

# OHIO AL-A-NOTES

Volume 39, Issue 1  
Winter / Spring 2015

"How important is having a home group to your personal recovery?"

## From your Delegate

Having a home group was very important to my recovery. When I first came into the program, I was isolated and untrusting. In fact, I drove half an hour away from my home because I was concerned about anonymity. Repeatedly attending the same group helped me to become less isolated, more trusting and moreover, gave me a sense of belonging. My home group was very welcoming and gave me comfort (Tradition Five). My home group gave me reassurance that the alcoholic's and my anonymity would not be broken (Traditions 11 and 12). Participation was encouraged right away (Concept Four). I was asked to be the Alternate Group Representative within the first six months of being in the program. I felt part of something greater than myself and felt included. Being part of a home group and serving as an officer of that group gave me the opportunity to be responsible for something beyond my everyday problems and to help others who wanted my help.

Ginny C., Delegate, Panel 55

## From your Alternate Delegate

My home group is where my family of choice lives. It isn't that my family of choice isn't much larger than that. After all, we are a world-wide fellowship; I can find "family" just about everywhere. But it is where I feel "safe" being myself, not judged or analyzed (Tradition 8 – nonprofessional, Concept 5 - minority right to be heard). I learn how to participate (Concept 4) and be comfortable with decisions reached by the group's informed conscience (Tradition 2 & Concept 3). My home group is definitely not organized; but we do try and get the necessary jobs done and are learning and relearning the importance of rotation of service (Step 7 – humility; Tradition 12 – anonymity). It's where I first ventured into service (showing up consistently, becoming a "key" person for the literature closet and setting up literature) and where I was led into service at the district level. It has been the support of that close family and sponsors that has led me to risk participating in service at all levels.

Theresa M., Alternate Delegate, Panel 55

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### 2015 Dates to remember:

- AWSC March 28
- Alateen Spring Rally April 25
- Spring Assembly May 16
- Ohio Area Convention, June 5-7
- International Convention of AA, July 2-5
- KOMIAC July 24-26
- Fall AWSC Aug 15
- Fall Assembly, October 17-18
- Alateen Fall Rally October 24



## From your Chairman

My growth in Al-Anon began in my home group in Portland, Oregon. I originally attended meetings because if it would keep my husband sober; it was what I needed to do. Somehow along the way I began going because it made me feel better. It was a **safe place** to express my feelings. I could ask "stupid" questions that my other friends would not understand. My Al-Anon family was always there to reassure me that I wasn't crazy. They would answer my questions, guide me and always stayed calm.

My service to Al-Anon began in my home group. They told me that helping put out literature was service. Then I learned that leading a meeting or simply attending a meeting was service. I began volunteering to help with local events with

Al-Anon participation. Suddenly I was a GR! The friendships I formed along the way have been lifetime friends. Service was a way I could "pay it back" to all those that were there at my very first home group.

My personal growth has been enhanced by my service in Al-Anon. My home group and my family have reaped the benefits of my service experience.

Buff N, Chair



## From your Treasurer

I never really thought about what my home group means to me. Then, I was asked to write a sharing for the AL-A-NOTES which encouraged me to think. Through my journey in Al-Anon I have had three different home groups. My first home group was a beginner's meeting along with a regular meeting of Adult Children of Alcoholics. I attended both religiously and followed their suggestions. I began to attend other meetings sometimes three or four a week. I read the literature. I found a sponsor and took the treasurer's position. As I began to feel better I drifted away from the program. I was not living with anyone whose life had been affected by Alcohol. My life had righted itself.

Then my Higher Power, who has a sense of humor, put a boss in my life that had many of the same characteristics as my father, whose drinking certainly had an effect on me. I beat a path back to Al-

Anon. My first home group was no longer meeting, so I found a second group. This time my service in the program grew and I became a GR for 6 years. I also volunteered to be the Group Records Coordinator for the Ohio Assembly.

