From your Delegate

Whenever I attend an Al-Anon business meeting, I try to have my Conflict Resolution Kit with me as well as my Service Manual. Both are based on the principles of the program. Sometimes flipping through the cards helps me find a phrase that helps to calm the waters or a question that helps to clarify matters. Some of these are: “Presume Goodwill”; “Principles above Personalities”; “Participation is the key to harmony”; “Mutual Respect” or “Unity”. Questions I ask myself include: “Am I listening to the other person’s point of view?”, “Do I need to stop talking so I do not dominate?”, “Am I sticking to my role?” or “Am I having compassion and understanding for the person talking?” The Service Manual helps me by keeping it simple. Many of the situations that arise have happened to others in the past and often there is already a well thought out policy already in my Service Manual. Having been to the World Service Conference twice, I know every word of that manual has been carefully deliberated by the largest group conscience we have. I also always keep in mind that no one is perfect, we are all in these rooms for a reason and we are all in the process of recovering. Also I try to “Keep an Open Mind.”

Ginny C., Delegate, Panel 55

From your Alternate Delegate

In Al-Anon I have come to realize that conflicts are a natural part of relationships. The slogans “How Important Is It,” “Keep It Simple,” and “Let Go and Let God” all help to keep things in perspective. “Listen and Learn” is an essential part of both knowledge base decision making (KBDM) and conflict resolution. I need to gather information by keeping an open mind, state my opinions simply and clearly, listen to feedback as well as other’s opinions, ask for clarification if needed, and then let go of the outcome as anything other than a learning experience/growth opportunity. I have learned that while many times I have good ideas about a given situation, others have even better ones. Practicing respect by being a good listener and learning to speak calmly have helped me grow in understanding of both the program and myself.

Theresa M., Alternate Delegate, Panel 55

Listen and Learn

“How do you handle conflicts and come to an informed decision?”

2015 Dates to remember:

- Spring AWSC (tentative) March 12, 2016
- WSC April 11-15, 2016 Banquet April 16, 2016 7-10pm Wyndham Virginia Beach Resort Hotel 5700 Atlantic Ave Virginia Beach, VA
- WSO Tours April 16, 2016 1-3pm
- Spring Assembly (tentative) May 15, 2016
- Ohio Area Convention June 24-26, 2016 Holiday Inn Northeast Mentor, Ohio
- KOMIAC Dayton, Ohio July 29-31, 2016
- Ohio AA Convention with Al-Anon Participation August 19-21 2016 Double Tree Inn Westlake, Ohio www.ohioal-anon.org/calendar.htm
From a Past Delegate

Knowledge Based Decision Making, KBDM, what can I say about it? When the idea was introduced to Ohio Area Assembly, I was curious exactly how it all worked. At the time our Delegate, Barbara W, explained it to us and I was still wondering how it really worked. I learned it was the opposite of "Roberts Rules" where a motion is made and then there is discussion and thinking and with KBDM, the thinking and discussion is done before a motion is presented. With KBDM information is gathered and presented in a five question format. It is my responsibility as a reader of KBDM’s presented to Ohio Area to read what is included in the presentation and then ask the presenting group questions when I do not understand any or all of it and be sure to ask before the presentation of any motion. To me all my questions need to be answered before I am ready to vote if one is called for.

Personally, I have been on Thought Forces, Task Forces, or Work Groups in both Ohio Area and at the World Service Conference. Having information and becoming more knowledgeable on a topic works better for me. Recently, I was asked to vote on a topic for my church where there was no information or discussion about the topic before the motion was made. During the discussion after the second was given, I asked questions. The motion was tabled so more information could be gathered and the governing body could make a more informed decision.

Knowledge Based Decision Making to me is an informed decision with discussion before deliberation.

