

Area Highlights

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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, the members of the World Service Conference focused on the theme, “Living Our Spiritual Principles: Expanding Our Vision,” during the annual week long business meeting of the widest group conscience of Al-Anon Family Groups.

Al-Anon members—Delegates and members of the Board of Trustees and Executive Committee—from the World Service Conference Structure joined together with World Service Office Conference staff, who are also Al-Anon members, in Virginia Beach, Virginia, April 19-23, 2015, to form the 95 voting members of the Conference.

In her opening remarks, the Chairperson of the Conference said, “Today we will begin the 55th World Service Conference. Can you feel the love and energy of those who came before you? Pause also, to take a moment to feel the love and support of those who sent you here to do this work to guarantee Al-Anon’s future. You have been entrusted to protect what our pioneers set in motion and continue to build the future that will ensure Al-Anon is vibrantly growing for those yet to come. What an awesome privilege and responsibility.”

She concluded by saying, “I’m going to ask you to stretch your mind to such an extent that you will never be the same again. Value your own judgment and inner guidance, but be willing to expand your awareness. Other members’ perspectives on reality are as valid as your own. By exploring all possibilities in an open and supportive environment, we will be acting in a spirit which supports Al-Anon’s primary purpose.

Even if the results of Conference decisions are not immediately obvious, we will know steps forward have been taken without altering our core values.”

When the Chairperson of the Board welcomed the members of the Conference, she stated, “As Trusted Servants, we strive to allow the spiritual principles of our Legacies to permeate our every thought and action. The principle of Mutual Respect ensures that the voices of all Conference members are heard. These voices bring the thoughts, ideas, and concerns of our current and future members to the discussion. Responsibility, another spiritual principle, reminds us to listen with an open mind. Once heard, we accept the group conscience because we know that our Higher Power was present in our discussions and decisions.”

Some of the highlights of the Conference included:

- The continuation of a Policy discussion on Memorial Contributions.
- A Finance Committee presentation where Conference members were asked to expand their minds to the limits of their dreams to achieve the Board’s Vision: All people affected by someone else’s drinking will find help and recovery in every community.
- A Board of Trustees’ Big Question presentation: How do we envision responsible service leadership in Al-Anon, a vision that inspires today’s members to be tomorrow’s leaders who are motivated by spiritual principles?

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

For complete details of these sessions, download a free copy of the 2015 Conference Summary at al-anon.org/members/pdf/summary/summary_2015.pdf, or order a copy of the 2015 Conference Summary for \$5.00 shipping/handling from your local Literature Distribution Center or from the shopping cart on the Al-Anon/Alateen Members' Web site, al-anon.org/members.

We hope all Al-Anon members will think about ways to expand our vision after hearing their Area Delegate's report and reading the 2015 World Service Conference Summary.

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 and read the complete report of the 2015 Conference—or another Conference—for free!



Al-Anon guidelines

The Shared Experience of Al-Anon and Alateen Members.

GUIDELINES! GUIDELINES! GUIDELINES!

Sharon Barnes, WSO Group Services Assistant

"Al-Anon Family Groups are a fellowship of the relatives and friends of alcoholics who share their experience, strength, and hope in order to solve their common problems." (*Preamble to the Twelve Steps*)

At Al-Anon and Alateen meetings, members share their personal experiences to aid recovery. The thirty-four Al-Anon guidelines offer the shared experience of Al-Anon and Alateen members on a variety of topics relating to Al-Anon/Alateen service. They are a "go-to" resource for Al-Anon and Alateen members to find suggestions and guidance to aid their service work.

Have you ever wondered what occurs at a *District Meeting* (G-17), or what is Al-Anon's role when *Participating in an A.A. Area Convention* (G-7)? The duties of a GR are published in the *Group Representative* guideline (G-11) and the

G-20 offers tips and tools for Area Conventions. The guidelines are updated periodically to reflect current practices such as the duties and responsibilities of the various Area Coordinators. The WSO no longer prints and sells the guidelines; they are all posted on the Al-Anon Members' Web site under the "Service Structure/Area Resources" tab for members to download: <http://al-anon.org/members/service-structure/area-resources/item/365-guidelines-and-other-service-tools>. Those most recently updated have the new masthead pictured above.

Some Areas, districts, and AISs post the actual guidelines on their Web site, or insert them in service binders for their local trusted servants. Please check to see that the most current versions are available to your members. Area and local Webmasters can link to the page listed above to avoid listing out-of-date information.

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Visit us at: www.al-anon.org/members

It's on my phone!