Five years ago several of us wanted to start a new discussion group whose only focus was the Legacies of Al-Anon. I wanted to be a part of that beginning. The first week of the month we discuss the Step; the second week the Tradition, the third week the Concept, and the fourth week we combine the three Legacies of that particular month. This group has **taught me the meat and potatoes of the program**. As a result, today I understand more clearly the importance of service. I need this program to be available to my children and grandchildren.

I had one of those Spiritual Awakenings at the 2014 2-Day Fall Assembly. No one had applied for the Treasure's

## From your Secretary

When I think of my home group, I think of **Concept 1** – "The ultimate responsibility and authority for Al-Anon world services belongs to the Al-Anon groups." Everything starts with a group and in my case, it's my home group. I feel most comfortable there – not that I feel uncomfortable in any other meeting – but my home group is where I started my recovery. It's also the place where I started my service work, as Group Treasurer. From there, I've served as the Group Representative and have held service positions at the Intergroup and Area levels. My recovery has been a path of progress, not perfection. I've stumbled a few times, but my home group has always been there for support and it's the foundation of my program.

Phil H, Area Secretary

**Spring Assembly  
May 16, 2015  
North Congregational United  
Church of Christ  
2040 W. Henderson Road  
Columbus, OH 43220**

position. My Higher Power and a member from my home group kept encouraging me to submit a profile for the job. I was afraid; I did not believe in myself, I lacked courage...all my old tapes had returned. However, I had Faith that this was something I was to do. As I filled out the profile sheet I realized I did have experience to do the job. As the Chairman was closing the meeting I turned in my profile and stood in front of the group with tears and fear as a result of my emotions and read my profile. Today as I take on this job I have gained the confidence I need. I have obtained a "service sponsor" and know that I am not alone and that this program works if you work it. I look forward to growing and being a trusted servant for the next 3 years.

Judy A, Treasurer

## From your Group Records Coordinator

I came into the Al-Anon program a bit later on in life and, before that, it was easy for me to blame others when things went wrong. "I did all I could do", I'd tell myself. In reality, I'd only paid lip service to the project. Or, I'd be all gung-ho, taking over duties that were assigned to others so "it would be done right".

I never looked at the Seventh Tradition as being anything more than my obligation to financially support my group and the Al-Anon service arms. But in reading more about it in our literature, and with my sponsor's help, I began to see that I was the one who needed to be "fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions". The way a project turns out is my respon-

sibility – be it a group service position, working a step or a slogan or some other aspect of Al-Anon. I am the person who is responsible for me and not anyone else.

There are still challenges that remain for me, and there will be times that I may start getting discouraged. That's when it's time to make a phone call to my sponsor or another Al-Anon friend and share what's bothering me. I'll get a different perspective on the problem and I'll be able to find a solution. I'm practicing my program that way, and I'm becoming more self-sufficient.

Phil H – Group Records

**WSC April 19-23, 2015**

**Wyndham Virginia Beach  
Oceanfront  
5700 Atlantic Avenue  
Virginia Beach, Virginia  
23451**

### WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE

**APRIL 19-23, 2015**

**Love gifts** for the other Areas and letters of encouragement are welcome. Below are the instructions regarding mail for WSC.

#### Mail

Conference members receive a large number of letters and packages. Hotel storage space is limited and packages will NOT be accepted before April 15th. **Mail it no earlier than the 13th.** To help the hotel sort and deliver the mail, please ask others to include the following information on the address label:

Ginny Clark (Hold for WSC April 19-23, 2015)  
Wyndham Virginia Beach Oceanfront  
5700 Atlantic Avenue  
Virginia Beach, Virginia 23451

In the event that mail delivery is delayed, put Ginny's address in the return address section of the envelope.

Ginny Clark  
40 Hamden Dr.  
Hudson, OH 44236-2722

## From your Alateen Coordinator

Having grown up with the disease of alcoholism, I didn't know who I was, what I felt or what I liked. By having a home group when I first started and sharing with that group, they began to discover who and what I was before I could see it. They were able to help me to find the path of discovering myself. Without allowing my group to get to know me, they would not have been able to help me. My home group has encouraged me in my service work by believing and trusting me. By trusting me at group level in service work, they helped increase my self-esteem and self-confidence.

