particular program topic or idea. The more varied the experience, the greater the strength and hope.

Please remember that without your sharing, there will be no new literature for future generations of Al-Anon members. So on that next rainy day, grab your pen, a cup of tea, and try your hand at becoming a published author!



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# Does Al-Anon have “Promises”?

By Nancy S., Wyoming

Wyoming Area AFG Newsletter, November 2015

One night, a member of my home group brought a printed copy of the “Al-Anon Promises” to the meeting for the topic. We had some discussion about whether this was Conference Approved Literature (CAL), and why there wasn’t information about them in our literature. My home group avoids use of literature other than CAL, so we chose another topic for discussion.

I was curious, though. I started asking other members what they’d heard about “promises,” and started researching for myself. What I found helped me better understand how the World Service Conference (WSC) and the World Service Office (WSO) serve the Al-Anon membership. Because I’d never seen anything in the literature titled “Promises,” I contacted the WSO, where staff responded to my request, and explained some of the history involved.

I learned that over time, requests had come before the WSO Literature Committee and the Policy Committee to adopt “Promises” for Al-Anon. These requests were discussed, but turned down because they would elevate an excerpt from literature to a higher level of importance than any other CAL, and because we don’t make promises in Al-Anon, since everyone’s situation is different. Instead, we offer our experience, strength, and hope to help each other. By taking passages out of context, we can lose the original intention.

One member I spoke with thought that the A.A. “Promises” were reprinted in Al-Anon literature, making them CAL. This is not true. Page 104 of the *2014-2017 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27) is clear that “A.A. literature is not used at Al-Anon meetings because it is written for and from the viewpoint of alcoholics and is not Conference Approved Literature. Reliance on opinions expressed in A.A. and other outside materials can distort the Al-Anon approach.”

As Al-Anon members, we are welcome to read whatever literature we choose outside of an Al-Anon meeting. Inside Al-Anon meetings, we are reminded to observe the First Tradition and use only CAL—as it was written and published—to support unity. Now when someone brings outside literature or items to a meeting, I am better able to explain why it’s important to stick to Al-Anon principles.

## Al-Anon electronic literature is here

Don’t forget that Conference Approved Literature, now available in e-book format, includes:

- *Alateen—Hope for Children of Alcoholics* (English eB-3; Spanish eSB-3; and French eFB-3)
- *How Al-Anon Works* (English eB-22; Spanish eSB-22; and French eFB-22)
- *Having Had a Spiritual Awakening . . .* (eB-25)
- *The Forum*
- *Courage to Change* (English eB-16; Spanish eSB-16; and French eFB-16)

These CAL audiobook can be obtained in English:

- *One Day at a Time in Al-Anon* (eA-6)
- *How Al-Anon Works* (eA-22)
- ◊ Coming soon: *Courage to Change* in audio format.

Please see your electronic book provider for details.

## What is public outreach?

By Fay W., Area Public Outreach Coordinator, Missouri

Missouri Round Robin, August 2015

Recently, I asked myself, “What is public outreach?” I went to my trusty resource, *The Best of Public Outreach*, for guidance and found my answer. It stated, “Public outreach informs the general public about who we are, what we do, and how to get in touch with Al-Anon and Alateen. How do we do that? We reach out to:

- The media
- Professionals (counselors, etc.)
- Facilities, such as treatment centers
- Organizations, e.g. the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (NCADD)

More questions came to mind. Is this all there is? What else can we do? How else can we get the message out there? I would love to hear from the Public Outreach Chairs in each district, how are you reaching out?

Please photocopy Area Highlights and share it with other members.

Visit us at: [www.al-anon.org/members](http://www.al-anon.org/members)

## MD/DC staffs an Al-Anon information table at a national recovery rally in Washington DC

By Terrie C., Area Public Outreach Coordinator, Maryland/District of Columbia

Via e-mail to the WSO

The WSO asked MD/DC to represent Al-Anon by setting up an Al-Anon display booth at the first nationwide rally in Washington DC. More than 35,000 Americans in recovery from substance abuse and their family members were present.

Many visitors to our table commented that they were so glad we were there. One of our five volunteers said she was so grateful to be able to help out at the event. I was thrilled because this was my first official event as Outreach Coordinator.