Lalena, California South

The Bulletin, Volume 57, No. 1, February 2015

Did you know the *Service Manual* (P-24/27) is on-line? I love having it on my phone so I can look at it whenever I want. I even used it in Scotland to compare and contrast theirs to ours. I have an actual print copy of the *Service Manual* that I like to write notes in when I'm at meetings.



Our district meeting format

Janet G., District Representative, District 17, Nebraska
Nebraskanon, May 2015

For the first meeting of the year we discuss the format of our district meeting. We try to follow guidelines for our district meetings. We send out an agenda well before the meeting and ask for input for the agenda.

District 17 continues to be very active with public outreach. We appreciate the information we get from the Area. We use the bookmarks and pamphlets for distribution and the poster for display. We try to remind people often to take information to laundromats, other churches, doctors, etc. We do have discussions about *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism*—"Don't just buy them, distribute them."



- We discuss what the WSO sends out by e-mail that is really helpful to our groups.
- We study the Tradition of the month and we use *Al-Anon's Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* (B-8) and the *Service Manual* (P-24/27) as our guide. Each member takes turns leading the Tradition Meeting.
- We review the Assembly Agenda when appropriate.
- We continue to discuss the job of the Group Representative and include time for questions/answers.
- We encourage people to view the WSO and Area Web sites to keep themselves informed.
- We have a literature display at the meeting to show what is available.

We have a meet and greet before the meeting and have refreshments during the meeting. Each member has their own *Service Manual* and *Al-Anon's Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* to use during the meeting.

E-letter from the World Service Office

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

The latest information and news from our World Service Office can come to your group via the *Group e-News*. Your Current Mailing Address (CMA) person can give our Missouri Area Group Records Coordinator his or her e-mail address, or the group can create an e-mail address to receive the *Group e-News*. The letter can be printed and brought to your meeting to become part of your announcements, or the receiving member can e-mail it to the rest of the group.

Help Us Make Our District More Diverse

By Maria A. and Aurora V, California North
Share & Care, Vol. 44, No. 5, May 2015

As another step in diversifying our district membership, we want to start the process of reaching out to other communities that we know exist within our boundaries. There is a large community of Eastern Europeans in Citrus Heights—Russian, Ukrainian, Romanian—and a community of Native Americans around and above Auburn. We also need information on other communities we may overlook for lack of familiarity with the district's population, and the scarcity of this type of information in the census. We would also like to start an LGBT meeting anywhere in our very extended district.

We are looking for help as there is lots of work to do. You don't need to be bilingual; you just need willingness to work in this area and time to dedicate to the project.

Being a GR

Jane W., Group Representative, Arizona
East Valley Information Center Newsletter,
May 2015, Issue 5

Today my Higher Power turns on lights in my soul so I can become what I was meant to be! Becoming a Group Representative is one of those lights.

While challenging, the service allows me new opportunities to honor my Higher Power and rise to greater heights of respect for Al-Anon as I see more fully the scope of its benefits. The ultimate goal of Al-Anon is a human being fully alive. Progress, not perfection, and one day at a time, the transformation is happening.

Thank you, God, for bringing me to Al-Anon.

Alateen Coordinator's Report

Janet W., Area Alateen Coordinator, Missouri
Missouri Round Robin July 2015

I am dedicating this article to our amazing Missouri Alateens and their Group Sponsors. I sent an e-mail to all the Alateen Group Sponsors asking them to ask their Alateens three questions from an e-Communities e-mail that I received. I was blown away with the number of groups and answers that I received. Some groups even used this as the topic for the meeting.

The following is a question from an e-mail that I received with some of our Missouri Alateens' replies below the questions. "We are having a discussion in one of our districts trying to figure out a couple of questions. At this time we do not have any kids coming so we can't ask them. I was wondering if any of the groups that have active teens could ask these questions for us."

1. Why did you come to Alateen?
 - At first I came because Mom/Dad made me.
 - I wanted to learn how to deal with my Dad's drinking.
 - To gain some knowledge.
 - I felt angry much of the time. The meeting has helped with that.
 - I wanted things to be better at home.
 - To not be lonely and was promised Taco Bell (the first night)!
 - I come to Alateen because it helps me sort through my problems in a calm, rational way, as well as my emotions.
 2. Why do you keep coming back?
 - I like the serenity and it gets me motivated.
 - It's a place to talk freely.
 - You walk out not wanting to tear someone's head off.
 - I have made some great friends.
 - Mom wants me to.
 - Might need to talk about something.
 - Feels special here.
 - Happier.
 - For the inner strength.
 - For the hope here that they get from others.
 - 'Cause it helps me understand what to do.
 - I keep coming back because it helps to keep me stable, mentally and physically. Also I want to help others.
 - I keep coming to Alateen because the people in my group welcomed me and we all had at least one thing in common.
 3. How could we get kids to come to an Alateen meeting?
 - Share with friends what Alateen has done for me.
 - Give literature to teachers and school counselors
 - Tell them there are snacks
 - By word of mouth and their example
 - We could properly announce the locations where some are since some teens do not even know it exists.
- Thank you to all Missouri Alateens and Alateen Group Sponsors for participating in this activity and also for making Missouri Alateen so awesome!!! Keep up the good work!

