

Delegate's Report, Ann M

We welcome 3 new District Reps to AWSC (Denise, Karl, and Caroline). If there is anything we can do to support you, please let us know.

The coordinators for Panel 58 were introduced. At the beginning of the meeting, there was a vacancy for the Literature/Forum Coordinator. During our lunch break, the position was filled.

Panel 58 met in January to establish our goals:

1. All AMAIS's are educated on the new Alateen Certification Program and Process.
2. Encourage district representatives in every district.
3. Clarify the responsibility and authority of each service position.
4. Strengthen links of service and increase participation through improved transparency and communication via traditional and emerging technologies.

Trivia questions were embedded in today's report, and the prize was the new 2018-2021 Service Manual.

If you wish to send me a card, while I am representing Michigan as your delegate at WSC (World Service Conference), please put my name and address in the return address section of the envelope in the event that mail delivery is delayed. Please plan to have mail arrive after April 13th to Renaissance Westchester Hotel, 80 W. Red Oak Lane, West Harrison, NY 10604. "Attention Ann Murphy, hold for WSC 4/16-4/20". As for the Love Gift, I will be bring lapel pins with the Al-Anon symbol.

In 2017, contributions to WSO reflect the second highest year of donations. WSO was able to accomplish the following from the donations:

- Completion of the newly designed al-anon.org website
- Completion of the newly designed Members link on the al-anon.org website
- Ability to hire and retain Staff verses the expense of outside consulting.
- Completion of the new meeting search
- Ability to not only look to the future but the continued commitment to our primary purpose of reaching families and friends of alcoholics. (Taken from COB Jan. letter)

Grand Rapids won the prize promising the highest number (154) of opportunities for its district/AIS to share the Al-Anon and Alateen message during the month of April,

"Let it begin with me. When Anyone, Anywhere reaches out for help, Let the hand of Al-Anon and Alateen always be there, and Let It Begin With Me"

which

"Alcohol Awareness Month". We will be looking forward to hearing and reading about their promise at Spring Assembly and in the newsletter.

With a grateful heart, I am

Ann

Your Delegate

Alternate Delegate's Report, Kristine G

I feel honored and blessed to serve MI AFG as your Alternate Delegate. I've spent the last 3 months gathering information about my service position from members who have held this position and studying our MI AFG Policy Handbook and current Service Manual. I updated the New District & Group Representative Orientation Booklet. I attended the Panel 58 Kick Off meeting and Policy Committee meeting both in Lansing. Did you know that as your alternate delegate I'm invited to attend the NCRDM (North Central Regional Delegates Meeting)? Well, that scared me a bit, but I called our Delegate and she explained to me that it's a mock WSC (World Service Conference) and I would be participating in logging motions, meeting other alternate delegates from the Region, reading the Warranties at the Sunday morning meeting and the dress code is business casual, I can do that! The 2018 NCRDM is in Duluth, MN, March 16-18th, I'm looking forward to the experience.

If you have any questions or concerns that I might be able to help with please do not hesitate to contact me. Kristine G., 248.361.8550, miafgalternatedelegate@gmail.com.

Treasurer's Report: Maggie S



Wow, is all I can say and a HUGE Thank You to the many groups and individuals who've donated this 1st quarter of 2018 to MI AFG Inc.!

Reading your personal messages included with your PayPal, check or money order donations, fill me with even more happiness and hope in recovery. As of March 19, **\$4018** has been received, which is a \$1,658 increase from this time last year. Do take NOTE of the new Post Office Box address: **MI AFG, Inc. PO Box 981074, Ypsilanti, MI 48198-0174.** The Lansing P O Box will forward mailings for a bit longer, but please do inform your district and group treasurers of this important update. It's been a very busy several months since assuming my treasurer duties, but so rewarding. As I get comfortable with the programs and systems, I hope to fulfill the expectations you've entrusted to me as a trusted servant of MI AFG, Inc.. Please contact

me at miafgtreasurer@gmail.com for any questions or concerns.

In most grateful service,
Maggie S



Sharing from Ann M

In finding my own peace and serenity, I cannot be looking at the A's dual personality. I have too many of my own. In working my own program, I see there's a part of the Al-Anon Preamble, "We have but one purpose: to help families of alcoholics." It goes on to say how we do this... "by welcoming and giving comfort to families of alcoholics, and so I do not go on bashing the problem drinkers of my life.

I have found it a relief when I could separate the disease of alcoholism and the behaviors of the person and the disease. I can/could see patterns in the daily life of a drinker. I can see the progressiveness of the disease. I still love 'em. If I don't, what's my problem? Am I using love to get I want? I shall continue thinking about this, keeping the focus on Ann.

