



Virginia Al-A-News

A newsletter written by and for Al-Anons and Alateens in Virginia **Fall 2009**

What service has taught me

One of the biggest gifts I have received from service is learning to approach conflict from a place of serenity and not from a position of fear, frustration, or anger. What a blessing! Our Area Delegate and Alternate Delegate shared the basics with us on how to conduct a "Informed Group Conscious." I then visited another Area Assembly that uses it to watch the process live and in action to get a better understanding. We started using this process at the Virginia Area World Service Committee (VAWSC) meetings and it was amazing. Soon the members of VAWSC voted to use it at Assemblies. Learning this approach to making decisions has been a tremendous gift to me personally. Growing up in an alcoholic home I learned to fear conflict. This process has shown me that making decisions does not have to be filled with fear, anger, and frustration, nor does it have to be scary, volatile or done in atmosphere of urgency. We now use this same process at home and it has made a huge difference with my family. What a gift service has given me!

As always, I am learning & growing in service,

Pat
Area Chair

Inside This Issue

...Delegate Corner... Final Thoughts from the Area...

This newsletter is dedicated to all who served the Area



...My last three years in service...

I learned that my performance can be less than perfect and that's okay. I learned that having a sense of humor is essential. I learned that I really don't like business meetings. **Ed B Area Alateen Process Coordinator**

Serving as the Area Secretary has been a most rewarding experience for me. I cannot think of any better opportunity to understand how Al-Anon works at the Area level than to serve as the secretary. It is a position worth every minute spent. I have grown in the program of Al-Anon in ways I would never have had the opportunity to grow had I not served in this position.

I've been able to work with some wonderful Officers, Coordinators and Past Delegates, strong District Representatives, inspiring Group Representatives, and dedicated interested members. I've met and gotten to know so many terrific people just by working to do my job.

I am incredibly grateful for this privilege to serve.
Beverly W Area Secretary



Challenging But Worth It!

First of all I want to thank my Higher Power for what's to come and the past three years and all the other years I have been in service. Actually you can say I have a career in service.

I'm compelled to write about my experience as the Group Records Coordinator of Virginia. This particular position has enlightened me to new heights within my program, especially in the areas of Traditions and Concepts of service. I haven't explored too much in these areas until this position came along. Boy did I ever learn. It's challenging to say the least; I was the one who was willing to do whatever in service. When I started everything was in Greek to me. I was petrified of the unknowing. I did not feel the confidence like I had in past service work.

So many people had given me praise in stepping forward to do this particular service and so many shared their empathy as well. Knowing the particulars from listening to past service providers that this position is of high importance. I automatically felt the pressure. Records had to be accurate, in order, updated continuously as you received them, transferred to web and WSO, researched missing information, accepting mail, emails, phone, assembly, and VAWSC CMA's and not even counting the little pieces of paper with information on it. Then comes the computer stuff, excel, access, mail merge, labels, reports, mailings, emailing attachments, and printing certain information for distribution. Of course I had no/none/notta bit of experience in any accept reading e-mails, and then I only had an e-mail buddy. You know that had to change right away with this position.

During the first year I was about to give it all up. I'm ashamed to say I complained, judged, and criticized. Slowly but surely I was heading towards trouble within myself. During the Holiday season I reflect on my past and practice Gratitude, as I was reflecting I came across a piece of paper in my literature that said I'm not God and to get out of the way. Was it ever something I needed! As my Higher Power is speaking to me now to share this, he spoke to me then. I only need to be willing to act upon his will for me. Change is a key word for me today, if I'm not willing, how will I ever know? This position is as hard as you make to be and I did. Earlier I said that I complained, criticized, judged, and ignored, I have to apologize to each and every one of my fellow service members for my behavior. I know today I'm not perfect, but I tried to be, and I have accepted that I have done the best that I could. I'm so sorry! This is another piece of change and fear that I will continue to work on.

As I have continued and didn't quit. My second year and this year has been a blessing. I am starting my reflection again and proud to say I'm very glad I stayed. It seemed like I learned everything I needed to do for this position and more. As I close for now, for whoever steps forward into this position, I believe this person will reap the rewards. I can honestly say today I am happy with the work I have accomplished and the gifts it gave in return. Thank you Higher Power and Thank You Virginia Area for letting me serve.

Glenda L. Group Records

THE DELEGATE CORNER

Hi everyone! – An increasing amount of the ideas and work that comes out of World Service Office (WSO) is coming from Thought Forces and Work Forces that are made up of members and Trustees. Some of these groups come from the annual World Service Conference and in these the members are Delegates. But there are also some opportunities that originate at WSO where they put out a call for all members to volunteer their time and talent to a short term project.