Santa Clara Valley Intergroup

Bruce D., Santa Clara Valley AFG Liaison, California North
The 12 Stepper, Vol. 52, Issue 1, February 2015

The Santa Clara Valley Al-Anon Family Groups (SCVAFG) is the Al-Anon Information Service (AIS) serving Districts 20, 21, and 22 in the greater San Jose area. As an AIS, SCVAFG is charged with managing important program functions in fulfillment of our program purpose of helping families and friends of alcoholics, both in and outside these rooms.

SCVAFG consists of a group of officers, service board members, and a full slate of coordinators, virtually identical to the service positions of our Northern California World Service Committee with the addition of TeleService, Meeting Directories, Financial (separate from Treasurer), Special Events, and Bookstore Coordinators, plus alternates.

The AIS or Intergroup, as we call it, meets monthly and works in cooperation with the three districts it serves. As stated in the guideline Al-Anon Information Services (G-4), "Experience shows that when the Information Service works closely with the Area and the districts, it increases its formula for success!"

With that in mind, SCVAFG Intergroup and the leadership of the three districts are convening a meeting to resume the Thought Force begun in 2014 and placed on short hiatus to accommodate the 2015 rotation of leadership which included the three-year panel service positions.

The purpose of the Thought Force is to examine whether we are delivering the Al-Anon message to families and friends of alcoholics as effectively as we can. Can communication and cooperation between the districts and Intergroup be improved? Are we functioning at an effective level for both membership and those in need? Where do we find room for improvement, and can we modify our current system to accommodate desired changes?

These questions and more will be delved into by our collective membership in the months to come. Whether or not substantial changes are made or even placed in the form of a motion remains to be seen, but there is currently unanimity that, in the meantime, this is a very valuable conversation, raising everyone's awareness of the importance of good coordination between the multiple Al-Anon service bodies in Santa Clara Valley.

District 5A REPORT

Meg H., District Representative, District 5A, Tennessee
The Tennessee Traveler, Spring 2015

Each of the groups within our district engaged in a group inventory process before the new term; each group used the WSO Guideline Taking a Group Inventory (G8-a & G8-b) questions. Some groups chose to have members write about the questions, then share. Other groups read each question and share. Still other groups voted as to which questions to answer and prepare before the group inventory. Newcomers and newer members were encouraged to participate and share their own experience, strength, and hope. At least one group found questions to explore through group consciences. It was a beautiful and very enlightening experience. I know I benefitted greatly as a member of various groups.

At the district level, we have been busy beginning our new term by digging deeply into the Traditions as they relate to groups. We began by studying Tradition Five, which clearly outlines Al-Anon's primary purpose. Each member at the district meeting received a quote about Tradition Five from among Al-Anon books: *Reaching for Personal Freedom—Living the Legacies* (P-92), *Paths to Recovery* (B-24), or Al-Anon's Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions (B-8). Members reflected first in writing and then with another person.

At our second district meeting, our Alternate DR prepared a super study of Tradition Two. Her leadership powerfully impacted the rest of us in two major ways:

1. She took each of the key words in Tradition Two and provided the official definitions of each word. We reflected on these definitions and then shared as a group.
2. She left us with a question to think about: How does it look when a group conscience is led by a Higher Power?

I am so thankful that my Higher Power led me to these groups and has allowed me to represent this district for a term.

WSO On-line Group Records Application for DRs

Valerie Stump, WSO Group Records Coordinator

A past Area Group Records Coordinator shared: “I make extra time during the Area World Service Committee (AWSC) meetings to talk with new District Representatives (DRs) and explain to them how to access the group records from their district using the WSO On-line Group Records application. Our meeting place has Wi-Fi, so I’m able to walk them through the process!”

As Concept Four states “Participation is the key to harmony.” Encouraging DRs to become familiar with the WSO On-line Group Records application is essential, as it allows them to use the latest WSO service tool, and strengthens the connection between the Area and the WSO. DRs can work more independently, as they have the ability to run group reports in their own district “on demand.” It benefits the Area Group Records Coordinators as well, since the Coordinators then don’t have to run large number of Al-Anon group reports for the entire Area. Ultimately, group information can be compared and updated on a more regular basis, so accurate meeting information can be provided to the friends and families of alcoholics who are seeking help.

