

Al-Anon Sense



District 14 Saint Louis, MO Newsletter — April-May 2024

HEALING THROUGH GROUP INVENTORY

This is the 6th article in a series entitled “Home Sweet AFG Home,” submitted by a District 14 member who wishes to remain anonymous.

From the AFG WSO G-8a guideline for Taking a Group Inventory: Taking a periodic group inventory helps to keep your group healthy and invigorated.

Members can use the inventory to discuss what actions have been beneficial to group and personal growth, and what actions need to be updated, discontinued, or improved. Discussions during or following an inventory can include ideas for new service opportunities, ideas for reaching out to potential members, and resolutions for major or minor concerns before the group’s unity is disrupted. “The harmony and success of each group depends on shared responsibility, a warm spirit of fellowship, and individual self-improvement.” (Al-Anon and Alateen Groups at

Work [P24], Introduction)

I wasn’t asked or allowed to ‘give my two cents worth’ to my family’s business. We never had anything like a group inventory where we checked in with each other to discuss concerns or needs. Everything was handled on an incident-by-



incident basis and usually with lots of drama and conflict. It’s refreshing, encouraging, and liberating to participate in group consciences and inventories where everyone is invited and has a voice. Of course, we have disagreements and even conflicts; we also have AFG tools and Traditions to help us work to-

gether for our common goal of unity and to process any conflicts.

My home group’s Alternate Group Rep (AltGR) heard about group inventories at a Missouri Dis-

Please turn to page 2, “Group Inventory”

MARCH AWSC MEETING RECAP

Virtual Meeting The AWSC met electronically on March 9, 2024, in keeping with the November 2022 Assembly motion that the second and third March AWSC meetings of each panel be held as entire virtual events. The day was filled with reports from officers, coordinators and district representatives.

Knowledge Based Decision

Making Discussion A KBDM Session explored the topic: Are we using our AWSC Meetings to our best advantage in terms of supporting our Service structure at the District and Group levels and to achieve our primary purpose?

2025 Al-Anon International Convention Kansas City has been in consultation with our Area Delegate and the World Ser-

vice Office about submitting a bid for the 2025 Al-Anon International Convention. The report has been finalized and submitted. The Convention City will be announced at the 2025 WSC meeting. Kansas City is in competition with 12 cities submitting bids, some from the Midwest, others from both coasts, the Northeast and the Southwest.

Please turn to page 6, “AWSC”

GROUP INVENTORY, continued from page 1

trict 14 meeting and asked our group if we were interested. We've had a big increase in members, with many newcomers, so it seemed like a good time to have another inventory. Over a few monthly group conscience meetings, our AltGR led us through the process of designing our inventory. There was a lot to consider. Since we were headed into the long holiday stretch and everyone was busy, we decided to have the inventory after the first of the year. Ultimately, we voted to have it after our regular AFG meeting in lieu of going to lunch for fellowship as we usually do.

Other planning details discussed—actual date and time, length of inventory, choosing a facility, clearing the date/time with the facility, whether to bring lunches, inviting an AFG observer, asking for someone to take notes, making reminder flyers, distributing the flyers and copies of the Taking a Group Inventory guidelines (WSO G-8a) to members.

The AltGR mentioned some of the ways other groups gather inventory questions and we voted to use the questions in the AFG WSO G-8a Guidelines. They asked members to email or text their 3 top questions and provided us with a list of the top concerns or interests. Everyone agreed this was a good way to focus our time and move through the list. They also made name cards which were drawn, and that person picked a question from the list for us to discuss. They used a timer and rotated the direction of questions clockwise and counter-clockwise from the person who picked the question. After everyone had responded or passed, we

were given a chance to add anything new. We were asked to not repeat what had already been said to save more time for new questions.

After our group inventory, we voted to not hold a second inventory session to finish the list because we had a lot of input and ideas to work through from this inventory. Any member can always bring up any questions or concerns at our monthly group conscience and we can have another inventory later.

