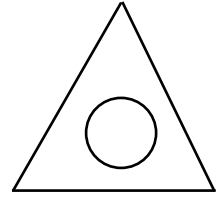


# SCV AFG Intergroup Newsletter



<http://www.ncwsa.org/scvafg>

Santa Clara Valley Al-Anon Family Groups Intergroup Newsletter ~ September 2009

## Honesty Begins with Staying True to Myself

By Marsha C., Oklahoma

Honesty, for me, has to begin with being true to myself, my perceptions, my beliefs, my values, and my reality.

Growing up in an alcoholic home, we would experience night rages followed by sunlight streaming in the kitchen window with breakfast cooking. I would wake up with the awful taste of the night before in my mouth—the fear, the anger, the hurt—and could not walk into that kitchen filled with warmth and pretense.

Somehow not addressing what had happened prevented me from being able to believe in the calm morning. I was torn between what I believed had happened, and the play that was performed before me. I bolted out the door, unwilling to join in the acting.

As much as I rebelled against the divergent extremes, I came to not trust what I saw or perceived—easily trading my reality for someone else's take on it. I had no way of knowing that I was dealing with alcoholism—with its thick, heavy blanket of denial.

It has been a long journey to restore my own personal integrity. I still want to excuse someone else's behavior, to wrap myself up in what I've come to see as "willful ignorance"—the ability to know something, yet suspend that knowledge rather than feel the deep feelings that knowing might invoke.

Today I can more easily hold on to my own personal truths. I am not swayed as easily by someone else's take on things. When someone else tells me the sky is green, and I see a brilliant blue, I can hold on to what I see and allow them to have their own choice of color; both can be real. I cannot stay true to myself if I give up my brilliant blue.

I am responsible for my own honesty before God, myself, and others. As I work these Steps of recovery, I am asked to be kind and tolerant of others. I do not have to force my honesty on anyone.

I can only trust God to reveal to me what I need to see and do to live an authentic life. I am no longer responsible for what others say or do.

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## What's In a Name?

"I've seen many publications pertaining to Al-Anon and never found an explanation of the meaning of Al-Anon. Where did it come from and what does it mean?" writes Margaret G. from Brody, MT. We immediately put the WSO Archivist to work, and she came up with the following:

In May 1951 Lois W., Chairman, and Anne B., Secretary, sent the first letter from the Clearing House polling the 87 family groups that had previously written to the AA GSO. One question asked was, "Do you approve of the name AA Family Group? If not, what do you suggest?"

Approximately 57 responses were received. Some groups suggested names they were already calling themselves such as, AA Associates, AA Auxiliary, Non-AA, Triple A, Women's Auxiliary of AA, Friendship, AA Helpmates, Twelfth Step Auxiliary. The majority, however, favored the AA Family Group name, which Lois and the Committee changed to "Al-Anon" which is a contraction of the two words, Alcoholics Anonymous. This decision came about when AA objected to the use of the letters, "AA" in the name of the national association of non-alcoholics since their Sixth Tradition stated that an AA group ought never to lend the AA name to any related facility or outside enterprise.

The hyphen was included because there are, in many locations in the U.S. and Canada, AA Clubhouses that call themselves Alanon or Alano. The hyphen also identifies Al-Anon as a distinct organization.

## Upcoming Events

### District 20 Open Speakers Meeting

7:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.  
Immanuel Lutheran Church  
14103 Saratoga Avenue  
Saratoga, CA 95070

**Friday, October 23, 2009**

Come listen to great speakers and celebrate May and June Al-Anon birthdays.

The District 20 Speaker Meeting abides by the NCWSA Requirement for Alateen Member Safety.

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### Intergroup Special Event 2009: "The Courage to Be Me"

2:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.  
Christ the Good Shepherd Church  
1550 Meridian Avenue  
San Jose, CA 95125

**Saturday, October 10, 2009**

For more information or to volunteer to help, please contact Lisa M. at (408) 316-8246 or Moriah W. at (408) 623-5320 or via email at [specialevent2009@live.com](mailto:specialevent2009@live.com).

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## District 20 Invites Your Al-Anon Group to Volunteer!

District 20 invites your Al-Anon group to volunteer to host a District 20 Speaker Meeting. District 20 Speaker Meetings are held on the 4th Friday of even-numbered months (February, April, June, August and October) at Immanuel Lutheran Church, 14103 Saratoga Ave., Saratoga.

All that is required is a willingness to get together with the members of your Al-Anon group and set up the District 20 Speaker Meeting. For more information or to volunteer to host this important event, please contact Rhonda D. at (408) 720-9718. Come and be a part of fun and fellowship with the members of your Al-Anon group.