*Note: The WSO thanks the MD/DC Area for responding to our request to represent Al-Anon at this national event.*

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## Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism magazine update

- Reminder, the deadline to order *AFA 2016* second printing magazines is **5 p.m. ET, Wednesday, February 3, 2016**.
  - ◇ Download the order form: <http://www.al-anon.org/pdf/OrderFormAFA.pdf>
  - ◇ Order online: [http://ecommerce.al-anon.org/iCommerce/Store/StoreLayouts/Category\\_BP\\_Results.aspx?InitialText=Category-Al-Anon%20Faces%20Alcoholism](http://ecommerce.al-anon.org/iCommerce/Store/StoreLayouts/Category_BP_Results.aspx?InitialText=Category-Al-Anon%20Faces%20Alcoholism)
- Invite “Al-Anon friendly” professionals to submit an article or quote for publication in *AFA*, <http://al-anon.org/professionals-writers-guide>
- Send a brief sharing to the WSO about alcoholism as a family illness and describe the benefits of our program, <http://al-anon.org/members/Al-Anon-faces-alcoholism>.

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## Making our meetings more interactive at treatment facilities

By Jim C, District Public Outreach Coordinator (South), Texas East  
*TX E. District Six Newsletter*, Winter 2015

We now have two speakers and allow more time for sharings from the audience at a transitional center. This is helping to increase the attendees’ participation. We are also sending two speakers to share with outpatient clients at a counseling center.

## Public outreach resources available on WSO Web sites

By Nancy H., Area Public Outreach Coordinator, Nebraska  
*Nebraskanon*, August/September 2015

Please encourage all members to visit the Al-Anon Family Groups Public Outreach and Members’ Web sites on a regular basis. Newcomers and seasoned members alike can benefit from listening to the various podcasts, reading the news releases, reviewing different survey results, and taking advantage of the vast recovery resources available through the WSO.

*The Best of Public Outreach*, available on the Members’ Web site, is a service tool that offers direction for many kinds of Al-Anon/Alateen public outreach projects. The current issue of *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism* is also available. Assistance for any question regarding public outreach can be directed to the WSO Communications Secretary, at [wso@Al-Anon.org](mailto:wso@Al-Anon.org).

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## Group AFA ‘assembly lines’ make public outreach mailings easier

By Teresa B-C., Area Literature Coordinator, Massachusetts  
*MA Area Bulletin*, October 2015

Several groups in District 35 sent out 406 copies of the *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism* magazines and leaflets. On three occasions, “assembly lines” were formed after a Saturday morning meeting to compile the three different mailings:

- Information for adults
- Explanation of Alateen and meeting information
- Materials for 127 local doctors

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## Replenishing literature is included in outreach to police and domestic courts

By Rachel L., Public Outreach West Coordinator, Oklahoma  
*This Day*, OK Area Newsletter, September 2015

I recently visited six local police stations with members of my group. We provided staff with a variety of pamphlets and meeting schedules. The staff is thankful for the information and eager to share it with police officers who often encounter alcohol-related domestic violence calls. We have permission to restock their supplies of literature as needed.

I also reached out to the city courthouse to place several pamphlets and meeting schedules on information tables in four of the five domestic (family) courts.

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

## Retractable banner attracts visitors to Al-Anon information tables

By Cathy S., Al-Anon/Alateen In the Desert Al-Anon Information Service, Palm Desert, California South  
Via e-mail to the WSO

The Al-Anon/Alateen In the Desert Al-Anon Information Service (AIS) updated its “When you don’t know where to turn...” retractable display banner used at health fairs and professional conferences. The vendor provided a discount because the Area also purchased banners for local service arms to use.

The WSO assisted us with:

- Furnishing the graphic in English, Spanish, or French.
- Reviewing the text for accuracy.
- Sharing tips, e.g., placing contact information in the center for improved visibility and easier access to the WSO Web site address, [www.al-anon.org](http://www.al-anon.org), as well as considering the addition of a Quick Read (QR) scan code.

For information, e-mail [al-anoninthedesert@yahoo.com](mailto:al-anoninthedesert@yahoo.com) or call 760-341-6202.

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By Rachel L., Public Outreach West Coordinator, Oklahoma  
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I also reached out to the city courthouse to place several pamphlets and meeting schedules on information tables in four of the five domestic (family) courts.

## Location, location, location at the state fair

By Kelli, Western NY AFG Information Service Chairman, New York North  
*Western NY AFG Information Service Newsletter*, Volume 35, Issue 6.

Our Al-Anon booth at the NY State Fair went well. We quickly learned some things about location, however. Our booth was to the left of the door and most people walked in and turned right. They nearly missed us. We now know that we have to catch attendees when they enter the facility. Overall, 596 people visited our booth and our cost for the outreach was less than half of what we budgeted.