From my perspective, our group has a lot of positive attributes and that was echoed in the inventory. Some of the concerns were answered by sharing the background for some of our group processes like our Newcomers process.



One major concern that came up was dominance within the group. A member shared that their view was that some perceived dominance could be linked to lack of participation. More participation solves some perceived dominance issues because more people rotate

through service positions and tasks. Another member mentioned that some dominance issues have resulted from personality conflicts among some members. Someone else mentioned that she had observed some conflicts at group conscience meetings, then was impressed that we all went out to lunch afterwards for fellowship.

I've learned that just as the Step 4 Inventory can help me heal and thrive on my personal recovery journey, group inventories can do the same for my home group. We all have a voice and, if we choose, can participate in that healing process.

Contact Al-Anon Family Groups

AFG WSO – World Service Office

Meeting Information: **1-888-4AL-ANON (1-888-425-2666)**

Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc., 1600 Corporate Landing Parkway, Virginia Beach, VA 23454-5617

T: (757) 563-1600 F: (757) 563-1656 E: wso@al-anon.org W: al-anon.org

Missouri Area— <https://www.missouri-al-anon.org/> (Round Robin newsletter, MO Area event calendar, Area info)

Al-Anon Family Groups of Greater St. Louis—Al-Anon Information Service

Al-Anon Sense is for your whole group!

To get newsletter, email: d14afgnewsletter@gmail.com
Please make copies for group members. If your group can't afford to print copies, contact us with your Group Name, a mailing address, and number of copies needed. District 14 will pay printing and mailing costs.

An **Invitation to share your experience, strength, and hope** with **Al-Anon Sense** readers – please send 200-400 word articles about: Event News, Reflections, Announcements, Photos, Artwork – anything Al-Anon related. **'Anonymous' bylines** for submissions: please supply first name and phone number or email in case we need to contact you.

STATEMENT: *Al-Anon Sense* is published 6 times a year by AFG District 14 in St. Louis, MO. *Al-Anon Sense* is not copyrighted or Conference Approved Literature. We reserve the right to edit or not publish submitted materials due to content or length. *"Anybody can start something, but carrying it out is the real challenge. And all the rest of you are doing that job. You're all founders in your own right, carrying the message."* -- Lois W, 1987 WSC

PICNIC IN THE PARK

The members of District 14 will sponsor our annual spring picnic on Sunday, June 9 2024. All members and interested guests are invited. The picnic is always a good way to network with other Al-Anon members, meet up with old friends and meet and encourage new members of our fellowship.

The District will once again provide fried chicken and those in attendance are asked to bring a side dish to share. We usually have a good selection of salads, fruit and desserts!

The Humboldt North pavilion is the location this year, just across the drive from the Humboldt South pavilion where we were located last year. There are picnic tables, but you are welcome to bring lawn chairs for additional (and more comfortable) seating. We are contacting a District 2 Alateen group to sell drinks to benefit their activities. If they are unable to make that date, the District will have water, tea and lemonade available. There will be food and fellowship at noon with an Al-Anon and an AA speaker beginning at 1p.m.

Our ever-popular jewelry sale will be held, as well as a quilt raffle (see photo) and Conference Ap-

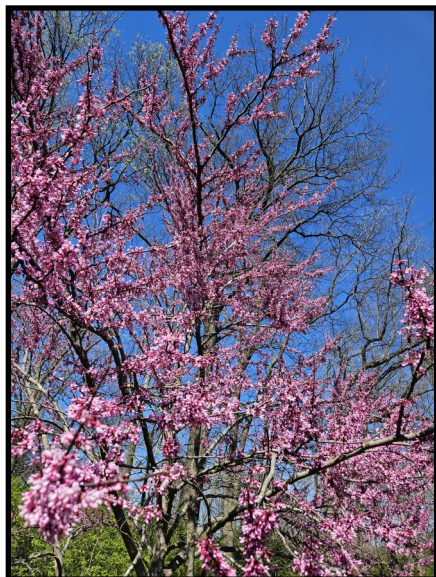


proved Literature for attendance prizes. Let us all hope for good weather and a good turnout!

