

# AL--GRAM

Pennsylvania Al-Anon/Alateen Newsletter

Spring 2014

PA Area Website: <[www.pa-al-anon.org](http://www.pa-al-anon.org)>

Volume 26, Number 23

## Many Voices, One Journey To Be Shared at State Convention; May 30 ~ June 1

*42nd Annual Al-Anon  
Pennsylvania AFG Convention  
May 30 ~ June 1, 2014  
"Many Voices, One Journey"  
Susquehanna University  
514 University Avenue  
Selinsgrove, PA 17870*

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Our state convention is quickly approaching. As we've planned, we have made good use of today's technologies: texts, emails, and conference calls. Excitement is becoming evident with nervous laughter. Leading off our calls with the serenity prayer and an occasional reminder of let's "keep it simple" seems to bring a collective deep breath that allows all to feel well.

From past service experience has come a special knowledge...that it is the members who attend that make the convention a success. The act of sharing their experience, strength,

and hope with each of us brings the end result.

The gift of recovery along this spiritual journey happens just the way it is meant to. Please travel along with a friend and share the journey.

#### Workshops [tentative list]

Finding Our Voice:

Building Self-Esteem

Moderating Our Voice:

Conflict Resolution

Al-Anon Gems: Things You've Heard That Have Stuck!

Tools for the Journey:

Navigating Obstacles

Let Go and Let God:

Making Your Own God Box

Fun Along the Way:

Let's Play!

Forks In the Road:

Making Healthy Choices

Express Your Journey Through Art

AA Workshops

See you there!

Amy, Convention Chair

## Concept 9 Guides My Leadership Journey

If you've never read the Bill W. essay on leadership in our Service Manual under Concept 9, you are missing a real treat. Concept 9 states "Good personal leadership at all service levels is a necessity. In the field of world service the Board of Trustees assumes the primary leadership."

What is a good leader? The essay lists several characteristic ~ dedication, stability, vision, and special skills. Who is a leader? "A person who can put principles, plans and policies into such dedicated and effective action that the rest of us want to back him up

and help." The essay goes on to mention some of the challenges that leaders may face ~ opposition for opposition's sake, and criticism that he calls "the acid test". It's interesting to note that "a leader must realize that even very prideful or angry people can sometimes be right, when the calm and more humble are quite mistaken."

Good advice is given when faced with the acid test. Listen to it and if there is even a small truth in it, take our own inventory and admit when we were wrong. If there is no truth and they do not want to listen to our opin-

ion, we can be sorry they have this opinion and just let it go.

One characteristic that was not listed for a leader was perfection. One does not have to be perfect to be a leader. In coming to terms with my own struggles with perfectionism, I truly believe being perfect would be a detriment to being a good leader. People appreciate my failings as much as my successes. It makes me more human and accessible than some perfect person up there never making mistakes. I am an equal to everyone.

## Spiritual Principles of Leadership ~ Reflections by Area Delegate Maria A.

"Concept Nine: Good personal leadership at all service levels is a necessity. In the field of world service the Board of Trustees assumes the primary leadership."

Some of the spiritual principles of leadership are dedication, responsibility, flexibility, and vision. A leader is someone who others are willing to follow because they trust their honesty, knowledge, ability to listen, and compassion. A good leader is neither

a robot nor a dictator, but someone in between; a leader is not perfect, but human. I have read Bill W.'s essay on "Leadership" in our Service Manual on Concept Nine. It is inspirational and I read it often

When I've stepped into the many positions of service, it has been because someone has invited me as they saw me ready and capable. It always surprised me that someone else could

recognize such qualities where I could not. I felt honored that someone would trust me and find me trustworthy. It is very humbling, but at the same time, raised my self-esteem. When I was elected as Delegate at the Assembly of 2012 by the Group Representatives (GRs) on the first ballot it was stunning to me. I truly felt like a world servant and not just the winner of a contest. I knew that I had the

skills and was very willing to do a good job representing and serving Pennsylvania as the primary link of communication with the WSO. I've enjoyed and am forever grateful for the trust, love, and support expressed by everybody. I've experienced what I've always known, that no one is ever alone in Al-Anon, I always rely on my Higher Power for support and love.