## December Newsletter Items

This newsletter is published four times per year — in March, June, September and December. Please send items for the SCV AFG Intergroup December Newsletter to Michael D. at [mdivinia@comcast.net](mailto:mdivinia@comcast.net). Our goal is to have items for the December newsletter submitted by December 1, 2009. Al-Anon news and information and the sharing of experience, strength and hope by Al-Anon members are welcome. — Michael D.

## Newsletter Email Distribution List

If you are not currently receiving the Intergroup newsletter via email and you would like to receive this newsletter in your email inbox, please send an email message to [mdivinia@comcast.net](mailto:mdivinia@comcast.net) requesting that your email address be added to the Intergroup newsletter email distribution list. — Michael D.

## Donate Plastic Bottles and Soda Cans for Alateen Scholarships

Please donate plastic bottles and soda cans to be recycled for donations to the NoCAC (Northern California Alateen Convention) Scholarship Fund—what a great cause!

You may bring plastic bottles and soda cans to the Intergroup Bookstore during open hours, or to the Intergroup business meeting (second Tuesday of each month), or to your group's Intergroup Representative, or contact Jay R. at (408) 296-2474 or by email at [jgvr@earthlink.net](mailto:jgvr@earthlink.net).

## Update: Al-Anon in State Prisons

This Report was presented at the NCWSA Committee Meeting. (July 31, 2009 – August 1, 2009)

There is much to report at this time. Things are going along nicely for our Al-Anon meetings to be set up in our California State Prisons. Yesterday, July 28th, I went to Solano State Prison near Vacaville for a meeting with the Community Resource Manager about getting Al-Anon into the Solano facility. The population of that prison is 4500 men of which there are 2400 lifers. There have been about 1500 prisoners who have signed up for AA, NA, or Al-Anon. So far we have only a limited volunteer base to draw from so we are only going to offer a Tuesday night, 6:45 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., meeting and a Sunday morning, 9:30 a.m. to 10:45 a.m., meeting at this time. As we get more volunteers and get them trained, we would like to expand our times and days.

We should be going in to Soledad any time now. There is some more red tape to go through, but we have been told that for sure we will be going in. They are looking to the twelve step programs because they are more cost effective, and with the state budget as it is, they are in need of help for the prisoners.

I am still waiting for more word from San Quentin, Tracy Deuel Vocational Institute, Folsom, and Chowchilla. I am sending our statement of purpose and other information that the prisons need for us to get started. I am very excited!

Please pass the word along that we will need a lot of volunteers. If you can't volunteer, we could use the monetary help in getting literature in.

Yours in Service  
Louise M., NCWSA Institutions Coordinator

## After Dark Days, She Found Hope

By Robin S., Iowa

...I had nothing to lose.

I went under the assumption that I'd learn how to fix my husband; then we'd be on our merry way to wedded bliss. I was surprised to learn that this program was for me. What was the point, if not to get him sober? Still I went, assuming that my husband would see what I was doing and join Alcoholics Anonymous (A.A.).

I remember hearing one woman say that she was grateful for her alcoholic husband. What was wrong with her? I couldn't possibly imagine ever being grateful for mine.

Now I not only understand, but I, too, am grateful for my alcoholic husband. Were it not for him and the horrible drinking years, I would not have the wonderful life and friends I have today. I have a much deeper relationship with God. I have grown so much because of the hardships I faced.

While in Al-Anon, I learned that my husband not only drank, but he was addicted to methamphetamines. I had no idea he was using. I tried to fix him and to micromanage his life. I would call around looking for him. Once, I found out he was at a motel, so I pulled my children out of bed and went to get him. We couldn't find him, so we drove back home in tears.

I would lie awake in bed at night with my stomach in knots and cry myself to sleep wondering why God would let something like this happen to me. I didn't deserve this. What good could possible come from this?

One night I was talking to my Sponsor after an exceptionally bad fight with my husband. She said to me, "I think it's time you turned your husband over to God and quit trying to make him change. He may never change." That's when I got down on my knees and asked God to take care of my husband. I detached with love; I finally "Let Go and Let God."

I slept well that night; I didn't wake up once with worry. I felt refreshed in the morning. It was a wonderful feeling.

Not long after that, things spiraled out of control. My husband came home after having been gone for a few days. The situation got out of hand, and I had to call the police. My children were frightened. I was forced to get a restraining order against him. It was the hardest thing I ever had to do.

Just days later, my husband went into an inpatient treatment program. I had to go on welfare and be a single mom for a time. It wasn't something I'd ever imagined I'd do, but with Al-Anon I got through it. I had many friends to support me along the way.

It's been more than three years now, and my husband is still sober and very active in his program. Life with sobriety is not the bed of roses I thought it would be, but it's a whole lot better than what it was.