As always, ODAT.
Sandy F, Past Delegate

From your Secretary

The recent passing of my Mom demonstrated what I’ve heard in the Al-Anon rooms, “Your HP will see that you get what you NEED, not what you WANT!” It was two days before my Mom’s funeral and the family was due to begin arriving that afternoon. I knew I needed to get to one additional meeting. It was a morning meeting that also had a separate beginner’s meeting an hour prior. I got there a few minutes late (yep, I stopped for my usual coffee), and there were only a couple of chairs left. I quietly took one of those, then gave it up when two more ladies arrived. There were more than 12 people at the beginner’s meeting – one of them a lady who said it was just her fifth meeting and she’d brought her 20-month old son with her. He’d been playing quietly beside her and then getting up on her lap, but about half way through the hour, he walked across the room to where I was standing. He looked up, with the innocence of a child, smiled and raised his arms for me to pick him up. When I did, I was rewarded with the most beautiful smile I’ve ever seen! I’d already shared with everyone there that my Mom’s funeral was only two days away, and here was this beautiful child simply offering his love to a total stranger. Several of the women had tears running down their cheeks (as did I) as they witnessed just how an HP can work. It was such a moving moment and I shall cherish that memory – the love of a child in the face of such adversity. I really DO have an awesome HP!

Phil H Secretary

From your Treasurer

Please note that there are TWO different AFG of Ohio, Inc. addresses and that these CHANGE every THREE years with the election of Officers. For Panel 55, term 2015-2017:

♦ Donation and payment of Al-A-Notes subscription checks are made payable to AFG of Ohio, Inc. and sent to AFG of Ohio, Inc., PO BOX 524, Columbiana, OH 44408-0524

♦ Al-A-Notes subscription forms (and the check) are sent to the Secretary at AFG of Ohio, Inc., PO BOX 54, Springfield, OH 45501-0054

Mail is only forwarded from the previous PO Boxes for a limited time. Some donations are still being addressed to Treasurers from 9 or more years ago. If your group wants to check on its donation status to Ohio, send an email to treasurer@ohioal-anon.org. This will forward to the personal email of the current Treasurer.

Thanks for your help with sharing this information with any groups you attend!
Judy A, Treasurer (and Theresa M, past Treasurer)
Sharings from our Committee Chairs & Coordinators

Ohio Area Convention News

The Districts of Cleveland are getting ready to roll out the red carpet for YOU June 24-26, 2016.

Our theme is Time to Grow!

So get ready to:

⇒ Hear inspiring speakers and participate in Ala-games,
⇒ Stretch with the slogans and meet new people,
⇒ Re-connect with old friends and explore your creativity at the art workshop,
⇒ Raise your voice in song and lift your spirit,
⇒ Share meals and dip in the pool,
⇒ Shop at the Ala-boutique and relax in your jammies … hugs, hugs, hugs!

Registration form available at www.ohioal-anon.org.

Click on “calendar” and scroll to June 2016.

From your Forum Coordinator

I would like to share that I have made a fold-out/stand-up poster for spreading the news and subscribership of The Forum Magazine and would be happy lend it to Districts for conferences/conventions/anniversaries etc. This was on display at our 2015 Fall Assembly in Toledo. Here are instructions that lists the (easy) steps for accessing The Forum online. From the web-site, you can read some articles from the past and current Forum, submit a sharing online, and subscribe online, among other things.

Instructions for accessing The Forum Magazine online

1. Go to: Al-anon.org/members/the-forum
2. Type in: Member password: group name ending with “afg”
   Example: serenityafg
3. You will see this:

The Forum

Al-Anon's monthly magazine, The Forum, contains many personal stories of inspiration, some of which are made available each month on the Internet by authorization of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc.

All registered English-speaking Al-Anon and Alateen groups in the U.S., Canada, Puerto Rico, and Bermuda receive a complimentary copy of The Forum each month. It is sent by postal mail to the group’s CMA (Current Mailing Address).

4. And you can then click on any of the following:

   Articles from this month's Forum magazine
   Index of Forum articles
   Submit a Forum sharing on-line
   Download The Forum Writing Guidelines (F-1)
   Subscribe on-line to The Forum
   The Forum printable order form
   The Forum and Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism: Two very different purposes!

Christine T. Forum Coordinator

Attitude of Gratitude
From your Archives Coordinator

In my experience, conflict erupts when information is not known or shared. Fear mounts as the imagination has "lift-off" about the possible outcome of a proposed action. Reasoning things out with one another is the very foundation of our Al-Anon program. Yet, sometimes in our haste, we overlook the needs of others: questions go unanswered, personalities override principles as we judge, gossip and criticize, and patience is absent from the room. When our primary focus is on the greatest good for the greatest number, there is plenty of time for conversation, mutual respect and understanding. If someone has the courage to suggest we all pause and engage in prayerful meditation, anxiety is lessened. While serving as the Ohio Delegate on Panel 46, I witnessed a World Service Conference member call for prayer when a discussion became heated. It was just the remedy needed to redirect and right-size our focus.

