

Northern California World Service Area

Newsletter

April 2005

Annual Report

Volume 39 Issue 7

Contents

Events Calendar.....	02	Alateen Sponso.....	12
Inside this issue.....	03	Budget Comm.....	12
Treasurers Report.....	05	Alateen Safety.....	13
Delegate's Report.....	04	Profit & Loss Budge.....	15
Executive Comm.....	06	My Bill of Rights.....	18
Web Site Report.....	07	District Reports.....	19
Job description.....	07	Letting Go.....	23
Secretary.....	11	Al-Anon/Alateen Cart.....	23
Alateen Liaison.....	11	Contact Information.....	24

Living with an alcoholic

Over the years of living with an alcoholic I did so much finger pointing, blaming and obsessing over how much better they would be if they just changed their behavior and stopped drinking. Since attending Al-Anon and working the steps I have gotten just a glimpse of just how much I was expecting of my alcoholic. Not being an addict/alcoholic I think it was hard for me to appreciate how hard it must be to be faced with giving up the very thing that gets them through each day. My alcoholic is expected to never take one drop of alcohol again for the rest of his life. He is expected to work the steps, have a sponsor and have a program, moment-by-moment, and daily. They are expected to resist primal urges that I can't fathom, and to resist the endless craving for alcohol. In addition, they must fulfill their daily obligations of work or study and to be "normal". God help them if they slip, everyone knows when that happens, there's no place to hide.

By contrast, who knows when I let down the guard of my heart and have mean or hateful thoughts about others? Who knows that I sometimes go days without reading Al Anon literature or take a "vacation" from my program? I can be in a constant state of spiritual and emotional relapse, but with a smile on my face and good manners, to others I look fine

Recently during my time of prayer I realized that if I am not willing to make the same level of commitment to serenity that I expect my alcoholic to make to sobriety I am a hypocrite. I have no business judging, blaming, accusing or criticizing anyone especially my alcoholic. Unless I am totally committed to serenity and daily take steps to achieve it, I must MIND MY OWN BUSINESS and have compassion for the alcoholic in my life. With the help of my Higher Power I have committed to working my program as if my life depends on it. And truly, my life does depend on it.

Clair

Event Calendar: See <http://www.ncwsa.org/cal-2005.html> for latest calendar

District 17 Birthday Speaker Meeting

(3rd Saturday of every month), 7:30 p.m.

Cedar Blvd Neighborhood Church

[38325 Cedar Blvd, Room 118](#)

Newark, CA 94560

Contact: Debbie S. 510/713-8436 or Debbie-spalding@yahoo.com

District 24 Open Speaker Meeting

(1st Friday of every other month), 7:30 p.m.

Unitarian Universalist Church of the Monterey Peninsula

[490 Aguajito Road, Carmel, CA 93923](#)

District 16 Speaker Meeting

(2nd Saturday every month), 8:00 p.m.

Unity Church, 6325 Sierra Court, Dublin

Contact: Karen HA, 925-417-8719, email khaleyallen414@Worldsavings.com

District 23 Speaker Meeting

Open to the Public

Santa Cruz Monday Night Group

3rd Monday, each month, 8:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Messiah Lutheran Church, (In rear of Church; Bring a Flashlight

[801 High Street, Santa Cruz](#)

Upcoming Events

23rd Annual Growing Together Weekend at Westminster Woods

Al-Anon Conference with Alateen Participation

May 20th 5:30 PM, 21st and 22nd

[6510 Bohemian Hwy](#)

Occidental, CA 95465-9101

Contact Joe G. 510-366-5733 woodsbear2005@aol.com

AFG Southwest Regional Service Seminar

Septembr 16 - 18, 2005

Renaissance Ilikai Waikiki Hotel. <http://www.ilikaihotel.com/acco.htm>

1777 Ala Moana Boulevard

Honolulu, Hawaii 96815-1606

Contacting NCWSA
Northern California Al-Anon Web <http://www.ncwsa.org/Al-Anon> Family Group
Headquarters 1600 Corporate Landing Parkway
Virginia, Beach, VA 23456-5617
Email wso@al-anon.org
Meeting information 888-4AL-ANON

Inside this Issue

Again I remind the committee members to write about their positions, how they each did there commitments. As I recall also to bring your binders to the meeting to make sure each one is up to date. As you have probably have notice, I've change my for matting to the stepper. I found it was a lot easier to do with the help of Bill S.

I am still would appreciate it if all reports are submitted by Email. I have change my address to hoks@comcast.net

Harlan

The 12 Stepper...

is the newsletter of the Northern California World Service Area (NSCSA) and is published three(3) times a yew A free copy is mailed to Al-Anon and Alateen Groups registered with NCWSA, NCWSA Officers, and Coordinators. Liaisons and District Representatives. A limited number of copies and shared with other newsletters across the country. All others are sold on a subscription basis.

The 12 Stepper is mailed non-profit, third class bulk rate within the continental U.S. and is not forwarded buy the U.S. Post Office. 12 Stepper mail lists are maintained by the NCWSA Records Coordinator, and are periodical updated upon receipt of a completed registration! Change of address form. The 12 Stepper editor or staff cannol be held responsible for non delivery or the statements and views of those contributing articles or letters Remember that contact lists are Confidential and are for Al-Anon use only..

Submitting material to the 12 Stepper

All members of Al-Anon and Alateen are urged to contribute information about district, group news, fundraiser and special events. Material submitted is subject to editing,. Please include your name, address, phone number, and e-mail address if you have one. Names will be withheld, if requested.

Submitting material in electronic form is preferred and looks a lot better in the Stepper. Send material via e-mail to hoks@comcast.net or regular mail (on white paper please!) to: 12 Stepper Editor, 1117 Baldwin St Sp 63, Salinas, Ca, 93906-3658.

The Deadline for the year end issue is May 23, 2005

Delegate's Report

As your Delegate, I have been active in our area since October. Although October was "surgery month" in my home with my husband undergoing 2 minor surgeries and me having 1 major surgery, I still found the strength thru God to carry out my duties. My father has also been very ill, although doing much better now, so I have spent a lot of time with him as well.

I was able to speak in District 5 December and District 2 in January. Both events were wonderful, and a chance for me to get to know new Al-Anon friends outside of my neighborhood. I also performed by annual "Game Show" for District 22's Day in Al-Anon in January.

I mentioned in my last report that the Delegate from California South has been having conversations about re-splitting California. She has had conversations with WSO that indicate that the Admission/Handbook Committee will be discussing the current Area structure at the World Service Conference. We have been given permission to submit information regarding our fine state and its request for change, if indeed that is what we want. Keep in mind that this is a VERY slow process and even if we in Northern California wanted the change nothing will happen for several years. Some relevant information for this discussion is as follows:

Current policy allows for only 2 areas per state
The national average of groups per area is 237
CA (S) — 9S7 groups (900 Al-Anon/87 Alateen)
CA (N) -694 groups (630 Al-Anon/64 Alateen)
The next largest Area is Pennsylvania with 475 groups (436 Al-Anon/39 Alateen)
The state of California makes up approximately 10% of all registered groups at WSO
The state of California has more groups than all of Canada
Currently Canada has 3 Regional Trustees while California shares I with 6 other areas
Currently Canada *has* 9 Delegates while California has 2

These are the numbers that show how much voice California has with relation to their population. However, this is only a PIECE of the question. The other questions that need to be asked are: Can we serve our groups under the current 2 area structure?