I am still working through my Steps, and I'm so thankful for my Al-Anon meetings and my Sponsor. If it weren't for Al-Anon, I don't know how I would've gotten through that horrible time of my life.

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## Conquering the Spiritual Disease of Fear

By P.A.M., Wyoming

The first time I had heard of Al-Anon was when I met my mother-in-law. She babbled on about how great a program it was and how it saved her life. Considering my background, it was absolutely mind boggling that I had no idea that alcohol could be such a problem in people's lives that they had a program for it.

My mom was just 18 years old when I was born. At 16, she married a man with an inclination to smoke pot, drink, and try to flush her head down the toilet. They were divorced by the time I was one year old. When she began to raise her two children alone, she had a bad accent and the equivalent of a high school education.

She soon fell in love with the man who became her second husband. He drank, smoked, snorted cocaine, and sold drugs. My stepfather would have liked it better if I hadn't been around. I can remember several occasions when they took me to parties where—instead of a potluck table—there would be all sorts of colored pills, bottles of liquor, cocaine on mirrors, and clouds of pot smoke wafting from room to room. I was the lucky one who held my mother's hair back while she vomited her guts out in the bathroom.

As I got older, I swore I would never put myself in that position—wasted and out of control. My first boyfriend was an alcoholic drug addict. My second was, too. My third was 24 years older than I am. And then I met my husband. He actually had the good sense to tell me he was an addict. I didn't listen. I had never known anything else.

I entered the Al-Anon program at the advice of a therapist about four years into our marriage. I thought I was going to learn about my husband's behavior and how to handle it. I worked through the Steps with a Sponsor, but I really didn't understand that my life was unmanageable because of my disease. I just thought I attracted "jerks."

When I moved two years later, I worked the Steps again with another Sponsor. This time I learned that I could be controlling. But my husband was using again, and didn't that make him the biggest jerk of all?

It wasn't until December of last year that I hit bottom. I was severely depressed. I thought killing myself was the answer. I truly thought that my three sons would be better off without me, that I was teaching the younger ones bad habits, and that I was making the older one

miserable. My husband, then sober, asked me to postpone killing myself until I had worked the Steps with a particular Sponsor. I agreed, and my life changed.

What I learned was that I have a disease that is just as detrimental to my health and well-being as alcoholism or drug addiction. I suffer from the spiritual disease of fear. When my disease is in control of my life, I am spiritually sick; and my behavior is bad. I am resentful and feel like I am a victim.

On the other hand, my attitude brings serenity into my life when I focus on spiritual principles: acceptance, open-mindedness, honesty, love, forgiveness, harmony, faith, hope, light, and joy.

I oscillate between living in fear and living in the solution. Today I am quicker to become aware of my diseased thinking and gently place myself back into the hands of God.

Today I am able to admit it when I am at fault and make amends for my behavior. I am able to pray for God's will for me and the power to carry that out. I am able to pass on what I have learned to someone else who is living in fear.

My father, ex-stepfather, mother-in-law, father-in-law, sister-in-law, brother-in-law, and husband are all alcoholics. What I have learned from Al-Anon is that any problem I have with them is the result of my diseased thinking, not their behavior. I can now clearly see the separation between me, my disease, and the rest of the world. I owe my life to Al-Anon and all the members who help to keep me free from the spiritual disease of fear.

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## Upcoming Events

**District 12 Day in Al-Anon;** September 12, 2009; Lakeside Presbyterian Church; near Stonestown; 201 Eucalyptus Drive, San Francisco; For more information; Contact: Jeffrey (415) 731-9920; e-mail [jbrodtkin@jbrodtkin.com](mailto:jbrodtkin@jbrodtkin.com); Phoebe (415) 550-0487; e-mail [grigg@cmp.ucsf.edu](mailto:grigg@cmp.ucsf.edu)

**District 15 Day in Al-Anon/Alateen with AA participation;** September 12, 2009; First Presbyterian Church of Hayward; 2490 Grove Way, Castro Valley; For more information, contact: Lorraine H. (510) 331-5978; Cristin G. (510) 701-8903

**Gold Country Roundup** (AA with Al-Anon participation) September 25-27, 2009

Theme: Extravagant Promises? Amador County Fairground, RV & tent space available; Al-Anon contact: Carol K. 209-245-3020

**District 22, Kick it up;** September 26, 2009; Scenic Ludewig Ranch; South Santa Clara County, CA (formerly San Martin County Park) 13865 Monterey Road, San Martin  
Contact: Doreen (408) 365-0985