Maria A, Area Delegate

## NOMAAC Coming July 11 ~ 13 in Shippensburg

Hello. I am Matthew S., the Alateen chair of NOMAAC board. NOMAAC is the Northern Mid-Atlantic Alateen Assembly and Conference that us Alateeners attend each summer. This year we will be holding our conference from July 11 ~ 13. Our theme is Stepping Through the Decades. I am so proud of the members on the NOMAAC board who have worked so hard together to make the conference possible.

This conference is a true service to all alateeners who attend. Many alateeners that I have spoken to say that the first NOMAAC that they went to made them keep coming back to their meetings. The fact that this one weekend conference once a year can have this much of an impact is amazing. I am glad that I am a part of it. We hope that all alateeners in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Delaware will join us this summer in recovery.

Check with your AMIAS or your group for registration information. See you in July.

Matthew S.,  
NOMAAC Board Chair

## Concept 9 Guides My Leadership Journey cont.

!What a relief! If I had to be perfect to lead, I would never have had the amazing growth opportunity that I've had on my service journey. It's in service that I've had to come to terms with, and face head-on, my perfectionism ~ this erroneous belief that I should be perfect to be accepted.

So what have I learned from Concept 9 about being a leader ~ to do

my best, keep an open mind, talk to others, reason things out and, when it's my responsibility, make the best decisions that I can with the information I have at the time. Then, when my service is complete, I turn over the position to the next leader who will continue moving Al-Anon forward.

Christine F., Area Chair

## An Invitation to be the Newsletter Editor

It wasn't what I expected after speaking at the January 2012 PA Area meeting. My husband died in October 2011, and I was in the midst of trying to figure out what to do next. Early the next morning, I got a call asking if I would be the Al-A-Gram editor. I said I would consider it. After a shower, dressing, and driving to the Carlisle gathering, I walked into the meeting and was greeted with applause. I **was** the editor.

I've worked on newsletters before, but they were very simple one or two pages. I've written lots of articles over the years and was a fast and accurate typist but my computer skills were minimal. I had only recently learned to attach files and cut and paste ~ all skills helpful in editing this newsletter. But I was willing to learn.

The first edition was the hardest. I was afraid I would get it all wrong. After that, it got easier and the tasks more familiar. I discovered how to ask others for help, to write an article, review the newsletter, help put it together. One of the joys was gathering with fellowship friends to get the newsletter ready for mailing. Members of my home group were willing to help in the preparation and the resulting conversations were rich and engaging.

The greatest gift of service is the opportunity to know folks from across Pennsylvania and discover the diversity of gifts they bring to recovery. In service, I have learned so much about Al-Anon, how we are connected and enriched by WSO, and how the Area works.

The friendships I have made with other trusted servants enrich my life. They've helped me over the rough spots and celebrated simple steps toward healing from pain and growing in recovery.

I'm delighted to invite you to consider becoming the next newsletter editor. For the past six years, the editors have been from the Harrisburg area. It's time for another part of the state to be represented in this service opportunity. Looking forward to hearing from you.

Ruth W., Al-A-Gram editor

## Recovery Boost: Being a Trusted Servant

I believe the biggest boost to my recovery has been my growth through being a trusted servant in Al-Anon Family Groups. As I conclude my term as Alternate Delegate, I have been looking back at where I was in my recovery almost a decade ago and where I am today. My first service position was the Information Service Representative (ISR) position. Al-Anon gave me a voice to share my thoughts and service helped me find the right words to express myself and accept the outcome as decided by my Higher Power.

After being an ISR and seeing Al-Anon in action at the local level, I took the Group Representative (GR) position. My marriage was falling apart and ending in divorce. I felt like I could not trust myself to make a decision on anything. I was also an Alateen group sponsor over that three year period and was blessed to be part of the host committee for the Al-Anon International Convention held in Pittsburgh.

Being a trusted servant in those positions taught me to trust myself again. I did not need to be perfect. I did need to learn to ask for help and offer it when asked. When it was time to elect a District Representative (DR), I felt strongly about giving back to the fellowship that helped me trust myself again. It also taught me that it was okay to say "no" or "Not right now" when other opportunities came along because I had taken on more responsibility. This helped me learn to set boundaries and focus on balance.