Would adding another area increase or decrease our service to the groups? Are the DR's in Central California interested in their, own area structure? I would like to start the brainstorming now so that Miriam (Delegate CA(s)) and I can submit something for Conference in April

Speaking of Conference! Keep those love gifts coming! You can send love gifts, cards of encouragement and love meteors to me at Conference:

MAIL WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED PRIOR TO APRIL 12, 2005. Be sure to use my home address as the return address for your packages just in case they do not get to the hotel on time. My husband will be attending with me and it is planned for the Delegates to go to Stepping Stones this year. My plate is pretty full with my Conference duties this year. I will be leading the Area Highlights Session, leading a workshop, one of the Spiritual Speakers for the closing dinner, participating in the closing skit and oh yeah. ...

I need input from you for the Chosen Agenda Topics. All Conference members may submit topics to be considered as agenda items. Items must be limited to questions not readily answerable at the group, district~ or area level or in the Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual or Conference Summary. A good starting question is "What are the most important issues facing Al-Anon in the future". Delegates at Conference will vote on all submitted questions and the top vote getters will be discussed on the Conference floor while all others will be discussed in Delegate workshops throughout Conference.

WSO News:

APRIL 29, 2006 — WSO will be holding a celebration in Virginia Beach for Al-Anon 55th Anniversary. It will be held after the '06 Conference, at the Virginia Beach Convention Center. Due to the huge turnout for the 50th Anniversary, they will be arranging for more seating.

LDC's - The shopping cart function is up and running for internet purchases of literature from WSO.

SURVEY: A letter from WSO was mailed to a random sampling of groups in November 2004 asking them to respond to a survey after consulting their groups. Some of the addresses in that mailing had the word "Al-Anon" along with the name and address of a member on the envelope. A letter of apology for breaking anonymity was then sent to each recipient.

CUBA: WSO visited Cuba at the end of November to discuss plans to form a national structure using the principles of the Twelve Concepts of Service.

I am looking forward to my last year of service as your Delegate. Upcoming events include Conference, Southwest Regional Delegates Meeting in Arizona, Conference reports at various districts, Regional Service Seminar in Hawaii and the AA International Convention in Toronto. I hope to see many of you along the way.

Yours in Service
Vicki H.Delegate, Panal 43

Treasurers Report

This begins my third year as Treasurer. I have enjoyed it very much.

Attached to this report is something of a description of this position. Please make copies and pass it around your meetings. We need to find several people to stand for ffis job when election assembly rolls around.

Also a preliminary financial report for 2004 is in your bin folder. The CPA will probably add a couple things when he does the taxes in late April, but this is pretty much it. If there are any questions, let me know.

One of my duties is to interview the Financial Assistants of events (H&I, Convention, Assembly) and pass my recommendations to the Executive Committee. So if the chairpersons of these events would let me know who their treasurers are as soon as they are picked, I would appreciate it. Also, any pre-registration people for the event should contact me as soon as they are picked.

We have a prudent reserve of \$15,492.80 as of December 31, 2004, as well as netting \$13,609 over budget last year. There was nothing budgeted the Alateen Special Event but it made money so it added to the plus amount. We also had the Alateen Safety Committee expenses this year but there was enough of a surplus to cover them.

On the Balance Sheet, the Alateen NoCAC account is not up to date as I don't have their figures yet. I will be auditing them soon.

The mileage reimbursement for this year will be 40.5 cents. I have printed new expense reimbursement forms. Please discard the old ones. The new one is also on the web site.

Thanks for all your support and understanding this past year. Hopefully, 2005 will be a very healthy one.

Carol K
Treasurer

PS: As always — please send donations to

**P 0 Box 1751
Alameda Ca 94501-0201**

Only correspondence goes to my address.

Executive Committee

Members:

Bob J/District 8
Lorraine T/District 11
Linda W/District 19
Gene H/District 14
Lori K/District 16

Northern Section
Central Section
Southern Section
Member-At-Large
Member-At-Large

Duties: No action required

Maintain the policies of the Assembly
Authorize expenditures: Approval of extraordinary expenses
Approve officer requests for transfer of reserve funds
Perform duties required by the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws
Supervise the performance of officers and agents

Duties: Action required

Supervise the performance of officers and agents:
a. Annual review with Chairperson and Secretary completed 2/11/05.
b. Corporate Responsibilities Time Line updated per NCWSA Treasurer.

Appoint agent: Dee J. has been appointed financial assistant for the H&I 2005 Conference. We are currently interviewing for Assembly 2005. As a reminder, please forward event information to the EC agents as follows.

Financial Assistant Reviews.

H & I Conference 2006 Linda W
Convention 2006 Gene H
Assembly 2005 Bob J

Reports will be sent to the EC Chairperson. If exceptions are found they should be reviewed with the EC Chair, the financial assistant who submitted the report, and the NCWSA Treasurer.

Financial Assistant Interviews:

H&I Conference 2006 Linda W & Lori K
Assembly 2006 Bob J & Gene H
Alateen Events 2005 Bob J & Linda W

The EC Secretary will post this information to the NCWSC list serve with appropriate instructions.

Supervise the performance of agents: Assembly 2004 deposits were reviewed and approved. The EC continues to review all financial reports submitted, as well as, all deposits to the NCWSA P0 Box.

Lori K
EC, Chairperson

WEB SITE REPORT

The web site <http://www.ncwsa.org> continues to increase its readership. January had 192,000 hits,

which is twice what I reported in August 2004. Locally, almost all newcomers now report that they found the meeting on line.

Web Site Committee members are Jim S., James M., Art B., Gary S. and Bruce D. Others who contribute are those involved in keeping the independent and separate pages updated.

We now have added another independent district. District 26 has taken on the responsibility of keeping D-26 items up-to-date. This reduces the burden of the committee volunteers and keeps the site fresher because the local person can quickly keep the information about D-26 up-to-date. Districts with independent or separate pages are D-15, D-17, D-18, D-26, D-27, NAPA Intergroup and Santa Clara Valley Intergroup (D-20, D-21 and D-22).

Copyright protection is important to protect Al-Anon materials. When NCWSA first started the web site, we added WSO materials on the web site with their permission. The WSO has changed their policy concerning how long the permission is valid. Currently, all areas must request permission yearly. NCWSA is currently exempted from this since we received a 10-year license 8 years ago. Caryn J. asked us to get onto the WSO's one-year cycle. I reviewed all the materials on the web site and found that everything we asked permission for is now posted on the WSO web site. As a result, I removed the NCWSA pages that included WSO materials and instead, linked to their web pages. The advantages of links are 1) that when a change is made by the WSO, our link is automatically updated. This reduces our oversight responsibility. 2) Since we have no WSO copyrighted materials on our web site, we don't need to go through the annual paperwork. And 3) links are a way that search engines determine the importance of a particular web site. The higher the number of links, the more likely we will be on the first page of the search result.