Serving my group as GR, attending district meetings and assemblies, and reporting back to my group has helped me become more comfortable with public speaking. Without the people in my home group who have loved me when I couldn't love myself, who taught me how to play, who believe in me, listen, trusted and guided me, and who have seen me at my best and at my worst, I would not be where I am today. Thank you for being there.

Tina L. OH Alateen Coordinator

## SIMPLE SERVICE IDEAS (REDUX)

Take copies of Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism to your Banker (Lawyer, MD, DDS)

Arrive early for your meeting and greet everyone who comes in.

Attend your group's business meeting

Attend District / Area Information Service Meetings

Send a sharing into The Forum

Leave bookmarks, AFA's, Forum's in the plane seat pockets.



# Sharing from our Committee Chairs

## Literature Coordinator

In finding a home group I started to feel as though I belonged and was part of a family. As in all families, I realized I had to pitch in and do my share in order to keep things running smoothly. Just showing up was not enough. My share soon became making coffee and chairing a meeting. This was service in it's simplest form.

I soon began to see that my group needed representation outside of my meeting to attend District meetings in order to be a part of the larger picture. This began my journey into service on a larger scale. What a gift this has been to me. When I Got Busy I Got Better is not just a piece of literature, it is a fact.

Had I not claimed a group as my home and wandered aimlessly week to week to different meetings, I would have never had a **sense of belonging** or felt the need to do my part. I would have kept showing up and expecting everything to be laid out for me. I began to feel like I was an important part of the group and not just a spectator. My recovery began to blossom and I had a whole new world of friends.

Karen M. Literature Coordinator

## 2 Day Fall & OAC Liaison

A "home" group--what a wonderful place! a safe place, a warm place, **a place to learn** !! Not like the alcoholic home! My 1st home group taught me soooo much, and I will be eternally grateful ! I learned about acceptance (I could not change the alcoholic), attitude (mine definitely need changing) a Higher Power of MY understanding (I needed to find one I trusted), sponsorship (I had a tough but caring one) and so much more !! And then I was gently pushed into service. I was secretary then treasurer then GR. My 1st assembly gave me a headache--but my group told me to keep going back! For me a good home group is supportive, trustworthy, rotates officers, has business meetings, works on the steps and traditions, is gentle with newcomers, a good example of how Al-Anon really works. After 8 years I had to leave that group because of my choice to go back to college --a choice they helped me to make. I did find other groups to attend and finally chose another to be my home group and attended that group for many years. A few years ago that 1st home group meeting closed. Lack of attendance and commitment-- wow-we were 20-25 people strong back then--it was sad to hear.

Today, I attend a group with a little different focus. It is a group that is very focused on Steps, Traditions, and Concepts. All the principles we need for everyday living! We make great use of our Al-Anon books as well as The Forum. We have beginners meetings and rotate our officers. We work together as a group (the WE) of the program. We set up the meeting together and take it down together. We laugh, hug, and cry together. We encourage each other--it's home!!

Lee R, 2-day Fall and OAC Liaison

## Archives

A home group is a place I feel safe, free to be me, secure in the knowledge that I am loved unconditionally and judgment is suspended -- all the qualities I longed for in my family of origin. In the past 23 years of one day at a time recovery, I've changed home groups five times. The reason doesn't matter, the day and hour aren't important. It's about finding the group where **I feel more me** than I've ever felt before and more a part of than I thought possible.

