

Intergroup NEWSLETTER

Santa Clara Valley Al-Anon Family Groups
<http://www.ncwsa.org/scvafg>

December 2011

A Message from the Newsletter Coordinator

To Our Readers:

It has been my privilege to serve Santa Clara Valley Intergroup in the capacity of Newsletter Coordinator for the 2011 calendar year. The release of this present issue completes my term, and this service position is now open. Anyone who is interested in filling this role for the coming year should notify the SCV AFG Chairperson at chair.scvafg@gmail.com.

Questions about the responsibilities of the Newsletter Coordinator may be addressed to me at newsletter.coordinator.scvafg@gmail.com.

My heartfelt thanks to all who have contributed to the newsletter by sharing their writing, news, announcements, or just a kind word. Your support made it possible. A special word of gratitude to A'nna A., who came forward to act as Alternate Coordinator and helped out in numerous ways.

And a big thank-you to my husband, Dick A., for handling all the formatting in InDesign.

Remember that Al-Anon is a volunteer-run organization and that it is a blessing to contribute by holding a service position. Fulfilling a commitment to the group is a great opportunity for recovery and growth. Without volunteers, there would be no Al-Anon.

All good wishes for the coming year.

– Merydy A.

YAR: Young Adults in Recovery

We're starting a new meeting for those who are young in Al-Anon! YAR is not your typical Al-Anon meeting.

NEW!

This group encompasses those who are transitioning from Alateen to Al-Anon, those who are young adults in recovery, and those of us who have been seeking a meeting that speaks to our generation. First of its kind in the Valley!

This is an open Al-Anon meeting and anyone is welcome to attend, but we do focus on young adults in recovery. Sensitive issues may be discussed, and swearing is permitted; please be advised if bringing "little ears" to this meeting.

WHEN: Thursdays, 8:45–10:00 p.m.

WHERE: Willow Glen United Methodist Church
1420 Newport Avenue, San Jose

The first meeting on December 8th went off without a hitch. I get the feeling that this group is going to grow both in size and in recovery. I look forward to the upcoming week, the unique format, and the fabulous speakers!

– Able, Secretary



Meeting Map

Did you know that we have an online map of all Northern California meetings?

All Al-Anon and Alateen meetings in the area appear as map tack locations on this web page: <http://ncwsa.org/norcalmeetingmap.html>

You can click on any location to see details of the meeting.

You can also zoom in to see meetings in a smaller area, search using a city, address, or ZIP code, filter for

meetings of a certain type (beginners, Alateen, men or women, Spanish-speaking, LGBT, etc.), select by day of the week, get directions, and more.

Of course, the value of the map depends on keeping it up to date. Secretaries and coordinators who know of meeting changes should inform the Northern California World Service Area (NCWSA) by downloading the A-16 form from this web page: <http://www.ncwsa.org/forms.html> and sending an e-mail to grouprecords@ncwsa.org. The Area will in turn notify the WSO.

New Mailing Address for District 20

District 20 has a new mailing address. After November 26, 2011, please send all correspondence and donations to:

District 20
PO Box 2536
Cupertino, CA 95015

Please update all of your directories and share this information at your meetings.

Mail sent to the old Sunnyvale address will be forwarded, but delivery time may be delayed.

D-20 Business and Speaker meetings are still held at Immanuel Lutheran in Saratoga, on the same dates and times shown in the current directories.

For further information, please contact District 20 Rep. Catherine A.: 408-252-7951. ncwsadistrict20@gmail.com

I Tied Myself into Knots—with a Shoelace

I realize now how quickly I can revert to my old thinking—if I'm not vigilant. One morning as I went out to get the newspaper, I saw a dirty shoelace lying on the walkway. I automatically assumed that one of my grown children, who live with me, had dropped it as they came in.

I looked at it and left it there. "That's not mine to pick up," I said to myself. "I already do enough around here."