A reminder for those with independent pages. Please either be sure you haven't used any copyrighted materials on your pages or obtain the permission to post on line from the WSO.

Art B.

ALTERNATE DELEGATE/AREA ALATEEN SAFETY ADMINISTRATOR **JOB DESCRIPTION**

Major Duties are:

- Become ready to perform the job of Delegate or Chairperson.
- Develop a realistic budget with the assistance of the Budget Committee. Present that budget to both NCWSC and NCWSA (at Assembly).
 - Audit the NCWSA books, annually, with assistance of the Budget Committee.
 - Keep a record of budgets passed; keep minutes of Budget Committee meetings; provide copies to the Archivist as necessary
 - Serve as the Alateen Safety Administrator by certifying all persons involved in Alateen Service in Northern California, annually, transmitting certifications to WSO each year, and maintaining a list of certified sponsors for Northern California. Also maintain **confidential** files for Alateen Sponsor Candidate forms and shred them upon expiration.
 - Receive Alateen meeting registration forms from meetings/DRs/Sponsors/local Alateen Safety Coordinators, ensure sponsors for those meetings have been certified, and transmit to WSO.
 - Ensure that the Group Records Coordinator receives all information needed to keep the NCWSA group records up to date for Alateen Sponsors and Alateen Meeting Registrations.
 - Sign contracts, when appropriate, and if requested.
- Sign and mail checks, when requested by the Treasurer.

Reference Documents for Performing Duties

- Alternate Delegate – page 139 and Delegate – page 137, World Service Handbook
- NCWSA Bylaws-Alternate Delegate, Article VI, Section 8B, Page 24 of the NCWSA Bylaws
- Budget Committee, Article VIII, Sections 2, A. and B., Page 29 of the NCWSA Bylaws
- Execution of Instruments, Article IX, Section 1 and 2, page 30 of the NCWSA Bylaws
- NCWSA Records and Reports, Article X, Section 1 and 2, page 31 of the NCWSA Bylaws: NCWSC Motion #9505.05 (May 1995, Motion #5), which reads, “Each member is responsible to submit a budget Request upon notification by the Budget Chairperson and to keep spending within the amount approved by the Assembly as expressed in the budget. Equipment request exceeding \$100.00 would be referred to the NCWSA Chairperson. The NCWSA Chairperson may appoint a Purchasing Committee, which would return recommendations about the purchase. The requester would be part of the Purchasing Committee since they are most familiar with the requirements of the job. Approved requests would be forwarded to the Budget Committee. Budget Committee would incorporate the request after evaluating the budget as a whole. Purchase would be charged to the office incurring the expense.”
- Northern California Requirements for Alateen Service (B-17) of Guidelines Binder, as well as associated forms.
- The Alternate Delegate refers to the Service Manual, other Al-Anon literature and guidelines, to NCWSA Bylaws and guidelines and to experienced, current and former Area level leaders for guidance. The chart below lists those specific requirements and the approximate time required

Time Required Each Year

Study Delegate's position	6 hours per year
Attend District Meetings with Delegate, if requested	6 hours
Chair Budget Committee and Audit	6 hours per year
Attend SWRDM-March	3 days per year (24 hours)
Assist the Delegate, if requested	3 days (24 hours)
Attend NCWSC Meetings- Feb, May, & Oct	24 hours per year
Study Chairperson's Position and assist, if requested	6 hours per year
Attend Alateen Safety Committee Meetings	24 hours per year
Attend Assembly	25 hours per year
Attend SWRSS - September	3 days per year (24 hours)
Reports/minutes: to NCWSC, NCWSA, and Budget Committee, Alateen Safety	16 hours per year
Executive Committee Job Review Meetings	8 hours per year
Process Alateen Safety Certifications	40 hours per year (usually within a 2-month period)
Attend Exchange Mtg. every 3 years	4 hours during the last year of panel
	panel

Space and Equipment Required:

- Three Binders and a few files, overhead projector and computer (for budget preparation and presentation to NCWSC/ NCWSA)
- A calculator
- A secure/locked storage to store all Alateen Sponsor Candidate forms (one of the binders listed above)

Reimbursable Expenses:

- Office expenses such as copying, postage, supplies, travel other than listed below, etc.
- Officers Conferences - for attendance at authorized conferences
- NCWSC Travel - for attendance at Committee Meetings and Assemblies.
- Budget Committee Expenses

Expense reports for travel and office expenses are to be submitted to the Treasurer on a timely basis, and kept within the Budget submitted and approved by NCWSA.

Types of Activity:

Attendance at conferences, district meetings, seminars, and supplies for which reimbursement is allowed are listed in the NCWSC Committee Guidelines, pages 9 and 10, J., Expenses of NCWSC members.

Submitted by: Sandi C.
Alternate Delegate & Area Alateen Safety Administrator
2002 - 2005

NCWSA Treasurer's Duties

Before I begin, let me say that I have witnessed NCWSA provide Al-Anon members who did not have extensive experience with bookkeeping with all the help they needed to be successful in this position. All that was needed was a willingness to ask for help and be willing to learn.

The treasurer is a corporate officer in charge of distributing the funds of NCWSA, keeping records and reporting to the Executive Committee chairperson and the Budget Committee chairperson.

- In my first two years of service I wrote about 390 checks.
- I entered all the checks and all the deposits into Quickbooks Pro 2003.
- I was responsible for providing the CPA with sales tax information from NCWSA and NOCAC in order to file by January 31.
- I provided the CPA with all the information necessary to produce the tax forms for the state and federal governments for filing by May 15.
- I took all the previous year's records to the budget committee for auditing once a year.
- Probably the work that took the most time and effort was coordinating with the event Financial Assistants to help them do their jobs and provide me with all the paperwork and information I needed.
- I accepted event chairperson's nomination for their Financial Assistant, interviewed the FA and passed my recommendation to the Executive Committee.
- Once a month I reconcile the bank statement and prudent reserve statement and send month-end reports to the Executive and Budget Committee chairs.
- Work with the By-Laws and Insurance Coordinator to keep a list of all the equipment and physical property that belongs to NCWSA. (Actually she did all the work.)
- Report to the state the dates we expect to hold a raffle, auction or donation drawing and then report how much we made after the event.
- Audit NOCAC's books once a year and report figures to CI~A fbr tax reports.
- Attended all NCWSC meetings, convention, and NOCAC. The chairperson or I were required to sign NOCAC checks for the event hotel. We took turns being there to do this.

Be prepared to spend some time and lots of personal information for the bank when getting the new signatures accepted.

You will need to find a volunteer in the Alameda area to maintain the post office box and pick up all money sent there. Also send an appeal letter out once a year.