*-Submitted by Janet R., GR,
Friends in Al-Anon AFG*

'PINK CLOUDS' EVOLVE INTO 'TREES' OF RECOVERY

On a recent road trip, the redbud trees along the highway looked like lovely pink clouds. The scene reminded me of the honeymoon phase mentioned at the treatment center; it describes the early recovery period that lasts about six months. I was



fortunate to enjoy that time with my spouse as we both entered recovery. We thought we would save everyone from this disease as we went from despair to great encouragement and peace in our home. This program has definitely taught me to enjoy nature, notice even the smallest things and be grateful for this awareness.

Since I enjoy art and photography, I am always on the lookout for interesting scenes and composi-

tions. As I watched those pink blossoms floating by, I was relating the whole tree to my recovery. The small flowers on the tips of the branches represented the small amount I really knew about recovery early in my program. Later I felt stronger as the limbs of the tree. All of those many branches were the many people helping me along the way, and gradually I felt as solid as the trunk of the tree. Of course, storms would make everything sway but I always came back to the main branches of my program.

Along with this visual comes the many other pictures I think of as challenges come about in life. The *One Day at A Time* daily reader is my favorite, perhaps because it was the only daily reader available when I came into the program. Passages that paint a visual picture are the ones that come to mind most often. My favorites are letting go of some of the candy to get my hand out of the candy jar. The fable of the Sun and the Wind is also a good one; the Sun could cause the man to remove his coat no matter how hard the Wind tried to blow it from the man's back. Things are not always as they seem!

-Article & photo submitted by Janet R.

STEPPING STONES HOME PRESERVES HISTORY & MEMORIES

One of Al-Anon's homes is Stepping Stones, the home of one of our co-founders, Lois Wilson.

Lois's husband, Bill Wilson, was a co-founder of Alcoholics Anonymous. Based in New York, Lois accompanied him to many AA meetings, sometimes parked in a line of cars of women who had brought their spouses to the meeting. Those ladies eventually got together and attended open meetings, finding that they could use the principles identified by the early alcoholics.

This was happening all over the country and abroad so some 87 individuals or groups of women associated with AA meetings had written to Alcoholics Anonymous, seeking membership or some sort of affiliation. The story is that Bill asked Lois to contact these people and Al-Anon resulted from that correspondence. Lois and her neighbor, Anne B., carried on more correspondence with family members of alcoholics and proposed that their group take on a name, to be suggested by those entities, and that they make small contributions for mailing and such. Lois and



Courtesy of Stepping Stones Foundation, all rights reserved

“Stepping Stones became a base for the two fellowships and a special place for both.”

Anne's early work was conducted from Stepping Stones, Lois and Bill's home. With additional volunteers, those leaders moved the typewriter to an AA facility and then to their own Al-Anon office.

Stepping Stones, as described in the book, *Lois Remembers*, became a base for the two fellowships and a special place for both.

After Bill's death, Lois set up a foundation to take effect when she passed away, to maintain the house as a focus of the fellowship's history. I visited shortly after Lois' death and since the foundation hadn't begun its work yet, found Lois' flowers to be need of care. That, in addition to other changes designed to make the home available to visitors, did take place shortly.

All of our Missouri Delegates got to visit Stepping Stones as part of the World Service Conference schedule, getting to sit on the couch and talk with Lois. Loretta R. remembers Lois serving strawberries with powdered sugar.

Lois was no longer living when I visited as Missouri's 39th delegate, but I could walk about the house and see it as it had been when Lois and Bill were living there. I also toured the grounds, visited the small cabin called Wit's End where Bill wrote some of AA's literature and found 26 species of birds and one chipmunk.