How can Area Group Records Coordinators encourage DRs to access the WSO On-line Group Records application?

- Create a presentation
- Hold a workshop
- Remind outgoing DRs to be a resource to new DRs
- Ask other Areas for their shared experience on the Area Group Record Coordinators e-Community discussion board

Detailed instructions can be found within the site or on the District Representative e-Community in the “WSO Online Group Records” folder. DRs can always be referred to the WSO Group Records Department if they need login information or further assistance to access the WSO Online Group Records application.

Here’s an easy way for new members to feel a part of your group!

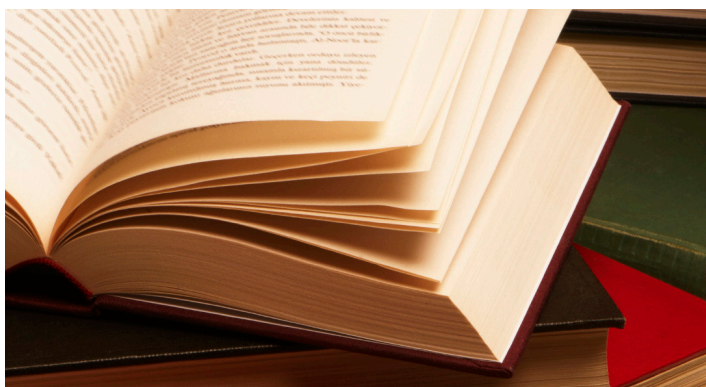
At the end of the “Suggested Al-Anon/Alateen Closing” that is on page 22 in the “Al-Anon and Alateen Groups at Work” (P-24), this note is followed by the Al-Anon Declaration.

“It is suggested that groups close in a manner that is agreeable to the group conscience. Many groups say the Al-Anon Declaration after their closing.”

The “Al-Anon Focus/Declaration Table Card” is an easy way for new members to feel a part of the group because the Al-Anon Declaration is on one side of the card and new members can read along with the group when it recites the Declaration. The other side of the table card includes a welcome mat and reminds members to focus on our Legacies and leave other affiliations outside of Al-Anon meetings.

The “Al-Anon Focus/Declaration Table Card” (S-24) is available at your local Literature Distribution Center and from the WSO.





United using our inspiring service resource...

Sally-Ann, New Zealand
The Messenger, July 2015, Volume 51, No. 7

When thinking about ways our literature inspires us to do our service roles, the 2014- 2017 *Al-Anon Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27) may not be the first piece of literature that comes to mind! Many service structures in other countries encourage their members involved in service to use the *Service Manual* as a resource with other service materials they produce. A member from New Zealand wrote in a recent sharing how the “Introduction” found in the *Service Manual* became an inspiring resource for her during her various service experiences in Al-Anon over the years.

I remembered in the past, especially when I felt hormonal, hungry, angry, lonely, or tired, I could not remember that my role in service was to help others lead purposeful and useful lives. Instead I became frustrated, critical, and helpless...that is until I read something in the *Service Manual* that helped me understand my purpose!

When I first read the “Introduction” found in the *Al-Anon and Alateen Groups at Work* section of this book, it reminded me that we become united in service as we help ourselves lead purposeful and useful lives “by overcoming the frustration and helplessness caused by close association with an alcoholic.” Today when I am down, I have learned to look to our inspiring people in service for their examples of the patience, understanding, tolerance, flexibility, and vision I would like to acquire and share with others. I also remember that we are united by our common bond and because of that bond and our service work, “Al-Anon will always be what we its members make it” as we strive do the work necessary to make sure that Al-Anon will be there in the future for those that may need our fellowship.

When I look to my tattered *Service Manual* these days and re-read our “Introduction,” I find it is now easier to assist members in resolving specific situations. I am also reminded as an Al-Anon member in service I am united with each of you when I use our inspiring resource, our *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*.

Al-Anon pamphlets— useful tools of the program

Northern Illinois Fellowship Literature Action Committee
AIMS Newsletter, October 2014

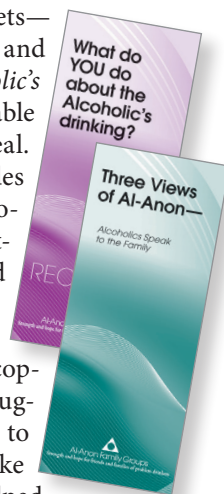
We have a wealth of pamphlets that are short but concise on many of the problems we acquire when dealing with problem drinking. They talk about how we feel and cope. They give us growth through the program principles.