You will be provided with a computer and a multi-purpose machine (printer, copier, scanner) as well as the software for Quickbooks I~ro 2003.

You will also be provided with my email address and my phone number and all the help you need.

Please consider standing for this position.

12 Stepper Duties

NCWSA 12 Stepper Duties

This is a job that you have to have the willingness to do and being able to ask for help. There are people in the program who can and do this kind of work. Just speak up and ask. There is a Scanner that goes with the job. It works on computers 2000 and earlier.

1 Required to attend all Committee Meeting, in Feb, May, Oct. Also attend the Assembly in September.

2. After each Committee Meeting, pick up all publications from the Stepper folder. This is where the start of the newsletter begins.

3. All Committee Members are required to have all their reports in for publications by the 2nd Monday after the Com. Meeting.

4. Ask everyone to submit there reports by E-mail. It makes it easier to transfer it to your computer.

5. You are required to edit all publication. Make templates of the pages that will be used continuously to keep from having to rebuild them each time.

6. Depending on how large the newsletter will be, you may spend as many as 80 hours, 240 hours on it. per year. Use your Alternate to help edit the materials.

7. Once the publications are ready for printing, you may send hard copy or send it email to the printer. at McClaskey Adult Center Att.Vito 5241 J Street Sacramento, Ca 95819 They are picked up in Sacramento by other people and taken to Auburn for mailing.

8. Encourage people to send in sharings, of their Experience, Strength and Hope. They can be useful for completing a page or too.

9. The pages used for the stepper are 8.5 x 17. This makes four pages per sheet.

10. Required to take the 12 Stepper Board to the Conventions or see that it is set up.

Harlan H
12 Step Editor

Secretary

Happy New Year! Since the October committee meeting, I've been mostly sick. I've had vertigo (and it's not verti-gone yet), back trouble and a sinus infection. I have managed to revise & mail the October committee meeting minutes with the February agenda, update the NCWSA Roster, and I worked a tiny bit on the Assembly minutes. I also bought a new laptop for the area Secretary. I actually like it so well, I think I'm going to keep it and let the new secretary buy their own.

I'm getting more organized. I know I've got a lot of detail work to finish up, but little by slowly it's getting done. Thank you for the opportunity to serve, even though I'm not perfect!

Love in Service,
Edie D.

Alateen Liaison Report

In my past month as Alateen Liaison I have done several things. Lets start with the first one. I held the NoCaC committee meeting at my house at the beginning of January. Currently we are working on getting the camp sites for this year's bash. With the possibility of having a third bash in July to keep up the excitement for the next one. Also we, the committee, are checking into hotels for this year's NoCaC, and probably have the first event in April. Again since it was the first meeting we are still exchanging basic ideas, and how we are going to be putting in the new guide lines as they were approved by assembly of last year and posted on the NCWSA website.

Second thing that I personally have attended with in the last month or so was the Woods committee meeting. Things are coming along smoothly and looks like they will have a great convention planned for this year. I also went to the first safety committee meeting of this year. New possible amendments we might incorporate this year are back ground checks, and how to incorporate them. It was a productive meeting, and we looked at surveys which were given out this year at NoCaC and to my knowledge this survey will be on going. The survey will also be updated. Other things considered at the safety committee meeting was whether or not we can create a form which will allow a current sponsor to confirm that nothing has changed in the past year which would require them to fill out a new sponsor candidate form. However to the best of my knowledge they will have to fill out the sponsor candidate form every two years.

I also attended one of the NCWSA convention meetings. They seem to be getting along smoothly. One of the things discussed was the Alateen event in march. Which will be held in the middle of next month on a Saturday. The money used for that event will sponsor two Alateen rooms. One for boys and one for girls. This all depends on whether or not the event raises enough money. And as a part of my budget I would like to donate some money to help make this possible as long as they make enough money with in reason.

As part of my personal plan for this up coming year and in discussion with the former Alateen Liaison I will be hopefully be holding an event. The event will not be a speaker meeting per say. Instead it will be a forum for the Northern California Alateens to get together, and discuss the new safety guidelines. This event of course will be with Alanon participation however this will be mainly for Alateens to read the guidelines and to ask questions and to try to promote Alateens going to assembly. Also I would like to get their educated opinions on what they would like to be added or amended to the current guidelines.

My plan between now and when our next committee meeting is to attend Alateen meetings on a regular basis. Go to as many functions as I can fit into my schedule. Attend the NCWSA convention, and of course continuing to be the representative for Alateens in the Northern California Area.

Travis R, Alateen Liaison

BE SURE TO READ - IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT ALATEEN SPONSOR CERTIFICATION

After a few challenges, we have completed certifying the majority of our Alateen Sponsors, or those involved in Alateen service. There were 150 sponsors certified, and I still have a couple outstanding ones that are missing forms. All that were submitted to WSO were returned approved with sponsor I.D. numbers assigned to them. There are two lists in your folders that you should keep for reference and if you are not your district's Alateen Safety Administrator, please see that that person gets a copy also. For those who have email, I will also email a copy to coordinators and DRs. One of the lists is of all Alateen Sponsors in Northern California. That list shows the district, first name, email address, and phone number of the sponsor. This could be used if a sponsor moved from one district to another within Northern California. The second report is a one-page report of your district's sponsors. That report has last names and addresses, so keep it confidential.

Speaking of confidential, when processing forms, the NCWSA Sponsor Candidate Profile should never be photocopied. If districts want to copy something for their records, copy the WSO form titled, *Al-Anon Involved in Alateen Service*. I will be the only person to keep copies of the NCWSA Sponsor Candidate Profile and it will be shredded if the person stops sponsoring in Northern CA. The Safety Committee worked on the process of renewal next year and I will tell you about it later in my report.

Also, 51 meeting registration forms were sent to WSO for all groups that sent me forms. A list of those groups is also included in your folders. One positive that came from this project was that it got all Alateen meetings registered that had not done so previously. I gave Chris M., our Group Records Coordinator, the database for both the meetings and sponsors so that all records for No. California can be updated with current information for future lists for DRs and mailing labels.

I know we just finished this process and it seems entirely too soon to talk about next time, however, this is an election year and my term as Alternate Delegate/Area Safety Administrator will be up December 31, 2005. Therefore, I would like to have the process completed so the new person does not have to finish up my leftovers or be swamped right at the beginning of their new panel. It will also enable me to ensure that all unnecessary paperwork is shredded before handing over the job. So, we will begin the renewal process at the end of June, this year. The good news is that if no information on the sponsor candidate has changed, we have a shorter renewal form. It will still be forms to fill out, but not so many boxes to complete or initial. Art will be distributing copies of that form so it can be approved. Once approved it will be put on our web site.

Budget Committee

The Budget Committee, consisting of Art B., Marilyn R., Tom L., Jackie R., Charli D., and Carol K., reviewed the 2006 Budget for your approval to present to Assembly. A copy of it is also in your folder. We will be setting a date to audit the 2004 NCWSA books some time in the next couple of months.