## Did you know?

By Roberta H., Forum Coordinator, Indiana  
*Lifelines*, August 2015

Did you know that every English-speaking registered group receives a free subscription to *The Forum*? Where is your group’s copy being delivered?

Did you know that you can use articles in *The Forum* for meeting topics?

Did you know that an annual *Forum* subscription is less than \$1.00 per month? How many people from your home group subscribe to *The Forum*? Do you subscribe?

Did you know that the Group Representative is *The Forum* representative to the group?

Did you know that you can purchase an electronic subscription to *The Forum*?

From December 2014 to March 2015, Al-Anon groups grew by two registered groups (U.S., Canada, Bermuda, and Puerto Rico) but *The Forum* subscriptions dropped by 365. However, Indiana increased its subscriptions by six! Go Indiana! We are reading for recovery!

*The Forum* is written by Al-Anon/Alateen members, for Al-Anon/Alateen members. It can be a bonus to your program of recovery. Think about giving yourself a boost and subscribing if you aren’t already. There is an order form in the back of every issue, or you can order it on-line at the World Service Office Web Site, [www.ecomm.al-anon.org/shop](http://www.ecomm.al-anon.org/shop).

## NEW FORUM BOOK (working title)

*The Forum* regularly publishes fresh, vibrant, and thoughtful sharings that represent the diversity of the fellowship today. The best of these sharings deserve to be read for years to come!

The April 2015 World Service Conference granted conceptual approval to create a book of sharings from previously published issues of *The Forum*.

Have you ever read a Forum sharing that:

- helped you to look at something a bit differently?
- made you laugh?
- touched your heart and made you keenly aware that you aren’t alone?
- had a unique way of presenting the topic/subject?
- will stand the test of time?
- is written using contemporary language?

Those are the sharings we would like to include in the NEW FORUM BOOK (working title) so they may live on in the hearts and minds of our fellow members of Al-Anon and Alateen.

You are cordially invited to send us your most memorable *Forum* sharings. There’s only one caveat! **Please let us know the title, month, and year in which it appeared in the magazine.**

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

## Comité de Difusión Pública

Iris, Coordinadora Difusión Pública

*El Faro de Al-Anon y Alateen-470, Mayo 2015*

Saludos compañeras:

Ya estamos en el mes de mayo, mes de **Información al Público**. Servicio que se coordina a través del Comité de Difusión Pública. En años anteriores hemos trabajado la actividad del «Día de la Pasquinada».

En mi opinión, el «Día de la Pasquinada» es un acto simbólico que uno de sus objetivos es concienciarnos de la responsabilidad de cada miembro Al-Anon de llevar el mensaje de fe y esperanza para aquellos que todavía sufren por la enfermedad del alcoholismo de un ser querido. Que la comunidad, profesional y no profesional, se entere de qué es Al-Anon, qué hacemos, dónde nos pueden encontrar. No es un acto o actividad de un día, es una actividad de día a día.. Por lo tanto, me pregunto:

◊ **En mi carácter personal, como miembro agradecido**

- ¿Tengo literatura del Programa siempre disponible, a la mano, en mi cartera, en el carro, para dejar o entregar en lugares cercanos a mi trabajo, a mi casa, oficinas que visito?
- ¿Qué lugares? Cuarteles de la policía, oficinas médicas, laboratorios, gimnasios, iglesias, farmacias, salas de emergencia, escuelas, centros de rehabilitación y muchos más.

◊ **¿Cómo consigo la literatura que voy a entregar?**

- En nuestra oficina (SEDE- Al-Anon) y en los mismos grupos la tenemos disponible. La mayoría sin costo alguno. Importante incluir el directorio de las reuniones actualizado. Pregunta a miembros de tu grupo, tu RG o RD.
- ¿Estoy alerta a programas de radio, de televisión, periódicos y ferias que promueven orientación a la comunidad para llamar o informarlo al RG, RD y/o a la Coordinadora de Difusión al Público?

◊ **Como grupo**

- ¿Hemos llevado información a cuarteles de la policía, oficinas médicas, laboratorios, gimnasios, iglesias, farmacias, salas de emergencia, escuelas, centros de rehabilitación, instituciones que brindan servicios a víctimas de violencia domestica cercanos al lugar de reunion de nuestro grupo?

«Sólo se necesita una persona para comenzar algo y muchas más para continuarlo».

¡Que emprece por mí!