At the end of my term as DR, I was healing from some medical issues and was very tired. I did not think I had any more to give as I was taking on more responsibilities in my professional life. I was done and told my fellow DR's the same thing. As I sat in the audience at Assembly, I was ready to go to the microphone and decline every board position. While sitting there, I was thinking how I would do things differently if I were coordinat-

ing Assembly (not that the current Alternate Delegate was not doing an excellent job, just how I would do things). Then I heard a quiet voice in my head say, "well, then do it". I said I was willing, and by a twist of fate, I won. I have learned so much about myself and have developed leadership skills that I did not have or used in the past. I am also able to acknowledge that I have special skills and talents (we all do!) and now use them in my personal and professional life.

I believe that being a trust servant has helped me grow in leaps and bounds in the recovery process. I encourage everyone to serve, accept the priceless gifts that recovery gives us, and share them to keep Al-Anon going in the future.

In love and service,

Dana P.,  
Alternate Delegate

**What are the spiritual principles that guide you as a trusted servant?**

**Where is your Higher Power nudging you to use your skills and gifts?**

**What are the learnings that you didn't anticipate in your present service position?**

**PA Website: [www.pa-al-anon.org](http://www.pa-al-anon.org)      Public Outreach Website: [www.al-anon.alateen.org](http://www.al-anon.alateen.org)**

**WSO Member's website: [www.al-anon.org/members](http://www.al-anon.org/members)**

### Al-A-Gram Order Form

#### Statement of Purpose

The Al-A-Gram is published by the PA Al-Anon Assembly for the purpose of providing information on District, Area, and WSO business, functions and events for Al-Anon and Alateen.

The opinions expressed in the Al-A-Gram are not to be attributed to Al-Anon / Alateen as a whole. In keeping with the 11th and 12th Traditions, names disclosed within this publication are to be kept within the fellowship.

Price is \$3.00 for a one-year subscription (3 issues). Make check or money order payable to: PA A Assembly (DO NOT SEND CASH). Remember: Every registered Al-Anon group automatically receives a FREE copy of the Al-A-Gram sent to its Group Representative [do not send money for your free copy]. . PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY! Thank you.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ CITY \_\_\_\_\_

STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE NUMBER [ \_\_\_\_\_ ]

Mail to: PA A Assembly; 26 Lantern Lane; Shippensburg, PA 17257-8769

## Harrisburg Welcomes Assembly, August 15 ~ 17

From all across Pennsylvania, trusted servants will gather to do the business of the Area. Group Representatives, District Representatives, Area Officers, and Committee Chairpersons will meet in conference. This year, we will be become acquainted with the new Service Manual as it guides our work together. Workshop participation and an invitation to witness alateens in meeting round out the weekend. Normally, all Alateen meetings are closed, but they open this one to help us understand the important work they do and to encourage folks to consider becoming an AMIAS (Al-Anon Member Involved in Alateen Service).

One of the major responsibilities of the weekend is the election of AWSC officers. Every three years we invite all DRs to consider standing for election to one of the offices. Serving as a Trusted Servant in the Area is a life-changing experience.

As you read this and anticipate Assembly, look around you. Do you believe your DR has the gifts to serve the Area in some capacity? Speak to them, offer a word of encouragement and tell them why you think they would do a good job.

Assembly is the opportunity for every group to be represented, to have a voice and a vote. Information will be coming soon. Make sure that your GR or an alternate, comes to Harrisburg for a weekend of service.

Ruth W., editor

Pennsylvania Area Assembly

August 15 ~ 17, 2014

Harrisburg Hilton Hotel

## Trusted Servant Includes Newsletter Funds

The Winter 2014 edition of the newsletter brought some changes and frustration. The Al-A-Gram is now being mailed in a business-size envelope, rather than folded the way it has been previously. New Post Office regulations require that a heavier weight paper be used when it is mailed without an envelope. The additional cost for paper alone would be at least another \$125. More tabs to seal the newsletter are also required, again an added cost.

Over the past two and a half years, I have used a variety of printing shops, some better than others. In January, the shop I used did a poor job of printing the newsletter. The proof copy was good. The further down in the box we got, the darker the printing.

I wrote a letter to the shop, explaining my frustration. I have been taught to say what I mean, mean what I say, but don't say it mean. The shop apologized and refunded the entire cost of printing. :) Ruth W., editor

## Panel #52 Goal for 2012 - 2015



# SERVICE

**Strong, Enthusiastic, Representatives, Valuing Intergenerational recovery, Community outreach, and Encouraging spiritual growth**