I will be attending the Southwest Regional Delegates Meeting with Vickie, John and our Past Delegates in Tucson on March 4, 5, and 6, and am looking forward to it. These meetings are a wealth of information for all of us and, of course, helpful to all of us who might attend the World Service Conference.

Later, I will be making a presentation on fingerprinting or doing a records check on Alateen Sponsors, so you will know what it entails and what the costs would be.

Thanks to everyone for giving me this opportunity to serve Al-Anon.

Love in Al-Anon and Alateen Service,

Sandi C.

Alateen Safety

Members of the Alateen Member *Safety* Committee are: Vic A., Chair, Alateen Safety Committee; Pleas S, Area Alateen Coordinator; Jim S, Alternate Area Alateen Coordinator; Travis R., Area Alateen Liaison; Jenae H, Immediate Past Area Alateen Liaison; Art B., Past Delegate; John S., Area Chair; Sandi C, Alternate Delegate and Area Safety Administrator. Carla H., District Rep of D-23 has resigned. We are looking for one more member to replace her, preferably a DR or a district Safety Coordinator.

1. Copy of the NCWSA REQUIREMENT FOR ALATEEN MEMBER SAFETY On December 22nd, after much negotiation with the WSO, Alateen Member safety committee completed the requirement. I have included a copy with this report. It plus new forms should be available on the website www.ncwsa.org

Additions are underlined. Removed words are double striked out. Some changes were technical in nature, such as removing the words “Motion 51” and replacing it with the name of the WSO motion and replacing “person~” with “Al-Anon member” where appropriate. We also were required to remove the word “teen” from the document and replace it with “Alateen member”. We were also required to modify the definition of an Alateen member to include those under 21 who are at an Alateen meeting or function whether or not they call themselves an Alateen member.

We also added a new section labeled “Minimum Safety and Behavioral Requirements for an Alateen Member”. This was in the original WSO Motion, but somehow, we didn’t see this requirement during our original deliberations.

We thank Vicki H., Delegate, for her efforts to break through the block at the WSO.

2. Survey.

We passed out a draft survey at NoCAC and asked those present to offer changes additions and deletions. We now have updated the survey and are mailing them to all Alateen groups and all Sponsor Candidates. This survey is intended to learn attitudes and concerns with items 3 and 4, “possible future additions to Alateen Member Safety Requirements” on pages 5 and 6 of the NCWSA REQUIREMENT FOR ALATEEN MEMBER SAFETY. Once we have results of the survey compiled, this committee will discuss the ten items and make recommendations as necessary. Our objective is to address each item, deciding if or how to implement any item on this list.

3. Background Checks

We now believe it is necessary to implement state background checks. There are valid reasons on each side of this issue.

Reasons to implement include:

1. It is a more thorough and accurate check than a Megan’s Law sex offender check.
2. It allows us to verify both the state and national systems.
3. It removes from an NCWSA volunteer the need to make decisions that may not be correctly interpreted. Instead, the decisions are made by professionals who are qualified to do so.
4. It protects the anonymity of those being checked, since the only report given to NCWSA is a “PASS” or “FAIL”.
5. Every national organization that works with children now requires some sort of background check. This leaves Alateen as the major national organization without this protection and therefore more vulnerable to those who are looking to molest children.
6. The publicity surrounding molesting priests and the role of the Catholic Church in hiding their scandal

has made the public more aware of the need for protection, even among the most trusted people.

Reasons to not implement include:

1. State law does not require it. The current law “encourages” rather than requires background checks.
2. Asking for sensitive information, including driver’s license, SS No., and fingerprints could make individuals vulnerable to identity theft.
3. It has a cost, expected to be \$18.00 per person now and rising in 2006 to \$50.00.

Vic A. Chairperson

Just What I Needed

Years ago when my life seemed hopeless and miserable, a friend encouraged me to seek counseling. Through my employer's Employee Assistance Program, I connected with a counselor who understood the effects of alcoholism. He did an excellent job—allowing me to unload my pain, grief, and unhappiness. We talked about alcoholism and the common thread that ran through my family history and personal relationships. I never realized how much other people's drinking affected my life. My counselor believed in Al-Anon wholeheartedly. He urged me to attend meetings, but I was stubborn and afraid to go. I didn't want to create more tension in my family.

Hopeful that my priest would offer me another option, I started visiting with him. However, he immediately suggested I attend Al-Anon. So there I was, my priest and my counselor were encouraging me to attend Al-Anon. I continued making excuses, but eventually went to my first meeting. Al-Anon was just what I needed—laughter, encouragement, understanding, tools to take care of myself, and so much more.

I still keep in touch with the counselor, and he uses my name as a contact person. I give him newcomer packets and copies of *The Forum* magazine for his clients. Counseling was a great place for me to unload and start healing. My priest has since passed away, but I believe he is encouraging me and watching over my journey. He helped me with forgiveness and acceptance. I am grateful to both professionals, but I also needed the sharing and support of people who understood my story. I needed Al-Anon. It has been a lifesaver for me. I'm grateful for the caring, understanding, and encouragement that my counselor and priest gave me because I found Al-Anon and a happier, healthier way of life.

By Amy H., Iowa
The Forum, April 2005
AFG Hdqr, Inc 2005 Al Rights Reservec.

Check It Out

Did you know the WSO member website has been reorganized?

Check it out at <http://www.al-anon.alateen.org/members>

You can find useful information about Group Services(Registration/Change Form, Guidelines, Service Plans, Special Needs Catalog); Publications (Newsletters, The Forum, World Service Conference Summary, Downloadable items, Copyright/Reprint Information, Order Publications Online); Public Outreach (Outreach to Media, Professionals & Institutions); Inside the World Service Office (Take a Tour, Seventh Tradition Suggestions, Financial Information, Archives, Employment)' WSO Seminars/Convention (2008 International Al-Anon Convention. 2005 AA International Convention With Al-Anon Participation, Regional Service Seminars) & Forms.