I have two favorite pamphlets—*Three Views of Al-Anon* (P-15) and *What Do You Do about the Alcoholic's Drinking?* (P-19). Both have valuable information that can help us heal. *Three Views of Al-Anon* includes “An Open Letter from an Alcoholic,” which I have read at meetings when I chair, or if a confused newcomer has questions that the letter can answer. It is well worth the \$.30 to have several copies ready to give to members struggling with “Why do they do this to us?” or “Why don't they love us like we love them?” This pamphlet helped

me begin to understand how the mind of a suffering drinker worked. The letter is a powerful reminder of what the haze of alcoholism does to our loved ones.

The other pamphlet, *What Do You Do about the Alcoholic's Drinking?* is great for leading a meeting. I had read it many years ago, but had forgotten the impact and insight it gives. I attended a meeting a few years back where the Chairperson used the pamphlet as the topic. She gave us each a copy and told us to mark any of the listed coping items we had tried when dealing with the drinking in our homes. As I revealed at that meeting, I had done about 85 percent of the items, plus a few not mentioned. No wonder I was not the sanest person when I arrived at the doors of Al-Anon! This pamphlet points out the futile attempts we used to control the alcoholic, not realizing (or maybe realizing) that we were trying to control a disease that could not be controlled by us. It is well worth the \$.30 cost.

If you have been ignoring the pamphlets at your meetings, I urge you to start reading some of them. These are only two of many I could mention. I love our pamphlets as tools of the program. Which one is your favorite?



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Ever feel you are different?

By Bill D., Arkansas Area Literature Coordinator
The Partyline, May 2015

The World Service Office is asking for submissions for a new daily reader that reflects the diversity of our fellowship as it is today. Diversity, in this case, is not just race, creed, color, or sexual orientation. The book hopes to include thought-provoking meditations of how *individuals* have grown in Al-Anon and found unity, despite their individual situations. Mental health, physical disabilities, etc., would all be a part of this mix. Writing guidelines are available on the Members' Web site, www.al-anon.org/members.

Why not you?

By Aimee L., Connecticut Area Literature Coordinator
Lifeline, May 2015

Hopefully, your Group Representative has been asking you to consider writing a submission for Al-Anon literature, such as the piece of intimacy, the pamphlet for parents and grandparents of young problem drinkers, or the new daily reader. If you haven't considered it, what's holding you back? Why not you? All of our Conference Approved Literature is written by members like you and me. We all have experience, strength, and hope that others might benefit from. Send your sharings by mail to AFG, Inc., 1600 Corporate Landing Parkway, Virginia Beach, VA 23454; by e-mail to wso@al-anon.org; or by fax to 757-563-1656. Or submit your sharing on-line by following these steps:

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

Instant workshop: Treatment Facilities Outreach Project

It is easier than ever before to build relationships with local treatment facilities and mental health care agencies that offer services for alcoholism. The WSO Members' Web site has four PowerPoint presentations, *Presenter's and Resources Guides* to help members plan, implement, and maintain outreach activities at local treatment facilities.

Step-by-step information makes carrying Al-Anon's message easier for trusted servants and attracts volunteers.

Visit the WSO Members' Web site, District Resources file in the "Service Structure" section.

<http://al-anon.org/members/service-structure/district-resources>.

Public Outreach pens

By Faye D., Missouri Area Public Outreach Coordinator
Missouri Round Robin, June 2015

I received an offer for 500 imprinted ink pens in the mail at 70 cents per pen. I shared the idea with my group and district. We ordered "Are you concerned with someone's drinking? Maybe Al-Anon Family Groups can help" with our local telephone answering service number on it. The pens are being dropped off at medical offices and banks and being placed in our Newcomer Kits. It is an idea as limitless as the imagination.

Hats off and thumbs up, Al-Anon members, for your AFA 2016 first printing orders

Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism magazines are now being shipped by the WSO.

Members ordered a record-breaking 220,025 copies in three languages.

- English 190,550
- Spanish 20,300
- French 9,175

Please add your local Al-Anon telephone, e-mail, and Web site addresses to the contact information so that magazine readers know how to find Al-Anon meeting information in your community.



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Visit us at: www.al-anon.org/members

One professional request can build a network

By Sandy P., Past CPC Coordinator, California South

I was part of an Al-Anon panel at the “Help Me Grow” program at the Orange County Children’s Hospital. This facility works with low income families that have preschool children attending local schools. Their focus is to provide resources and referrals to families for domestic violence, mental health, and substance abuse. Our presentation was to 30 facilitators who counsel two to three families. As a result, Al-Anon information will reach over 100 people from this single contact.