## Compartiendo Ideas Entre Nosotros

Beatriz (Grupo Mi Familia), Coordinadora de Área

*El Faro de Al-Anon y Alateen-470, Junio 2015*

Al-Anon es un programa para compartir experiencia, fortaleza, esperanza y también ideas. También tenemos diferentes foros para llevar nuestro mensaje; aniversarios de grupo, divulgaciones a profesionales, convenciones A.A., aniversarios en actividades donde A.A. nos ofrece un turno y nuestras convenciones Al-Anon. Pero, ¿qué debo decir cuándo y si se me invita a llevar el mensaje Al-Anon?

Algo que está bien claro para mí es que debo poner el enfoque Al-Anon en todos mis mensajes sea cual sea la actividad. Si es Al-Anon, debe prevalecer la presencia de Al-Anon, lo que sucede casi siempre cuando se empieza y se cierra la reunión con un miembro Al-Anon. El tiempo es importante. Luego de ser aprobado por una conciencia grupal, somos iguales y, por lo tanto, debo compartirlo entre todos los oradores de igual manera. Es bonito y parte de la cooperación, invitar a un miembro A.A., a compartir como nuestro invitado (ellos lo hacen casi siempre con nosotros).

Entiendo que si me invitan como servidor del Area, podría hablar salpicando mi mensaje de recuperación con el servicio ¿por qué no? eso sí, limitando mi charla a los minutos concedidos en la actividad en particular.

En cuanto al mensaje Al-Anon en actividades A.A. tenemos la Guías G-1 que nos puede servir de ayuda; en algunos Distritos ya se ha estado discutiendo este tema. En nuestro plan de trabajo de reorganización de los Distritos se está contemplando un acercamiento a los grupos de A.A. que nos lo permitan, para llevar el mensaje Al-Anon en sus actividades y poder llegar a posibles miembros interesados en abrir grupos Al-Anon; por tal razón debo ser cautelosa en el uso del tiempo para evitar cerrarnos las puertas.

Les sugiero que compartan entre ustedes, si también tienen estas inquietudes, y así compartir las otras preguntas que puedan surgir en sus grupos para seguir creciendo.

Con amor en el servicio, Beatriz

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.

## Témoignage

Extrait du journal interne des Groupes Familiaux Al-Anon et Alateen de la Circonscription du Québec-Est et du Nouveau-Brunswick  
*Le Contact*, mars 2015

Ghislaine R., Secrétaire

[...] Pendant longtemps j'ai fait du « meeting de chaise » comme on dit, croyant que c'était suffisant pour moi. Au fil du temps, je me suis bien rendu compte que ça ne l'était pas! J'ai alors commencé à m'impliquer dans le service, petit à petit, un jour à la fois. J'ai fait plusieurs tâches toutes aussi intéressantes et motivantes les unes que les autres. Quel merveilleux rétablissement qu'est le service.

Premièrement, ça m'apporte de l'assiduité, et oui, je suis du genre à dire : bon il fait froid, il mouille, je suis fatiguée alors j'irai la semaine prochaine; mais ne soyez pas inquiète, j'y travaille! J'ai acquis plus de stabilité dans ma vie et de la confiance en moi. En prime, j'ai le privilège de côtoyer ces personnes extraordinaires que sont les membres Al-Anon. Présentement je suis RG, mais aussi sur le Comité des officiels. Quelles rencontres enrichissantes nous avons, j'en apprend à chaque fois. [...]

Pour ceux et celles qui hésitent à faire du service, allez-y, c'est du rétablissement à l'état pur. C'est normal d'être stressé au début, de se poser mille et une questions. Quand j'ai été RD, je me suis longtemps demandé ce qui avait bien pu me passer par la tête pour donner mon nom, une bulle que je me disais. Et bien cela aura été une bulle remplie de bonheur...

## Le service

Extraits du journal interne des Groupes Familiaux Al-Anon et Alateen de la Circonscription du Québec-Ouest  
*Le Tournesol*, mai-juin 2015

« ... Dans le travail de service, j'accepte d'assumer certaines responsabilités et de prendre des décisions. Cette recherche du bien commun est pour moi une boussole sûre selon laquelle orienter mes décisions et mes façons de travailler... »  
*France L.*

« ... Je veux souligner comment toutes les réunions de service m'ont enrichie. Oui, je continue de croire que côtoyer des membres aimant le service contribue à mon rétablissement personnel et améliore la connaissance de soi en relation avec les autres... »  
*Lorraine D., Déléguée*

**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.