Profit & Loss Budget vs. Actual

January through December 2004

	Jan - Dec 04	Budget	<u>\$ Over Budget</u>	
Ordinary Income/Expense				
Income				
10Z Donations Income				
10a-Individual Donations	2,069.07	500.00	1,569.07	
10b- Donations -Group	31,626.99			
10c- Donations -Other	9,141.13			
10Z Donations Income .Other	<u>0.00</u>	32,700.00	<u>-32,700.00</u>	Total 10Z
Donations Income	42,837.19	33,200.00	9,637.19	
11Z Literature Income	248.84	300.00	-51.16	
12 Stepper Subscriptions	154.50	200.00	-45.50	
5Z CD/Money Market Dividends	167.46	600.00	-432.54	
6Z Assembly Income	7,302.22	6,200.00	1,102.22	
7Z Convention Income				
7A Tee-Shirts	3,863.07			
7B 7th Tradition	1,001.45			
7C- Registration	5,254.02			
7Z- Convention Income -Other	<u>1,005.50</u>			
Total 7Z Convention Income	11,124.04	13,000.00	-1,875.96	
8 -Alateen Special Event	828.16			
9Z H & I Conference Income	<u>427.00</u>	1,000.00	<u>-573.00</u>	
Total Income	63,089.41	54,500.00	8,589.41	
Expense				
17- Officers				
15- Delegate	115.83	1,400.00	-1,284.17	
19 -Alternate Delegate	274.83	250.00	24.83	
20Z Chairperson				
20a Admin	513.70			
20b- Discretionary Fund	75.00			
20Z .Chairperson .Other	<u>0.00</u>		<u>0.00</u>	
Total 20Z Chairperson	588.70	1,500.00	-911.30	
21Z Treasurer	1,308.09	1,500.00	-191.91	
22 Secretary	<u>1,558.19</u>	1,200.00	<u>358.19</u>	
Total 17 -Officers	3,845.64	5,850.00	-2,004.36	
24 .Conferences(Offlcer/Deiegates)				
26 .World Service Conference (WSC)				
26A Assessments	1,600.00			
Total 26 .World Service Conference (WSC)	1,600.00	1,600.00	0.00	
27- SWRDM				
27A SWRDM Officers & Delegate	1,591.85	1,500.00	91.85	
276- SWRDM Past Delegates	<u>1,152.66</u>	1,500.00	<u>-347.34</u>	Total 27 -SWRDM
<u>2,744.51</u>	300000		<u>-255.49</u>	
Total 24 Conferences(OfflcerlDelegates)	4,344.51	4,600.00	-255.49	

Profit & Loss Budget vs. Actual January through December 2004

	Jan -Dec 04	Budget	<u>\$ Over Budget</u>
3D- Coordinators			
31Z -Alateen	0.00	800.00	-800.00
32 Archives	0.00	500.00	-500.00
33Z By-Laws & Insurance			
33A Administration	12537		
33Z By-Laws & Insurance .Other	<u>0.00</u>		0.00
Total 33Z• By-Laws & Insurance	125.37	500.00	-374.63
34- Facilities	0.00	100.00	-100.00
35- Group Records	272.31	400.00	-127.69
36- Institutions	624.87	500.00	124.87
37 Literature	20.00	300.00	-280.00
38 NOCAC Chair	0.00	150.00	-150.00
39- Diversity	37.74	250.00	-212.26
40- PI/CPC	506.65	600.00	-93.35
41Z Stepper Editor	0.00	200.00	-200.00
42 Alateen Liaison	<u>187.00</u>	250.00	<u>-63.00</u>
Total 30- Coordinators	1,773.94	4,550.00	-2,776.06
43 Committees			
~~Action Committees	0.00	1,000.00	-1,000.00
45 Alateen Safety	135.10		
46Z- Budget Committee	159.37	150.00	9.37
47 By-Laws Committee	0.00	100.00	-100.00
49• Executive Committee (EC)	647.65	800.00	-152.35
50Z Internet Committee	299.40	500.00	-200.60
52- NCWSC Meeting			
52a Facility Rental Expense	2,079.78		
52b -Travel	4,399.34		
52 NCWSC Meeting .Other	<u>0.00</u>		<u>0.00</u>
Total 52- NCWSC Meeting	<u>6,479.12</u>	8 15000 ^a	<u>-1,670.88</u>
Total 43 Committees	7,720.64	10 70000	-2,979.36
54 .Events			
65Z .Assembly			
55a .Committee Travel	3,511.13		
55b Facility Expense	823.94		
55c .Speaker Expense	269.62		
55Z - Assembly - Other	343.30		<u>343.30</u>
Total 55Z Assembly	4,947.99	5 30000 ^a	-352.01
56Z Conventions			
56A Committee Travel	2,080.59		
668- Facility Expense	4,671.77		
SOC .Speakers Expense	1,524.40		
SOD .Convention Expenses-Other	4,560.34		
56Z Conventions .Other	0.00		<u>0.00</u>
Total 56Z Conventions	12,837.10	11 00000	1,837.10

Profit & Loss Budget vs. Actual
January through December 2004
Continued

	Jan .Dec 04	Budget	<u>\$ Over Budget</u>
57Z .Alateen Special Event			
57b- Facility Expense	200.00		
57c .Speaker Expense	30.00		
57Z .Alateen Special Event .Other	<u>285.43</u>		
Total 57Z .Alateen Special Event	515.43		
68Z H & I Conference			
58A Committee Travel	591.67		
58B- Facility Expense	646.99		
58C -Speaker Expense	102.10		
58Z H & I Conference .Other	<u>3.46</u>		3.46
Total 58Z .H & I Conference	<u>1344.22</u>	1,000.00	344.22
Total 54 Events	19,644.74	17,300.00	2,344.74
59- NOCAC Grant	1,500.00	1,500.00	0.00
61 Literature	2,444.74	100.00	2,344.74
62 .Stepper Expenses	2,379.06	2,500.00	-120.94
63- NOCAC Registration	476.00		
70 .Corporate Expenses			
72- Insurance Expense	3,815.00		
73 .Legal & Accounting	1,075.00		
74 .License & Permits	228.00		
76 .Taxes and Penalties	10.00		
70 .Corporate Expenses .Other	102.40		
Total 70 .Corporate Expenses	5,230.40	7,300.00	-2,069.60
90 .Bank Adjustments/Fees	<u>60.00</u>		
Total Expense	<u>49,419.67</u>	54,400.00	<u>4980.33</u>
Net Ordinary Income	13,669.74	100.00	13,569.74
Other Income/Expense			
Other Income			
SR .Returned Check Charges	<u>0.00</u>		
Total Other Income	0.00	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>
Net Other Income	0.00	0.00	0.00
Net Income	13,669.74	<u>100.00</u>	<u>13,569.74</u>

MY BILL OF RIGHTS

When I came into the Al-Anon program, I had a very clear cut idea of what my rights and responsibilities were. First on my list was the right to be angry, living in an alcoholic family like mine. Also, I had a definite responsibility to express that anger to everyone around me.

I had the right to my opinion and I had the responsibility to change the opinion of anyone who didn't agree with me.

Some of my other rights included' the right to worry, control, be guilty, and feel superior.

And finally, I had the right to question my Higher Power. Why me, Lord? That was my bill of rights and responsibilities for more years than I care to remember. At last, by the grace of my Higher Power and the Al-Anon program, it is slowly but surely being rewritten'.

As I try to live the Al-Anon program each day, I find myself with the right to, and the responsibility for, a new set of values and attitudes. I still have the right to become upset, but I find that I also 'have the responsibility to turn away from anger. I have the right to be supportive of others, but also the responsibility for not taking over their lives and problems. I have the right to discuss and the responsibility not to lecture. I have the right to look back and the responsibility to look forward.

I have the right to learn a better way to live and the responsibility to share it with others; I have" the right to expect happiness and the responsibility to create it. I have the' right to be understood and the responsibility to be understanding; I have the right to dignity without sophistication> and serenity without superiority.