Days passed, and I kept stepping over that dirty shoelace. Surely, someone would pick it up. My husband and two children go out that front door every day, taking that same path. My resentment grew as I thought about how inconsiderate they were—too lazy to pick up a shoelace. Why do I have to be the one to do everything?

I was getting angrier by the day. Finally, I bent over and picked up that dirty shoelace. As I held the weightless item in my hand, it no longer seemed such

an obstacle. I started to smile, and then a little laughter followed. Where was my program? How did I expect someone to do something without asking? Old behaviors were creeping back. "How Important Is It?"

I could have picked up that shoelace on day one and saved myself a battle in my head. But I chose to hang onto it. How many times in my dealings

I lost my serenity over something so trivial.

with the alcoholic did I choose to hang onto it? Who was hurt the most? Me! I lost my serenity over something so trivial.

I carry that shoelace as a bookmark in my *One Day At a Time* to be my constant reminder to let go of the small stuff, and to ask for help when I need it. I don't need to be the martyr.

I thank my Higher Power for putting these little reminders in my life and ask Him to guide me in my everyday trials, no matter how big or how small.

— Patti B., Ohio

From *The Forum*, July 2011. Reprinted with permission of *The Forum*, Al-Anon Family Group Hdqts., Inc., Virginia Beach, VA.



Condensed Wisdom

The Al-Anon slogans are so simple and so familiar that it can be easy to forget how powerful they are. They are like a multivitamin capsule that contains all our daily requirements. The immense wisdom of Al-Anon is condensed into single easy-to-swallow doses. Take what you like and leave the rest.

Keep It Simple
 Easy Does It
 First Things First
 How Important Is It?
 One Day at a Time
 Keep an Open Mind
 Live and Let Live
 Let Go and Let God

Intergroup Newsletter is published by SCV AFG four times per year, in March, June, September, and December. Send Al-Anon news updates, group information, and stories of your experience, strength, and hope to the newsletter coordinator at newsletter.coordinator.scvafg@gmail.com.

Coming Events

Pleasanton

Learning to Love Yourself

February 18, 2012

4:00 to 10:00 p.m.

Trinity Lutheran Church

1225 Hopyard Rd., Pleasanton

Scholarship FUNdraiser for the 30th Annual Growing Together Weekend (GTW). Potluck, speakers, fun and fellowship. Suggested donation: adults \$10, Alateen \$5. This event abides by the NCWSA Requirements for Alateen Safety Guidelines.

Contact: Moriah, moriah_r@hotmail.com, or sagebearz@yahoo.com

Saratoga

District 20 Speaker Meeting

February 24, 2012

7:30 to 9:30 p.m.

Immanuel Lutheran Church

14103 Saratoga Avenue, Saratoga

Speaker meeting: 4th Friday every even month except December.

Contact: Fred P., 650-948-4919

Squaw Valley

NCWSA Convention 2012

April 20-23, 2012

The Village at Squaw Valley, near Lake Tahoe



“Steps Up Slippery Slopes.” Al-Anon and Alateen with AA and Spanish participation.

Occidental

30th Annual Growing Together Weekend

May 18-20, 2012

Westminster Woods

- Have you been to a GTW function in the last 30 years? If so, come back and share your experience, strength and hope.
- Have you never been to GTW? Come experience a weekend of recovery unlike anything you have participated in before.

This event abides by the NCWSA Requirements for Alateen Safety Guidelines.

Contact: Moriah, moriah_r@hotmail.com, or sagebearz@yahoo.com

What Is Growing Together Weekend, Anyway?

How many people in Al-Anon know what Growing Together Weekend (GTW) is all about?

When I took on the challenge of publicity for GTW 2012, I thought I would share my experience and what it means to me. As I understand it, GTW is a way for Alateens, Al-Anons, and AAs to share their experience with each other. Unlike most retreats I've been on, everyone is required to participate. This is done for the safety of our teens as well as to help each person attending get the full experience of the weekend. We have speaker meetings, workshops, a dance, games,

a talent or no-talent required show, and “Easy Does It Time.” Yes, everyone loves “Easy Does It Time.” You can choose from taking a nap, swimming, hiking, volleyball, fellowship, labyrinth, and the list goes on.