Al-Anon literature welcomed at driver safety awareness program

By Rose S., District 33 Public Information Coordinator, California South
Southern California World Service Area Bulletin, February 2015

A member gave me the name and contact information of a professional who conducts a safety awareness program. Many of the clients have received DUIs (Driving Under the Influence) from the police. Many of the family members participate along with the loved ones in the safety awareness program. The professional welcomes our literature. Another member and I will be communicating with others who teach these driver safety programs.

A DR’s Success: ‘How to’ idea for introducing AFA to Group Representatives

By Angela F., District 2 Representative, Nebraska
Nebraskan, May 2015.

There were 60 copies of the *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism* magazines left over. So, I gave the remaining issues to the GRs to take back to their groups. This helped them to explain how the magazine can be used for public outreach activities.

Responsible technology

By Karen A., Area Web Coordinator, Washington
Washington Wandering, Vol. 40, N. 4, December 2014

The *Conference Summary* discusses many aspects of technology, indicating that as we learn to adjust to technology, we must not let it interfere with the spiritual nature of our program. As Web Coordinator, I have the responsibility to publish words with clear meaning. That task can be difficult. Fortunately, I’ve had a committee of helpers that provides feedback on how words might impact others, prior to publishing.

The power of words cannot be underestimated; they can hurt and they can heal. We, who have the power to publish items broadly, need to be mindful of the major differences between written words and conversations.

Technology is a tool, but the technology of using the Web for communications has limitations. Faces carry expressions, which convey meaning. I see how my communication is being received, and make adjustments in my tone or restate the message in a way that provides better understanding. When face-to-face communication is not practical, I need to rely on technology, the phone, or e-mail.

We will soon have a vendor working to help provide a premium Web site, where districts will have a page on the Area site in order to facilitate communication. As a fellowship, we will need to explore responsible technology concepts together. Talking to each other and reasoning things out will help us create some useful guidelines, based in program principles, in addition to learning the new system.

Outreach to professionals is a group effort

By Cathy S., Area Public Outreach Coordinator, Tennessee
The Tennessee Traveler, Spring AWSC 2015

I was contacted by the Public Outreach department at WSO and given the name and phone number of a contact person at our local public television channel. The channel had plans to produce a program on the topic of alcoholism and addiction. The 30-minute program would include a three-minute segment for Al-Anon information. The producer was looking for an Al-Anon-savvy professional who refers friends and family members of alcoholics to Al-Anon and can speak to how Al-Anon works.

I got on our AIS e-tree and asked for help. Our chairperson who coordinates the efforts of Al-Anon members bringing meetings to treatment centers gave me contact information. To my knowledge, the program aired twice.

Putting Al-Anon's TV PSAs on my to-do-list

By Rose S., Area Public Outreach Coordinator, California South
Southern California World Service Area Bulletin, February 2015

I am really excited to begin my new term as Public Outreach Coordinator. It is my life work to pass along the message of hope.

I have a list of some 135 local TV stations, and hopefully we'll be able to get our PSAs on TV. I have been told that previously we received support only from Spanish stations. I hope to find both English- and Spanish-speaking members to participate in carrying the message.

How do we get started doing Public Outreach?

By Pat Q, Associate Director of Communications, Public Outreach/Media

In Al-Anon, no one has to do anything alone anymore. As soon as we find out how someone else handled something that scares us or makes us nervous, we can go forward feeling empowered and supported.

Members speaking about their public outreach experiences via podcasts on the Members' Web site can inspire us to try something new. At <http://al-anon.org/members/MembersAndGroups/category/public-outreach>, members tell how they felt before they decided to get involved in public outreach projects, how they became involved, and what that involvement has done for their personal recovery. You are welcome to join these conversations by leaving a personal comment.

Lois's Story (AV-1) and Lois W. & the Pioneers (AV-24) - Now available in DVD format for rental from the WSO

Members now have the opportunity to witness history in a convenient, modern-day format, as the 2015 World Service Conference (WSC) voted the videocassettes be converted to DVDs. These inspirational videos can be shared at meetings or for a fun addition at a special Al-Anon event (district meetings, workshops, assemblies, etc.).

Originally produced at the recommendation of the 1971 WSC, *Lois's Story* (AV-1) (Running time: 33 minutes) features Lois, herself, as she takes viewers through the captivating journey of Al-Anon's early days in becoming the organization we now know to help so many friends and families of alcoholics all over the world.