Ann



Forum subscriptions reminder

To order the Forum, send a check payable to AFG, Inc., for \$11 to start or renew a Forum Magazine subscription. 1600 Landing Parkway, Virginia Beach, VA 23464-5617 On-line sign-up at al-anon.org or, via fax ([757-563-1655](tel:757-563-1655)) and pay with Visa, MasterCard, Discover or American Express credit cards

Web Coordinator Report: Jamie H

As of the new panel, the web site has been updated to reflect the new officers as well as coordinators. The donation address has been updated to reflect the new PO Box. There have been several emails through the site asking for the donation address because their checks have been returned. The majority of those were using the address that was over three years old. There have also been more inquiries on meeting locations.

When addressing the donation and meeting emails I will give them the information they are asking for as well as inform them where they can find the information on the web site for future reference

There has been one new district meeting happenings added to the District/Group Events page. April 7, District 16 is having an Open Al-Anon Speaker meeting in Lansing.

Group Record's Coordinator: Sandy C

Hi Fellow Al-Anon members,

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself to you. I am the new MI AFG Records Coordinator.

I have been a member of Al-Anon since 2008; since becoming a very grateful member of this fellowship I have held several service positions; all service positions at the group level, District Rep for district 20 (Grand Rapids) Chairperson for Grand Rapids Information Service, and I am also an AMIAS. I have also co-chaired for a state convention.

With all these service positions I have grown in Al-Anon/Alateen more than I ever dreamt I would. Service has helped me grow in the fellowship and helped me put the traditions and principles of our program into practice and use in my everyday life.

The position of records coordinator is a position I have felt a calling for, for several years. I would like to thank Mike and Ann for having faith and trust in me to be a trusted servant for MI AFG. I am looking forward to working with Panel 58 members during the next 3 years. The wisdom around that table can only help me grow in this great and wonderful lifesaving fellowship.

Please forward any changes for your group, registration of a new group to the address below: I will update WSO; and do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or concerns about your group records.

Sandy C.

miafgrecords@yahoo.com



Editor's note: DON'T FORGET TO RENEW YOUR PERSONAL ISSUE OF NEWSLETTER: \$4 A YEAR

Archives Coordinator Report: Ross F

Another fresh start for another three years. I was asked, and I accepted, the Archive Coordinator position. What does this mean? I don't know. What I can tell you is there is a lot of stuff to go through and learn about. Hopefully over the next three years the answer to what does this mean will evolve as my knowledge evolves. The former Archive Coordinator has offered to help as he can, Thanks Hugh! He has big shoulders I will be leaning on them a lot.

In Service, Ross F

Newsletter Editor's Report: Jeannette G

I am grateful to be serving as your Newsletter Editor. I am approaching this position with Training Wheels on. There is so much to learn. I have been blessed to have our previous editors, Maggie and Steffi's willingness to give me guidance on this journey. Yet another lesson in you are never alone in this program. As your trusted servant in this position I will do whatever it takes to fulfill this position to the best of my ability.

I have served Al-Anon on many levels as a DR (2 terms), GR, district Secretary, group treasurer, etc., and am looking at this coordinator position as another opportunity to learn and grow on yet another level.

On a personal note. I have been involved in Al-Anon since 1974 and returned to the program in 2000 and stayed. I look forward to continuing to attend meetings as long as I am able.

The Serenity Sentinel is YOUR Newsletter, as members of MI AFG. I will look forward to working with all of you to be sure YOUR Experience, Strength, and Hope are heard in this publication.

Please feel free to contact me at any time with suggestions/contributions at miafgnewsletter@gmail.com.

Jeannette G
Newsletter Editor



Anonymous Sharing:

I really love Al-Anon Conference Approved Literature, and have a difficult time choosing my favorite one. Between the monthly Forum magazine (it used to go by a tagline of, 'a meeting in your pocket'), daily readers, step-tradition-concept study workbooks and so much more. I would say that one book, 'As we Understood' has helped me tremendously. Short miscellaneous snippets from members around the world sharing their Experience, Strength, and Hope on numerous topics, that includes a great index. A short but perfect example is on page 17 and 18, on the topic of 'choices'. To paraphrase it: "I am learning to walk the path of love shown by the good people of Al-Anon. In practicing the principles of the program in all my affairs and using God's guidance in making decisions that are right for me, regardless of whether others are pleased or not". Truly, I've gained so much from Al-Anon recovery and want everyone, everywhere to find those benefits too!

A Message From your Editor:

I had suggested at our kick off panel meeting, for Panel 58, that perhaps we could have a "group problems and solutions" section in the Serenity Sentinel which was well received by those attending. This is a carry over idea from Mike D in his delegate position and I think worth carrying on. In giving this more thought I would like to suggest, and will follow up in the summer newsletter on this thought, that I include in the newsletter a section from our Service Manual which members can respond to with sharing's of how this particular section of our manual has helped them resolve problems within their groups. I would love to have suggestions from you as to which sections you have found useful in problem solving so that we can start this off. I will be hoping for your contributions and suggestions on this.

Jeannette G, Newsletter Editor,
miafgnewsletter@gmail.com

Twenty years later, I'm ready to change...

By Ellen P., Wisconsin

Forum WSC 2011

I had been avoiding the dating scene. Relationships were just too hard---and all of mine had ended badly.