Barbara W. Archives Coordinator

Review Committee Chair & Liaison Chair for the AA Conference w/Al-Anon Participation

After sitting down with my sponsor on Sunday, October 11 and attending my home group and talking with others in the program, I have decided that I must resign as your Audit and Review chair and allow someone else to reap the benefits of service. Currently, I am DR for District Number 7. The Cleveland Gratitude Night chair, The Treasurer for the Cleveland Meeting of Districts, The Liaison for the AA Conference with Al-Anon Participation in Westlake, Ohio, and the secretary for my home group. Additionally, I work 40 plus hours a week and attend school three nights a week. I do not state all the above for a pat on the back because that is not my intent, but I am realizing that I have a difficult time saying NO to a program that has changed my life in every area. I wish that I could say YES to everything, but I was reminded this weekend that I am cheating others out of serving and I need to take better care of myself. With that being said, I will pray that someone in the program is led to take this important Review and Audit service position.

On Sunday, October 18th, I will be attending my second planning meeting for the AA Conference with Al-Anon participation which will be held August 19-21 2016 at the Double Tree Inn in Westlake, Ohio. I will have more information and a flyer by the AWSC meeting. I have asked Malinda M to 9.5be my Co-Chair, who is not only knowledgeable about the program but has a love for Al-Anon service. We will work together with the AA members to design a program that will be beneficial in getting the word out that Al-Anon when worked can change the lives of individuals. One focus under the direction of Ginny, our Delegate of Ohio, will be on the pamphlet “Al-Anon Spoken Here”. While the 12-step concept has helped many succeed in eradicating various addictions, at times the ideology of other Twelve Step programs creeps into the Al-Anon rooms diluting the principles of the Al-Anon program. Incoming members need to be reminded that when they come into Al-Anon, they leave their other program’s autonomy outside of the Al-Anon rooms. Al-Anon has been beneficial and has worked fine for several generations, so we want to ensure that newcomers receive the benefits that many of us have enjoyed over the years.

Thanks to Al-Anon service and 28 years in Al-Anon and most importantly a sponsor who insisted I go to college, I will have my Associates next semester in Applied Accounting and am currently working on finishing up the core to transfer to Cleveland State to get my Bachelor’s in Accounting. I could not have accomplished this great task without the many tutors inside and outside of the program. You all know who you are, and I will be eternally grateful to all of you!

Thank you all for your undying support,
Your Servant, Merri Giacomazzo DR 7

Ala-Notes Sharing from District 45 Janis S

I had a phone conversation with someone whose area has little participation at Assembly and their question to me was, "Why do we need Assembly, what do they do for us?" I think that "the value of Assembly" would be a GREAT feature in an upcoming Ala-Notes (possibly a submission to The Forum if more people weight in). Not the service structure diagram, but the explanation that without assembly, we have no voice if a program is destroyed outside the US and Canada. This was one value of Assembly that I mentioned to my friend. There's also the state convention.

This person also comes from an area missing the DR link. I count us fortunate in District 45 to have Donna as our "mama duck". I hear a murmur of approval as our table (we often sit together) stands for the Introduction by Districts. Although we are just a handful of people (I think 8 this time) for our number of meetings, we are a larger handful than most other districts. We come to Assembly reasonably prepared, because Donna attends the preceding AWSC, brings back the info, and discusses it with us in a District 45 meeting. She offers to act as a clearinghouse for GRs in our district (and sometimes beyond) needing rides and roommates to Assemblies. Although she isn't well-off, she brings snacks for all of us to share at our table. The one thing she WON'T DO is tell us how to vote, saying that is up to us. We have cooperation and unity because we have an active DR. You have my permission to print this in the Ala-Notes if it is OK with Donna. Perhaps a GR from another strong district can offer an additional perspective.