There is such a request now being made. The details are as follows:

WSO Beginners' Meetings Thought Force – The Al-Anon Registration/Group Records Change Form (GR-3) has a box now which allows groups to indicate locations where Beginners Meetings, as described on Page 47 of the Service Manual, are available. It has been found that the majority of meetings which are checking the above box are doing so only to indicate that newcomers are welcome.

WSO would like to find out more about how true Beginners Meetings are serving the needs of newcomers and how the Al-Anon meetings that meet at the same time and location are supporting them. Therefore they are putting together a Thought Force of up to seven members to study these issues.

Members who are currently serving in some capacity (Chairperson, Greeter, etc) at a Beginners Meeting and are interested in serving on this Thought Force are asked to submit a résumé by December 1, 2009. This Thought Force is expected to operate from January 4 to February 26, 2010. Résumé forms are available from the Delegate at Fall Assembly or by contacting him anytime prior to the deadline of December 1, 2009.

Finally, Tradition Two that is read at the opening of our meetings says, “For our group purpose there is but one authority – a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants – they do not govern.”

As this Panel of officers gives way to the next group of trusted servants, I want to thank the Virginia Area for allowing me to be your voice for the past three years at the group conscience that is the World Service Conference. I hope and pray that you feel that your voice has been heard during this Panel and that you feel that you have also been kept well informed on Al-Anon and Alateen affairs.

Before going to my first WSC I was told by others who had gone before me that this would be a life changing experience. It has been just that! I wish each of you could have been with me in person to experience all the work and dedication that goes on all year long. WSO staff and employees as well as the Executive Committee, Trustees and Delegates try to keep our fellowship moving forward so as to reach all those who suffer from the effects of alcoholism world wide.

What has really struck me has been how everyone in Al-Anon and Alateen from the groups on up to the WSO and WSC seems to try to work in harmony and be ever mindful of the Traditions and Concepts of Service in all that they do. Are there problems and times when we fall short? Of course there are. But all in all, I feel that I'm a better man for having had the opportunity to work with all of you and with the members of Conference. Thanks you for the example you have been to me! Don F.

Calendar of Events

Dec 12, 2009	Springfield-Annandale District Spirituality Workshop	Ravenworth Baptist Church Annandale, VA
Apr 11, 2010	24th Peninsula Al-Anon Breakfast	Point Plaza Suites and Conference Hotel 950 J. Clyde Morris, Newport News VA
Apr 11-15, 2010	World Service Conference	TBA

News from Richmond

15th Annual Gratitude Candlelight Dinner & Meeting, Tuesday, Nov. 17 at 6:30 PM
Cool Spring Baptist Church

Thanksgiving Day Alcathon, 8 AM to 9 PM, Al-Anon meetings at 10 & 4,
AA speaker at 2, dinner at 3.
Lakeside Presbyterian Church

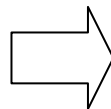
District Holiday Eating Meeting, Everyone welcome!, Wednesday, Dec. 2 at 6:30 PM
Tuckahoe Library

12 Steps to Change Holiday Dinner and 2 Speakers, Thursday, Dec. 17 at 6:00 PM,
New Bethesda Baptist Church

Holiday Al-Anon/AA Dinner and 2 Speakers, Friday, Dec. 18 at 6:00 PM,
Lakeside Presbyterian Church

How to pass this newsletter on:

The newsletter is emailed to **Officers, Coordinators and District Representatives**



Your **District Representative** emails (forwards) the newsletter to their



Group Representatives, who email (forward) a copy to **each member** of their group!

And that's how it works!!!

Growing In Service

When I took on the service position of DR, I had only been in the program for two years and I was sure that I did not know enough to do the job properly. I put it into my Higher Power's hands and asked Him to help me. At my first meeting as DR, there were only a few of the GR's in attendance. I was sure that I had made a mistake and that no one liked me and that I had three years of hell ahead of me.

The following month we had our district workshop and I had the coffee pot and all of the other stuff to set up and I got lost going to the church where the workshop was being held. I was unbelievably upset and crying my eyes out.

When I finally got there, one hour late, all of the GR's had pitched in and set up with the church equipment and they all had smiles on their faces. They were not mad at me, as I thought that they would be, and we all just pitched in and had a great gathering.