Barbara W. Archives

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## Let It Begin With Me

When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help—  
let the hand of Al-Anon and Alateen always be  
there, and—

*Let It Begin With Me.*

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WSO website —

**[www.al-anon.alateen.org/members](http://www.al-anon.alateen.org/members)**

Toll free number **1-800-4ALANON**

# District doings

## DISTRICTS OF CLEVELAND

In October Al-Anon members staffed a table at the 2-day Evidence-Based Practices Conference for medical and social service professionals as well as advocates dealing with mental illness and substance abuse. The conference was sponsored by Case Western Reserve University at the Cleveland Airport Marriott. **Al-Anon was the only 12-Step program invited to participate, a referral resulting from Al-Anon's efforts earlier in the summer at the annual Addiction Studies Institute in Columbus.** Grassroots outreach efforts to police, medical personnel, clergy, and others are continuing using the yellow business cards. The Cleveland Meeting of Districts printed with contact info for our downtown AIS office.

Cleveland Intergroup Council is sponsoring a fundraiser supper and auction in Lakewood on Sunday, April 19 to benefit the downtown AIS office. Details are on the Cleveland website

[www.clevelandal-anon.org](http://www.clevelandal-anon.org).

There are plans for a workshop with the theme "Self-Care". A co-chair and committees are needed. Please express interest by attending The Cleveland Meeting of Districts Thursday, April 2 and Tuesday, June 9 at 7 pm. Meeting location is the Parma-Snow library.

Progress is ongoing as Cleveland prepares to host next year's **Ohio Area Convention June 24-26, 2016 at the Holiday Inn Northeast in Mentor.** The officers and committee are working on the program for the theme "Time to Grow!" An initial flyer will be ready by Spring Assembly. Room rates will be \$105/night + tax, and the convention rate is available for 1 additional night before and after the convention if you would like to spend time sightseeing in our area.

## DISTRICTS OF MIAMI VALLEY

The districts of Miami Valley will be participating in the annual Levine Family Health Fair in Dayton on Saturday, April 18. This event typically brings 5,000 or more people to the Sinclair Community College Campus for a variety of free health screenings. Miami Valley AIS has had a space there for several years with Al-Anon pamphlets, meeting schedules and "Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism" displayed. We're looking forward to another good turn out this year again.

Miami Valley AIS is also working on starting a Beginner's Meeting at the McKinley Hall treatment center in Springfield. We're hopeful that the meeting is up and running by the time you read this.



Alateen continues along in the Miami Valley also. There are currently 3 Alateen meetings: two in schools and the third is on Saturday morning, in conjunction with an Al-Anon meeting. We had two Alateens attend KOMIAC last year and are hopeful of sending more this year.

### ODE TO A HOME GROUP

I feel blessed beyond measure that you allowed me to be your Public Outreach Coordinator.

It is like being locked up, with all my favorite foods, on a hot summer day in a refrigerator.

Assembly is my second family because my first family is the Sunday Triangle Group.

And although I have a biological family, I came out of there feeling like a worn out hula-hoop.

My home group is a safe place to cry and to laugh and to get a hello and a goodbye hug.

It's a place where I go to give and receive love without getting caught up in the web of a bug.

I love picking meeting topics and asking others to share their experience, strength, and hope.

It provides me with tools that I can use to get along in a world that is in need of Al-A-Soap.

And although some people criticize that our meeting engages in cross-talk.

I am grateful for the dialogue since it keeps me from going on that bad neighborhood walk.

I am grateful that I have a place to call home with a wonderful group of Al-A-pals.

Who are committed to using literature that carries the distinguished symbol of CAL.

With All My Love,  
Merri G, Public Outreach  
Coordinator

EDITOR'S NOTE:

Send all **GROUP DONATIONS** to:

AFG OF OHIO

PO Box 524

Columbiana, OH 44408-0524

Every registered group in Ohio will receive a free copy of the Al-A-Notes at their current mailing address. Paid subscriptions are for individuals or for extra group copies. If you are not receiving a copy three times a year, check with the Group Records Coordinator or the Alternate Delegate.

Please include your **Group's ID number**, including the **District number**, on the check and whether a "plea donation" or "group donation"

We are on the Web

[www.ohioal-anon.org](http://www.ohioal-anon.org)



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