**NoCAC 2009 Pancake Brunch Extravaganza Reaching for recovery;** October 10, 2009

Trinity Lutheran Church; 1225 Hopyard Road, Pleasanton, Ca; Contact: Jasper R. (NoCAC Chair) 831-345-7836 [nocacchair@ncwsa.org](mailto:nocacchair@ncwsa.org)  
Chris M. (NoCAC Sponsor) 831-247-4497 [cmrturtle@comcast.net](mailto:cmrturtle@comcast.net)

**Intergroup Special Event 2009: "Courage to be Me"** – Saturday, October 10, 2009, 1:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., Christ the Good Shepherd Church, 1550 Meridian Avenue, San Jose, CA 95125. For more information or to volunteer to help, please contact Lisa M. or Moriah W. at (408) 316-8246 or at [specialevent2009@live.com](mailto:specialevent2009@live.com)

**NCWSA Assembly, October 16-18; "Harvesting the Gifts of Service";** Radisson Hotel and Conference Center; 2233 Ventura St., Fresno; Cut-off date is September 25; Reservation number is 559-268-1000 reservation code NCWSA; Website: [www.Radisson.com/fresno](http://www.Radisson.com/fresno)

**District 20 Open Speakers Meeting,** 7:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m., Friday, October 23, 2009, Immanuel Lutheran Church, 14103 Saratoga Avenue, Saratoga, CA 95070. Speakers: TBD.

**District 24 Open Speaker Meeting;** November 6th, 7:00 pm; Unitarian Universalist Church of the Monterey Peninsula; 490 Aguajito Road, Carmel; Contact Joanne H. [jh10231023@gmail.com](mailto:jh10231023@gmail.com); or Rebecca smithcali@comcast.net Or for more information click on: <http://www.ncwsa.org/d24>

**NoCAC 2009: "Reaching for Recovery"** Northern California Alateen Convention: November 13 – 15, 2009, Wyndham Hotel, 1350 N. First Street, San Jose, CA 95112 Registration includes hotel and meals: \$180 for a quad/\$220 for a double. Registration deadline: October 10, 2009. Speakers, talent show, workshops, dance, banquet dinner and more. Scholarships for 50% of the registration cost are available upon request. For more information, contact Jasper R., NoCAC Chair, at (831) 345-7836 or Chris M., NoCAC Sponsor, at (831) 247-4497. Also see [www.ncwsa.org](http://www.ncwsa.org) for more information and forms.

# SCVAFG Intergroup Al-Anon Annual Special Event The Courage to Be Me

Speaker Meeting, Potluck & Raffle  
Featuring Larcine G., from Hawthorne, CA

October 10, 2009 2 - 7 p.m.

Christ the Good Shepherd  
1550 Meridian Avenue, San Jose (near Hamilton)

Pre-registration due September 26, 2009:

Free raffle ticket with pre-registration

\$8.00 single adult

\$5.00 Alateen

\$12.00 family

Registration at the Door

\$10.00 single adult

\$5.00 Alateen

\$15.00 family

Potluck, please bring the following:

A - M: Salads or Snacks

M - Z: Dessert

Main Course is provided

Alateen will be selling drinks

Pre-registration for SCVAFG Special Event held Oct. 10, 2009

Due no later than September 26, 2009

For more information: Please contact Lisa M. 408.316.8246; or

Moriah W. 408.623.5320; Email: specialevent2009@live.com

Name \_\_\_\_\_

# Adult(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

# Alateen(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

# Family(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Please send pre-registration to the Intergroup Office  
Please make checks payable to SCVAFG Intergroup  
1 West Campbell Avenue, Campbell, CA 95008

## Upcoming Events

### Yosemite Summit Conference

#### AA with Al-Anon participation

November 20, 21 & 22, 2009

Curry Village Yosemite National Park

209-966-8300 or ysc@sti.net

website <http://www.serenityyosemite.com>

Please note that all events involving Alateens abide by the NCWSA requirement for Alateen member safety.

## Intergroup Bookstore

Published in 2007, the Al-Anon book, *Opening our Hearts Transforming our Losses*, is available at the Intergroup Bookstore. "This book helps us to acknowledge the painful reality of loss and grief. It encourages us to acknowledge sometimes hidden thoughts and fears, to recognize the truth of our feelings, and to seek solutions that ease our pain and lead us to inner peace." (From the Preface, Page 1, *Opening our Hearts Transforming our Losses*)

The Intergroup Bookstore is located at the Campbell Community Center:

Room Q-82

1 West Campbell Avenue

Campbell, CA 95008

(408) 379-9375

Before making a trip to the bookstore, please call to verify that it is open. If you are interested in serving as a bookstore volunteer, please contact Anne C. at (408) 314-0883.

The current bookstore hours are as follows:

Monday	5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.
Tuesday	4:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.
Wednesday	9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.
Thursday	12:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
Saturday	9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
The bookstore is closed on holidays.	