Many of us involved with Alateen see how many of the teens have trouble with the transition to Al-Anon. When I look back to being 20 or 21, would I enter an Al-Anon meeting and think, “Here is where my peers are hiding”? NO WAY! I would think, “Those old fuddy-duddies don't know what my life is like.” But at a weekend like GTW, I get to share honestly what I was like before, what happened, and what it's like now. The greatest gift for me is hearing these teens share honestly. I learn how to recover from growing up in an alcoholic home. My

hope is that we all keep coming back, continue to have fun, and learn from each other how to have more serenity in our lives.

If you're not sure whether GTW is for you, come to one of our fundraisers throughout the year. It's another way to be of service, find fellowship, and have a tremendous amount of fun. It's a great way to be “a part of” something, and all the money raised is used for scholarships for GTW.

In closing, I would like to say that the opinions expressed here are strictly those of the person who gave them. I in no way speak for the GTW, but am sharing my experience. If you would like to share your experience please e-mail me: Moriah_r@hotmail.com.

– Moriah

Twenty Years Later, I'm Ready to Change

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

I really liked this man, and I didn't want to fall into my old patterns of pushing my boyfriends away.

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 boyfriends 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 its spiritual aspect. I feel that my attitude has improved already.

It's really neat to work my program, and to let 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.

– Ellen P., Wisconsin

From *The Forum*, July 2011. Reprinted with permission of *The Forum*, Al-Anon Family Group Hdqts., Inc., Virginia Beach, VA.

A Man, Not a Hero Accepting My Father for Who He Is

I now know that my dad is just a man. For the past 30 years, I put him on a pedestal. He was a beacon, an example of how the program really works. He had 15 years of sobriety, then five years, and now after less than a year, he slipped again. My world is shattered and I feel lost. I hate this disease! It is, however, because of my father that I can recognize it as a disease – and for that, I am grateful.

When he has sobriety, he is wise, compassionate, and someone I look up to and confide in. When he isn't sober, he is a stranger to me. Thank God for Al-Anon. Now, I see my dad for who he really is, instead of how I want him to be.

I know that this is a family disease. I can have compassion for him. He is

not a hero. He is simply a man who needs to find his own way. He grew up with this disease, just as I did, and cannot do it alone. He has changed my life and given me the greatest gift of all – our program.

It is my turn to be a light to him. Let him know that when he is done living in darkness, the light of this program will bring back my dad and restore hope and peace in his heart. Just for today, I will put him in God's hands and trust that he is safe there. I have a sponsor; I have tools to help me through this difficult time.

– Jennifer L., Alberta

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Book Donations Needed

Contribute your used Al-Anon books to the Al-Anon table for upcoming public events. The Public Information Coordinators need book donations to give away for free.



If you have any Al-Anon literature that you would like to donate, please send e-mail to pi.coordinators.scvafg@gmail.com. Your used program readings will help spread the Al-Anon message.

Thank you for your support.

– Colette K. and A'nna A.,
Public Information Coordinators



SCV AFG Office and Bookstore

The Santa Clara Valley Al-Anon Family Groups (SCV AFG) office and bookstore are located in Campbell at the Campbell Community Center:

1 West Campbell Ave., Room Q82
Campbell, CA 95008
(corner of Campbell and Winchester).

Al-Anon literature can be purchased at the bookstore. Literature sales are a source of income for the group.

The office is staffed by volunteers. Volunteers can commit to as little as one shift per month, and more is always welcome! One shift is one day's range of open hours.

To volunteer at the bookstore, please contact Dava F. at 408-934-0104.

Bookstore Hours

Monday	5:00 p.m. to 7 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 noon to 2:00 p.m.
Friday	4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.
Saturday	9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

When visiting the bookstore, please call ahead to confirm that the office is open: 408-379-9375.