I have the right to live and the responsibility to let live; I have the right to take and the responsibility to give, the right to take it easy and the responsibility to make it easy to take. I have the right to live one day at a time, and the responsibility to make the most of each day.

Finally, I have the right to let go, and the responsibility to let God.

District 005

I will try one more time to make a report for the “12 Stepper,” letting Area #3 and the Districts within Area #3 know what we are doing in District #5 which encompasses Sonoma County and the Napa Valley.

The Napa Valley fellowship is now officially within the jurisdiction of District #5 and we are very happy to have them on board.

Our Outreach, Institutions, and PI/CPC are active in their efforts to bring the message of Al-Anon and Alateen to those in need.

We have a new Institution meeting at “Azure Acres,” the first time this rehab has agreed to invite Al-Anon in this capacity.

We have been participating in Health and Harmony Wellness and information days at the various college campuses in our district.

We held our annual Alathon at Memorial Hospital in Santa Rosa on Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, and New Year’s.

We held a speaker meeting dinner and dance in December. Al-Anon hosted with AA participation. Vicki H. was our guest speaker. We have 48 Al-Anon meetings, four Spanish-speaking meetings, and seven Alateen meetings.

We are incorporated and provide insurance for all the meetings and events. We have a large Literature Depot which is a great financial support to keeping the District in the black.

All our District positions are filled and we have an Insurance Coordinator with several hundred tapes and CDs available to borrow or purchase.

We look forward to seeing you all at some event in the near future.

Linda D. DR

District 11

Mann County District 11 Al Anon/Alateen has been very active since the last **NCWSC** meeting. We held our Alateen “Paper Workshop” on November 13 and it was well attend by the sponsors of the Alateen meetings in our district. All paper work was completed and submitted and we now have a healthy list of back up sponsors and more on the way. In D 11, the changes are for the better. Potential sponsors like the idea of being registered and no one felt threatened by the new requirements.

Our Day in Al Anon/Alateen on November 6 was very successful. We had a panel speaking on Sex and Relationships, a Writing Workshop, Alateen meeting and fundraising for NoCac. We had over 100 attendees at the Panel meeting and about 15 for the Writing Workshop. Alateens raised enough money selling Lunches to support 5 teens going to NoCac. We are in the early planning stages of another event for the coming year.

Our Public Outreach Committee continues with its successful efforts to get the message of Hope and Recovery out to the community. We have 2 new institutions meetings at outpatient treatment centers and have had a new coordinator step up to relieve a long time service volunteer at another institution meeting. Efforts to reach out to schools are planned in the coming months. Continued outreach to the professional community is having an effect.

One of our meetings has closed after a long struggle, Monday Evening Novato AcoA group. We are looking for help in starting a Spanish/English group at their old time and location.

We have been successful in our efforts to have a realistic budget and stop hoarding money. It has taken time and patience but it did happen! We no longer have a massive reserve reserve surplus fund, that money has gone to carry the message and we have a balanced and realistic budget and plan to raise money as needed.

District 18

We had 18 DR'S attend last night's meeting. After introductions the DR'S choose four topics for discussion. They were: 1) How and what information is disseminated from the DR to the GR'S from Assembly and NCWSC meetings. The discussion ranged from copying everything, flyers and reports at a large expense to the District. Copies of other Districts flyers to all Groups and copies of reports on District Clipboard. Everything on District Clipboard and copies made upon request. A theme ran through all of the discussion, do what ever the GR'S want. Topic # 2, what effect did WSO Motion # 51 have on incorporated Districts cost of Insurance. To add sexual misconduct to a policy was a cost of \$ 500.00 per year. As in the past a discussion of insurance for Groups is like opening a box of fish hooks and sticking your hand in and not wanting to get stuck. WSO started it, NCWSA implemented it with GR approval are Districts stuck with the bill. There is work to do and an answer needs to be found. Topic # 3, Public Information, Institutions and Public Outreach work together as a group so one person is not over whelmed. Meet with each other and coordinate jobs. Delegate jobs and ask for help. What worked for one district was to pass around a sign up sheet; some people were amazed at all the people that signed up. If a position is vacant one person should not do more than one job. The theme that ran through the discussion were the more people involved and the more work delegated the better it went. Topic #4, Geographic location of groups and groups in one District attending and supporting another District with their Tradition. Check with Group Records; work with all Groups and Districts and NCWSA and check guidelines of Northern CA. and a vote by all Groups involved.

This is a short report of a two hour meeting. It is the take of one DR who hosted the meeting and is not intended to reflect the opinion of the DR'S in attendance.

In service

Tom L.

DISTRICT 19

All district coordinator positions have been filled as we enter the last year of our panel. Even Alateen now has a Coordinator and Alternate Coordinator. Something must be in the air because within one week a new Alateen meeting is opening in Madera and another in Oakhurst. It has been a very difficult task obtaining Alateen sponsor profiles and group information from all of our Alateen groups. Procrastination is also in the air. But a very important message also came from this hard work. All our Alateen sponsors are hungry for guidance from our new Alateen Coordinator. These groups have been struggling. They welcome the guidance district can give them in developing healthy groups.

D19 is blessed in having an AIS/LDC, a meeting room, and an archives room. A committee has been formed to investigate the advantages, cost, practicality of having internet service in our office. Our literature sales are up as well as contributions from our groups. Another committee will be meeting the end of February to formulate workshops. Our Special Events committee has planned an April District birthday party (our office will be 8 years old.) A July or August district picnic is being planned and our annual Oktoberfest with western wear, chili cook off contest, and country store will highlight our end of year district activities.

P1 has been meeting with Fresno schools regarding mailing and distribution of Alateen literature in the county. We have two monthly speaker meetings-Fresno and Visalia. In March the Fresno meeting will be geared to our Spanish speaking groups. The meeting will be in English, but the panel will be made up of Al-Anons from our growing Spanish groups.

We have a monthly newsletter-Alanews. It is published both in English and Spanish. Between 400 and 500 copies of the English version are printed monthly. (Copies of each are in your DR folders.) Our DR writes a monthly Greetings from your District Representative letter and mails it along with a meeting list and the Alanews to 60+ people who have at one time or another attended our district meeting. This monthly letter helps keep "DISTRICT" on people's minds.

D19 district meeting is held the last Saturday of each month at the district office 922 N. Van Ness, Fresno from 12:30 — 2:30. And unlike many other districts, we have a 15-minute break where we enjoy the most delicious bring what you want edibles. So come visit us.

Love in Al-Anon Service,
Linda W, DR

District 23 AFG

District 23 of NCWSA covers Santa Cruz and San Benito Counties. We have 25 meetings each week, with at least two Al-Anon meetings every day in Santa Cruz County, and one English and one Spanish meeting weekly in San Benito County. We have one "open" Alateen meeting, with other Alateen meetings in schools which are open only to students of the school.