I visited one more time when I was serving as a member of the Board of Trustees, at Conference time, and got to play Lois's piano. I was told that it needed to be played. A story is told by another delegate who visited Stepping Stones and left his camera lens cap accidentally on the piano top. When he came again serving as delegate for a different area, there was his lens cap. By then, the plan was to leave the house just as Lois had left it!

One year in each delegate's panel, the members of the Conference go to visit Stepping Stones. That means that Conference is held either in New York or Connecticut where expenses are greater than in Virginia Beach. The Conference has asked the fellowship if this expense is justified. Our Missouri Area delegate will take our input and comments to our 2024 World Service Conference.

--Submitted by Laurie K., GR, Southside AFG

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE MARCH 2024 DISTRICT 14 MEETING

District Representative Marge O. called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Treasurer – In the first two months of the year, the District received \$323.00 in donations and spent \$351.50 for Conference-approved literature and rent. There was \$618.80 in available funds at the time of the meeting.

Public Outreach – Laurie K. encouraged members to place Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism pamphlets in tiny, free libraries. Marge has available packets of information about the fellowship geared toward professionals, such as school personnel and therapists, including business cards, posters and informational pamphlets. The packets are available for members to distribute to those in the helping professions.

History Project—Marge and Loretta R. visited District 14 groups to gauge interest in a gathering to share Al-Anon history. They reported that the groups expressed significant in-

terest in watching a documentary about Lois W., cofounder of Al-Anon Family Groups. History Day is scheduled for Saturday, August 17 at Bethel Lutheran Church, 7001 Forsyth at Big Bend. Time to be determined; watch the St. Louis Al-Anon Information Service website for a flyer. All members are invited.

All Are Welcome
May 9, 2024
Next District 14 Meeting
6450 S. Kingshighway

District 14 Picnic – The picnic is scheduled for noon-3 p.m., Sunday, June 9 at the Humboldt North Pavilion at Tower Grove Park. The district is looking for Al-Anon and AA speakers to talk briefly at the picnic. The district will provide fried chicken and beverages; attendees are asked to bring side dishes to share. A quilt raffle and jewelry sale will be featured again this year.

Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements – Meagan M. reported on the work that has been done at the Missouri Area level to revise the requirements. The WSO has provided feedback on the proposed wording and the Missouri Area is expected to vote on the revisions at the November Area Assembly.

Spiritual Principles of Concept 12 & the Warranties Workshop—Janie F. presented a workshop highlighting the characteristics represented in the Warranties, including prudence, humility, substantial unanimity, personal responsibility, avoidance of controversy, mutual respect, and equality. The Warranties strike a balance that was often missing in our alcoholic upbringing. She talked about the spiritual principles of Concept 12. Members in attendance appreciated Janie’s succinct and vibrant presentation style.

Excerpts from the meeting minutes submitted by Tess S., District Secretary

District 14 Ledger Balance as of 3-14-2024	
Starting Balance as of	\$ 2,147.30
D14 Receipts	\$ 323.00
Expenses	\$ (351.50)
Ending checking Balance	\$ 2,118.80
Ample Reserve Goal	\$ 1,500.00
AVAILABLE FUNDS	
(w/o Ample Reserve)	\$ 618.80

District 14 gratefully accepts donations from groups and members. Please mail or Venmo to:
 Hilda Willman, 5239 Westminster Place
 St. Louis, MO 63108-1122
 Venmo: [@Hilda-Willman](#)

Please make checks out to Missouri District 14 AFG & write Group Name on Memo line.

For security reasons, don't write 'Treasurer' on envelope.
 Contact: d14afgtreasurer@gmail.com or text 314-277-0714

2024 DISTRICT 14 WORKSHOPS

May 9	Public Outreach	Joy W.
Jul 11	Happy, Joyous and Free	Michael C.
Sep 12	Sponsorship	Sue K.
Nov 11	District Inventory	District Members

“I don’t need to be alone with my problems if I’m willing to accept help from a Power greater than myself.”