Lois W. & the Pioneers (AV-24) (Running time: 22 minutes) lets us all in on a candid discussion in 1982 with Al-Anon's cofounder, Lois W., the first General Secretary of the Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Henrietta S., and the first Editor of *The Forum*, Margaret D., who share their recollections of the spirit of commitment among our pioneer members.

For more information and to schedule the DVDs for a week's rental during a time that is convenient for you, based on availability, download the S-35 order form for AV-1 and AV-24 from the Al-Anon Online Store, and mail or fax to the WSO. The general WSO order form, S-16, is also available for download from the Online Store, to schedule a video rental.

Each DVD, containing a version of the video with closed – captioning and one without, can be rented for \$25, and all return packaging and postage will be included with your order. It is requested that your order be placed three weeks in advance of when the DVDs will be needed.

The Forum and *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism*: Two very different purposes!

Many of us had to overcome multiple challenges before we were ready to give Al-Anon Family Groups a try. We had to overcome denial that there was a problem with a loved one's drinking. Some of us didn't want to ask for help because it was embarrassing and we didn't want anyone to know what was going on at home. Even if we were aware that Al-Anon existed, perhaps the misconception that it's a religious group kept us away. Still others believed that no one could possibly understand what they were going through.

Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism is designed to address those challenges. Members write about their own denial, or share how they overcame the fear of reaching out. Most of all, members share hope, understanding, and compassion with the potential newcomer.

In *The Forum*, members share how the Twelve Steps, Traditions, and Concepts of Service have helped them find—and keep recovery! Even the newcomer walking through the door for the first time, someone who has already overcome the challenges of reaching out for help, could benefit from reading the experience, strength, and hope that we share in *The Forum*. They may be confused by our Legacies and even the some of the language we use, but Al-Anon and Alateen members will be there to help. Imagine how daunting it could be for a potential member, someone who may have never even heard of Al-Anon, to read about Concept Three or Tradition Five for example.

With that in mind, please encourage members and groups in your Area to share *The Forum* with one another, and share *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism* with their community!

The Forum Sharing Recovery, Unity, and Service

The Forum is a powerful tool for recovery. Make it part of your program by:

- Sharing your story with the magazine
- Sharing the magazine with a newcomer
- Using *The Forum* in your meetings!

Encourage your group to pass around a *Forum* envelope, so the group can have a monthly drawing and award personal subscriptions in the spirit of fellowship.



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.

Mi experiencia como Custodio

Boletín *Serenidad*, marzo de 2015

Año 35 – Número 140 - España

Cuando me dijeron que si quería contar mi experiencia como Custodio Regional dije: <<vale, de acuerdo, es fácil. Es platicar de lo que he vivido estando en este servicio (sin caer en la falsa modestia)>>. Me hizo recordar que hacer un servicio voluntario, no se le dice a nadie. Sabían mis amistades que los lunes no se podía contar conmigo. Al comentarle esto a mi Madrina de servicio (para que viera lo humilde que era), me dijo: <<creo que estás en un error, ¿por qué no lo han a saber?, puedes atraer a otros miembros al servicio contando lo que haces. Creo que te estás justificando>>. Les cuento mi experiencia:

Leyendo una encuesta en la que debía de poner los servicios que he hecho, debo decir que todos los he hecho, menos el de Alateen porque nunca fui miembro. En su lugar puse el de limpieza del local, para mi uno de los que me dio más satisfacción. Me encantaba cuando llegaban las compañeras y decían lo limpio estaba el local del grupo y como olía. Ahora estoy como Custodio Regional, y creo que es el servicio más difícil ya que ser prudente y estar callada cuesta. He aprendido a decir: <<pregunta a la oficina>>. También las Delegadas están al día pues asistieron a la última Conferencia de Servicio.

Si digo que <<Al-Anon me ha salvado la vida>> o que <<estoy muy agradecida>>, ¿qué hago para corresponder? Si tengo un mínimo de recuperación y el miedo me aborda me digo: <<tengo un Poder Superior que me va ayudar>> y si no sé, ahí están las(os) compañeras(os), las(os) madrinas/padrinos de servicio y la OSG, así como la literatura. Cuando siento que no tengo tiempo, me pregunto: << ¿sé priorizar?, ¿practico, 'Primero las cosas mas importantes'?>>. Todo eso lo pensé cuando me dijeron que me propusiera como Custodio Regional Canarias. Casi me desmayo, pero después pensé: << ¿Por qué no? Tengo un Poder Superior, tengo a quien preguntar, y puedo buscar tiempo.