I learned at that time that "Principles above Personalities" was not just something people say. It is truly something that Al-Anon people practice. I have become friends with the group and feel that I really have grown in my program. It has given me the confidence that my alcoholic ex-husband took away from me. I realize that I can do anything with God by my side and I feel that not only have I grown, but my district has also.

We have had three great years with Public Outreach, workshops, mini workshops at the meetings, learning more about the Service Manual, and many sharing's. I am so grateful for these three years. I look forward to the next two years as the Chair of the Tidewater Area Service Center. I know that my Higher Power has a lot in store for me and I am waiting for Him to lead me there in small steps.

Bette T, DR Nansemond District



Don't dwell on the problem, but on the solution.

To see things as they are rather than how you would like them to be, is the beginning of spirituality.

Thanks to Nell for these and many other contributions

No One Listens To Me!!!

During the past three years I learned that no one listens to me!. It is a mantra of mine lately. Probably an old martyr tape that I enjoy. Not so hot for my ego, however, it is fun to laugh at myself and not take life too seriously. I believe that gaining wisdom and having fun is what Al-Anon Service is all about.

Service has given to me the opportunity throughout my recovery to learn about acceptance, and watch for many years that, whatever it is, it always gets done. It might be at the last minute and test your faith to the max....but Al-Anon members can be depended upon to "get er done." Al-Anon, HP and faith....they all go together.

I am reminded by my experience that districts and groups are committed to Public Outreach and understand it best at a local level. Although my goal was to reach out to the districts to influence the groups to have an Area focus, I found that my voice, ideas, suggestions from my bully pulpit was not nearly as effective as were the Assembly Public Outreach Action Committees.

It was in that setting that things which affected the Area as a whole worked best. The Action Committee was a congregation of District Representatives with the wisdom to know what effort would be the most beneficial for the Area as a whole.

It was a privilege to work with these dedicated members and although I might have been their "leader" for these Action Committee sessions, I realized the meaning of trusted servant when it was time to get "agreement" on final drafts.

It has been a pleasure seeing products actually emulate from the hard work of many. I have many to thank, but especially our Area Chairman, Pat M. for appointing me as your Area Public Outreach Coordinator for this three year term.

Apparently some groups did listen to me and found that through a group conscience that an open meeting could be achieved. I am grateful for their willingness to lift up the rock and find out that it was not so heavy after all.

Juanita P. passed me a note in a Virginia Area World Service Committee (VAWSC) meeting and between the two of us, the VAWSC, and the Assembly a beautiful Al-Anon display unit was created with the cooperation of the Al-Anon World Service Office. We then created a Health Fair document to encourage and assist groups and districts to engage in health fairs and professionals forums.

I have to thank publicly Beverly W., your Area Secretary, who taught me how to say VAWSC without biting my tongue and has kept me on track with so many dates, policies and Area background information. Jack B. has kept me from saying un-Christian words when my computer has crashed and put the Committee's work on line for you all to see. Thanks to the VAWSC Area Officers and fellow Coordinators for their support and commitment. A special thanks to our Area Delegate, Don, who gave to me a current World Service perspective.

This is a great opportunity for someone for the next three years. Make sure you let the new Area Chairperson know you are interested in serving as Area Public Outreach Coordinator. Phyllis, Public Outreach

Area News...

Join **The Springfield-Annandale District**
for a cookie and a hug as they host their
4th annual Spirituality Workshop Good Speakers & Good Fellowship
Date: Saturday, December 12, 2009 Time: 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM
Place: Ravensworth Baptist Church 5100 Ravensworth Road
Annandale, VA 22003
Contact: Rhonda Young @ (703) 385-4658

*Refreshments will be provided, and any
donations of **finger foods only** will be gladly accepted.*

Recipe for Recovery!

*You're invited to the
24th Peninsula Al-Anon Breakfast
on Sunday, April 11, 2010*

*The cost is \$18.00 per person.
Seating is limited. Get your tickets today!!*

*The Peninsula District Alateens
are cooking up a special performance!*

*Point Plaza Suites & Conference Hotel
Chesapeake Ballroom*

950 J. Clyde Morris Blvd, Newport News, VA 23601

(Point Plaza is conveniently located from Interstate 64 east or west, exit 258B. The Chesapeake Ballroom is accessible from the hotel lobby, or from its private entrance on the north end of the hotel.)

Registration and Coffee Service begins at 8:00 a.m.

Additional Information

Please contact Duane F. at 757-769-4254 or Ami S. at 757-897-3884, afs1966@yahoo.com

Ticket Orders/Purchases

Please contact Jo F., Ticket Coordinator, at 757-238-8540