Last fall we mailed Alateen outreach information to each school in Santa Cruz and San Benito Counties, and several schools have expressed interest in having meetings. Our Alateen Coordinator has resigned, but we have another member who is interested in serving. A high school in San Benito County has expressed interest in Alateen, and we are hopeful of being able to work with them once our new Alateen Coordinator is on board.

In December, three Santa Cruz members and I visited the Hollister English language meeting to talk about Sponsorship. Each of us shared our experience, strength and hope on the topic, and we invited questions and discussion. Prior to our visit, the meeting had agreed to suspend their crosstalk policy so that we could discuss the subject. We left some literature, some tapes, and a list of Santa Cruz members willing to sponsor Hollister

Al-Anons at the meeting.

Also in December, we held our annual fundraising and fellowship event, our Holiday Craft Faire. We were delighted to see several members from other Districts attending the Craft Faire. Sue K, our chairperson this year, and her committee did a fabulous job of organizing the event. The food was excellent, delicious and plentiful, and in addition to our traditional quilt donation drawing and "white elephant" tables, this year we had an Al-Anon and an AA speaker. So, as a fundraiser the event was very successful, and in terms of fellowship and recovery, the event was outstanding!

Our Spanish/Bilingual Coordinator position has been open for several months, and during that time the one Spanish language meeting in Santa Cruz County closed. We are hoping to encourage outreach to and participation by the Spanish language community in Santa Cruz County. Our first step in that direction is to invite members of the Northern California Intergroup to be our guests and make a presentation at our May or July District Meeting, and to help us grow Al-Anon in our District for our Spanish speaking community.

We are also looking forward to the Northern California Convention which will be held nearby in Seaside this year. Several of our District 23 members including Chairperson Chris M, along with lots of other members from Northern California, are working hard to make sure it is a wonderful and growthful convention.

Carla H, DR 23

My Desire to Lives

By MaryAnn H. Northwest Territories

When I married and escaped to violence and insanity of my childhood. I thought I was free. Of course I never lost my intense need to control everything and please everyone. I was suicidal, resentful, and suffered from depression. Even though I was beautiful, educated, successful, and well liked, privately I was as fearful as I had been as a child.

My husband walked away from me after 22 years of marriage. My world came apart, the walls shattered, and I felt utterly exposed. It was the support of a good therapist that helped me endure the following months. Little by little he guided me toward Al-Anon. My denial and defenses were so strong that it took well over a year before I accepted his wisdom. That's when I finally heard him say for the first time, it the pain from your alcoholic childhood home that's hurting you now. How could that be? I hadn't lived at home for 22 years. Since I was in therapy trying to survive the loss of my marriage, how could my childhood be the cause of all my pain?

The therapist went on to tell me about a program that has helped many children of alcoholics. I trusted him so much that I found an open meeting and went with some of friends. Sitting in the large room. I politely listened as one young woman's sharing struck me she told my life story. She had experienced fear, violence, terror, and insanity in her childhood, too. However, the difference between us was that she seemed happy and serene, and I wasn't.

A week later, I was having a difficult time. I knew I couldn't make it through another night on my own, so I took the list of meetings, grabbed my purse, went out the door, got into the car, and panicked. I got out of the car, got back in the and turned the key. When I arrived at the meeting place, my desire to live envaled me to walk through those doors. I sat quietly until the end of the meeting when the Chairperson announced that the group save the last five minutes for newcomers. Some friendly faces turned toward me and I started to speak. Tears of relief poured out and when I finished sharing I hear, You are in a safe place. This is the program for you. Keep coming back.

I often say with a chuckle, where would I be without Al-Anon. I don't even want to imagine. I am so grateful to have it in my life.

Reprinted with permission of The Forum, Al-Anon Family Group Hdqrs, Inc. Virginia Beach, VA

Letting Go

Several years ago I saw a neurologist for a back injury. In addition to caring for my back, she always asked how I was doing. One day I was feeling very low and knew I would cry when she asked me how I was, so I wrote my answer on a piece of paper—sad, worried, sleepless, and constantly crying. I gave my doctor the note when I went to my appointment. After she read it, she looked me right in the eye and said, "Oh my, either you are an alcoholic or someone you love very much is—and you've taken on all of his responsibilities."

Wow! It stunned me that the doctor could tell I loved someone who had a drinking problem. She asked me if I attended Al-Anon. I said I had never heard of it. She told me her husband died from alcoholism. She also said there was an Al-Anon meeting that night and she would meet me there if I wanted to go. I didn't want to, but since she cared that much about me I said I would meet her.

I didn't want to go back after the first meeting I attended, but I promised myself I'd try six meetings. By then I knew I belonged in Al-Anon. I attended every meeting and service event that I could, and I soaked up everything.

It deeply affected me when my husband and sons drank. My recovery hasn't been easy. Great things didn't happen over night but it did get easier as I worked the Al-Anon program. I learned how to let go of other people's responsibilities. I hate to think where I would be if my doctor hadn't told me about Al-Anon. I believe the program works because all the members have a common bond. Al-Anon has saved many lives and I will be forever grateful that my caring doctor recommended it to me.

By Lois S., Pennsylvania
The Forum, April 2005

© Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. 2005. All Rights Reserved.

Al-Anon and Alateen on-line cart

Al-Anon Family Groups--hope for families and friends of alcoholics

The Al-Anon/Alateen literature and materials in this site are available through local Al-Anon literature distribution centers. If there are no distribution centers nearby, you can order Al-Anon/Alateen literature and materials on-line or contact us at (757) 563-1600 for a catalog or [download a free copy of the order form here](#). Remember—when you buy from your local literature distribution center or general service office, you support your local services. Prices are US currency and subject to change. Many of these items are also available in French and Spanish—click to download a copy of the [French order form \(FS-16\)](#) or the [Spanish order form \(SS-16\)](#).

Don't Delay! Due to The Forum's production schedule, the WSO must receive your payment and order form for the September Forum by 5 p.m. ET, Monday August 1, 2005. No exceptions can be made. The WSO will ship orders before September 1, 2005. [Click here to download or print an order form](#) or [just order online](#).

This offer is AVAILABLE ONLY in the U.S., Canada, Bermuda, and Puerto Rico.

Please Note: Please allow 3 weeks for delivery

Northern California World Service Area

Individual and Group Contributions

Individual/Group Name _____

Address _____

City _____ **State** _____ **Zip** _____

Dist/Number _____ **Group WSO#** _____

Donation Amount _____ **Date** _____

Please make checks payable to NCWSA and mail to NCWSA Treasurer
P.O. Box 1751
Alameda, Ca 94501-0201

Subscriptions to the 12 Stepper

Northern California World Service area (*12 Stepper Newsletter Subscriptions Forum*).

New _____ **Renewal** _____ **Gift** _____ **Extra Group copy** _____

One Year (\$5.00) _____ **Two Years(\$9.50)** _____ **Three Years (\$14.00)** _____

Individual?Group Name _____

City _____ **State** _____ **Zip** _____

Please make checks payable to NCWSA and mail to:
Group Records: P.O. Box 1435, Soquel, Ca 95073-1435
cmrturtle@comcast.net