Tengo un recuerdo fantástico de estos seis años como Custodio, aparte del cariño que se respira, y les aseguro que sigo siendo la misma. Estamos tres días encerrados los de la Junta de Custodios. En vez de estar <<entre costura>> estábamos entre Tradiciones y Conceptos. Al principio calladita, con mucha vergüenza, hasta que sin darme cuenta, estaba dando mi opinión.

Aprendí la importancia de los grupos, a delegar, a decidir, a participar, a escuchar a las minorías, a la responsabilidad, a saber la importancia de un líder.

Creo sinceramente que fue una de las mejores etapas de mi vida. Pasaron muchas cosas pero nunca dejé de asistir a la Junta de los Custodios. Ni tampoco durante mi etapa de Delegada durante cinco años falté a la Conferencia de Servicio.

Fue muy importante para mí compartir en el aeropuerto con las compañeras, todo un lujo, y mientras estábamos hasta seis horas esperando el vuelo, parecía que estábamos en un grupo Al-Anon. Toda esa etapa fue muy positiva en todos los sentidos.

Por eso cuando veo que desde hace varios años en Canarias no tenemos un Custodio Regional, me da mucha pena, porque veo que aquí en Tenerife como en Las Palmas hay varios miembros que tienen mucho que aportar y que aprender para después traerlo otra vez para acá. Espero que algún(a) compañero(a) tenga la inquietud de al menos pensarlo. Y si no creen que puedan hacer el servicio solos(as), allí también funciona lo de la <<conciencia de grupo>>.

Con amor en el servicio,
Marisa



Photo by Tom C., TX

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 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, avril 2015

Alice

Le bulletin *La Chaîne* n° 473 d'octobre 2013 parlait du « service, un rouage essentiel », qui force l'esprit à plus d'ouverture et de curiosité : une participation merveilleuse pour ne pas être dans l'indifférence, ni fermé aux autres, à l'existence auprès de la maladie alcoolique et ses désagréments. C'est donner plus de sens et d'intensité sur le chemin du progrès, vivre pleinement le moment présent sans être parasité par le mental. Cela peut être le déclic d'une prise de conscience et de questionnement quant à la force, la fragilité, la gaieté; ne pas être rassasié pour voir la beauté plutôt que laideur et se donner un environnement qui corresponde aux besoins de l'estime de soi dans la cohérence de ses aspirations et de ses actes. Si je perds courage, je perds la part essentielle qui me permet de vivre.

Le service : un passeport pour cheminer et grandir

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

Une RG reconnaissante

Je suis RG et même si ce n'est pas pour la première fois que je sers à ce niveau de service, je désire servir les membres de mon groupe de la meilleure façon qu'il soit possible de le faire et de la façon dont ils le méritent.

L'un de mes outils préférés, mis à part le *Manuel de Service* que j'ai toujours à la portée de la main, est le petit livre *Un passeport pour le rétablissement* (FP-78) qui est à la fois un excellent guide pour le service, ainsi qu'une source d'information qui est à la fois intarissable et intéressante.

Ce petit livre parle en terme simple et avec un bon sens assez remarquable de plusieurs volets du service. Les témoignages sont inspirants et nous encourageant à prendre des risques, à oser aller de l'avant dans un domaine dans lequel nous ne pensons peut-être pas pouvoir servir.

Servir n'a rien de nouveau pour moi. Ce qui est nouveau c'est le chemin fait depuis mes premiers pas dans le service et mon cheminement personnel qui me permet de servir d'une façon renouvelée. Je réalise que de servir signifie que je dois travailler mon programme de la même façon que je le fais toujours, mais sur une échelle plus élargie, tout en sortant parfois de ma zone de confort.

C'est le service qui garde les portes d'Al-Anon ouvertes. Nous pouvons tous servir qu'il s'agisse de placer les chaises dans la salle ou d'être trésorier (ère) du groupe. Chaque geste posé a son importance et il faut en être conscient. Le principe d'égalité me rassure et me garde bien humble dans la part que je joue dans mon groupe.

Pratiquer les principes Al-Anon, comme façon de vivre signifie savoir et agir. Souhaiter ne suffit pas! J'ai immensément de gratitude pour le fait que je puisse servir mon groupe et je le fais parce que je le veux, non parce que je dois le faire.

Je sais qu'être RG favorisera pour moi des points que j'ai à travailler tels : le détachement, l'acceptation et la sérénité. Le service se fait dans un environnement d'entraide qui favorise une meilleure connaissance de mes forces et mes faiblesses, donc je ne peux que tirer des bienfaits de cette expérience.

Servir est une formule gagnante et bénéfique qui m'aidera à devenir une meilleure membre et une meilleure personne. Merci à mon groupe de me permettre de servir et de me faire confiance.

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.