I stopped trying, and went about my life. Then I met a wonderful guy. He was divorced, and I learned that his ex-wife is an alcoholic. Like me, he had also grown up in an alcoholic home. We shared a common bond.

He was going to Al-Anon regularly. I had been to two meetings---about twenty years ago. I remember feeling frustrated because I just wanted to be told how to make the alcoholic in my life stop drinking. The meetings didn't give me that information, so I stopped going.

Then my boyfriend asked me if I wanted to go to an open meeting. I was concerned that, even though I was no longer living with any alcoholics, something was wrong with my thinking that was affecting me---at work and in all my relationships.

I wanted to change. I really liked this man, and I didn't want to fall into my old patterns of pushing my boyfriend away, so, I sought out my own Al-Anon meeting.

I've only been attending meetings for a short while, but I love it. I love the people, and as I try to practice some of the principles, I see the program really helping me in areas that have always been problems for me. I love it's spiritual aspect. I feel that my attitude has improved already.

It's really neat to work my program, and to let my my boyfriend work his. I intend to "Keep Coming Back." Twenty years after my initial start with Al-Anon, I'm now ready to work on *me*.

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The family dynamic seemed to demand a designated drinker

By Cathy P., Pennsylvania

The Forum July 2010

I understood that my family was dysfunctional even before I came to Al-Anon. I blamed my bipolar illness on the chaos of abuse, neglect, and anger I went through as a child. Now, years later, I better understand the effects of living with alcoholism.

I believe that my father self-medicated his bipolar disorder with alcohol. He was not a daily drinker, but a daily “rager” who had intermittent bouts with the bottle. We all covered in fear of his anger and kept the family secret.

From the outside, we---five children---looked perfectly normal. We were always well-dressed, went to church every Sunday, and some of us (mostly me) did very well in school. We all strove for perfection. I thought that everything would right itself if I got straight A’s and won the senior writing prize in high school. Looking back, my thinking was very distorted.

After college, I married a man very much like my father. At first I didn’t believe that, but I started to wonder barely six months after our wedding day, when he began to rage and occasionally overdo his drinking.

I had been married five years when my father died. I began trying to sort it all out then. The day of Dad’s funeral, I asked my mother, “Dad was an alcoholic, wasn’t he?” She swiftly and irritably replied, “Of course not! Your father was a periodic, episodic problem drinker.”

Whew, I thought that took care of that. But for the rest of my family, the drinking continued, especially on holidays and when we got together for weekends at the summer house.

After Dad died, Mom seemed to take on the central role of problem drinker. Her nightly ritual was to drink scotch while sitting on the front porch and watching the sun set over the dunes. My antenna went up---and that was before Al-Anon---when the sun’s last glow lit the sky and she said, “I’m going to be naughty and just have one more teeny little drink.”

When she died, I knew that one of my four siblings would take over the primary drinking role. That was when I started commit to Al-Anon. I wanted to learn how to deal with the effects of this family illness.

The first tool I learned was the slogan “Let Go and Let God.” I use it almost daily. It helps me to detach from this powerful, confusing, and distorting family illness.

I also remind myself that I didn’t cause the drinking, I can’t control it, and I can’t cure it. This reminder releases me from a false sense of responsibility and the need to control.

I don’t feel guilt over something I didn’t cause. Control is not mine.

Alcoholism is a disease, not a choice made by the alcoholic. It’s a relief and a cause for serenity that all is in God’s hands. I pray for the alcoholic’s recovery, but again, leave the results up to God.

Another important, vital part, of the program is working the Steps with a Sponsor. The first time I did all Twelve Steps, I skipped over Step Two. I had always had a personal relationship with God. The only problem in skipping the “could restore us to sanity” was that I believed--- but didn’t follow belief with action. I gave lip service to God. This kept me from the hope contained in that Step, and hindered my growth in the program.

Sanity was a hard concept for me. I am bipolar and truly know what insanity is. It took me years in the program to realize the Step was not talking about clinical insanity. My denial, attempts at manipulating events, and perfectionism all fell into this category. It wasn’t till last night, while speaking on Step Two, that I finally got this concept of insanity in the sense intended by the Step.

Now I can examine my thoughts, words, and actions in light of insanity and humbly ask God to remove these defects of character. It isn’t going to happen overnight; after all, it has taken decades for me to get...insane; so I have to be patient with the process, letting go of unproductive attitudes and behaviors; and replacing them with positive thoughts and actions.

This is not easy – but I’m grateful to Al-Anon for bringing me this far.

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Sharing from Ann M

Boundaries. I’m wondering about my place in relationship with others. I long for healthy relationships of mutual participation. I especially want to feel safe: physically, emotionally, spiritually, etc.. While I find “unhealthy” people to be amusing, funny, and memorable, I need to define my role when I am around them. Defining that role is what I call setting boundaries. It is an opportunity to be minding my own business. I love those characters, I sure do!

Happy Spring to all, Hope to see everyone at Michigan Al-Anon/Alateen Family Groups 46th Annual State Convention, see attached flyer for further information.