I'd never thought, until it was mentioned at Assembly, about using the Ala-Notes as material for a meeting at our home group. We DO have it on the clip board which gets passed around with flyers for anniversaries, conferences, etc. In pen I write on the front page "Please return to Jan" so it doesn't get thrown out when we clear off old stuff; I file it in my Assembly binder.
District doings

DISTRICTS OF CLEVELAND

Feeling grateful? Looking to grow?

We’ve got you covered!

Members from groups across the metro Cleveland area will gather together for the annual Gratitude Night November 6, 2015 at St. Malachi – 2459 Washington Ave., Cleveland. AA & Al-Anon Tom and Kathleen G. plus an Alateen speak at 7:30 pm. More info on the Ala-Calendar at the Cleveland website www.clevelandal-anon.org. Proceeds to benefit our three service arms.

Looking ahead to 2016, Cleveland will host “Time to Grow!” the Ohio Area Convention June 24-26, 2016 at the Holiday Inn Mentor at Rte. 306 & Rte. 2. The OAC is a FUN weekend – open to all Al-Anons, Alateens (accompanied by an adult), with AA participation. Friday plans include an Early Bird discussion meeting 4:30 pm, formal opening 7:30 pm, followed by AA & Al-Anon leads. Saturday early risers can catch “Stretching with the slogans” at 7:30 am, then the opening at 9:30 am and Alateen panel with Q & A. There will be a served banquet at 6:00 pm followed by AA & Al-Anon speakers. Please help us to be good hosts by pre-registering -- whether or not you are staying overnight at the hotel – so we can plan sufficient meeting space! Hotel rooms are limited, so please book by May 21st.

More info at the Ohio Assembly website www.ohioal-anon.org (on the left hand column, click on “calendar” and scroll to June). You can e-mail us with questions or suggestions at ohioconvention@ohioal-anon.org.

DISTRICT 6

For many years we had an Entertainment chairperson and committee but with the changing times we couldn't find anyone to step forward. We came up with a way to keep some of our really loved events from folding. We have some groups step forward and take responsibility for these events. One of the events is our Annual Al-Anon Children’s Christmas party. It’s a much looked forward to day with a visit from Santa who brings a present for each child that is age appropriate. The adult calls and gives the name and age of each child so "Santa's Elves" can buy a gift. Groups send in donation to the treasurer marked for the Christmas party. One of the highlights is the shopping done by the children (12 years and younger). Members start saving white elephant items and drop them off a couple of weeks before the event to members of the group. Volunteers set up as many table as needed and display the items. Kid take turns shopping where they pick out an item for a member of the family. We have another table with stickers to decorate paper bags, wrapping paper, and gift tags. After everyone has gone through the line once, we let them shop a second or third time until time runs out. The kids love this and allows them to get some really nice items for their loved ones!

The Alateens help with this event and have a great time with face painting and helping kids with cookie decorating. We also announce that anyone wishing to help from any group is welcome. This event whether you are bringing a child or volunteering to work has been a huge success! The adults have as much fun as the children!!

Kathleen S

DISTRICT 39

Our district is doing a 2016 Winter Workshop. The theme is “How Does Your Serenity Garden Grow?” The date is Saturday, Jan 9,2016

Our district is is also having a Gratitude Dinner on November 15, 2015. The dinner always gets a large crowd. There is no better way to share fellowship gratitude. Our District Meeting was October 12, 2015. We discussed the Task Force and Thought Force reports to be presented at 2-day Fall Assembly.

Geanie B.
District 39 Representative

DISTRICTS 25 & 51

District 25 is having Gratitude Nite on Saturday, November 21st. It's coming along nicely! Doors open at 5, Dinner at 6, and speakers at 7. Great food and great fellowship and much gratitude!!

Districts 25 and 51 are putting on the Fall 2016 Assembly in the Akron/Canton locality. We are making good progress planning that, as well. Canton Districts, we can definitely use your help! District 25 also gave money to Jane E. for Public Information Committee in the area. She's done a great job passing on experience, strength and hope! She took some literature to 2 different recovery events, one in Columbus and one in Akron. Janice S. took some of our literature to the Tri-State Assembly in Chautauqua. AAs were at that conference, and she expressed a lot of gratitude for being able to carry the message to them, as well.

Love Al-Anon Service!
(My, how I've grown because of it!) Monica C.
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