-Part of a sharing at a recent meeting in the District

AWSC, continued from page 1



World Service Office Financial Report

WSO Income for 2023 was \$6,900,000, which is an increase from 2022 of \$1,077,000. Expenses were \$5,800,000.

131 groups in Missouri contributed a total of \$25,000. The new reader, “A

Little Time for Myself,” sold well, making 2023 the highest-grossing year ever for literature sales.

2022-2025 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual, Version 3 The Service Manual has been updated. The revisions amounted to small changes that affect seven pages of the present Manual. You can download the new version and save it in your computer or print the seven pages and staple or paper clip them in your book. Go to <https://al-anon.org/pdf/P2427-v3-replacement-pages.pdf>.

Position Descriptions

Task Force

The position descriptions in the Missouri Area Al-Anon/Alateen Service Digest are being rewritten. This task force will have their work completed by November



and the new descriptions will be ready to be approved by the Group Representatives at the Assembly.

Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements

The Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements Task Force reported that

they have received feedback from the WSO on the updated requirements that they submitted to them for approval. They have heard back and the WSO comments were positive and will be easy to implement. The Task Force plans to share this information at the August AWSC, August Super Sunday and the November Assembly.

Al-Anon Members in Alateen Service It is time for AMIAS certification and recertification. Information about this is on the website: <https://www.missouri-al-anon.org/alateen.html>. Or contact the Missouri Area Alateen Process Person: Elaine M. aapp@missouri-al-anon.org

Round Robin The past issues of the Round Robin (the Missouri Area Newsletter) are being digitized and will soon be available online.

Missouri Area Al-Anon Convention The theme for this year is Serenity Restored 2024. It will be held September 27-29, 2024, at the Old Kinderhook Resort in Camdenton, Missouri. It is Missouri's only annual state-wide recovery event. Information is available at: https://www.missouri-al-anon.org/up-loads/1/1/6/7/116772009/2024_convention_save_the_date_flyer.pdf



-Submitted by Marge O., District 14 DR

When I first began thinking about doing a workshop for the District 14 March meeting, I had the idea that the 5 General Warranties of the Conference are not something that is discussed or talked about, much less the 12 Concepts of Service. So here I am given an opportunity for us all to share our experience, strength and hope. Yes, the Concepts of Service are for Al-Anon's service, but as in all of our legacies-36-each one has a spiritual principle or principles that lies within each of these 36 legacies.

Concept 12 not only give guidelines to prevent problems of money, property, power or prestige from diverting us from our primary spiritual aim, it embodies the spiritual principles of **PRUDENCE, HUMILITY, SUBSTANTIAL UNANIMITY, PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY, AVOIDANCE OF CONTROVERSY, MUTUAL RESPECT** and **EQUALITY**.

Each of these warranties reveals a wisdom and balance that can be carried into our personal lives, work environment, and our relationships. Through exercising these spiritual principles, we find that indeed our lives can attain a healthy outlook that may have seemed unattainable in the past. We learn to strike a balance in our lives, contrary to the extremes that the family disease of Alcoholism taught us.

1) That only sufficient operating funds, including an ample reserve, be its prudent financial principle.

This warranty has taught me about money matters in my personal life. I need to maintain balance in my financial affairs. Not spending more than I make, to have an emergency fund. Today I even have a vacation fund. The warranty also speaks to me of how I use my time-balance in all areas of life.

2) That no conference member shall be placed in unqualified authority over other members.

This warranty helps me to treat others as I want to be treated. No matter how long I have been in Al-Anon, every one is equal. Tradition 2 speaks of Only One Authority—a loving God as He may ex-

Wisdom of the Warranties

by Janie F.

press Himself in our group conscience. Using the principle in my personal life, I remember that other family members have a God and it is not me.

3) That all decisions be reached by discussion, vote and, whenever possible, unanimity.

This warranty continues to remind me that when there is a problem whether group or family, each member has

a voice-and a vote, to provide their solutions to the issue. If what I think is right is not what the majority votes, my part is to do what is best for everyone.

4) That no conference action ever be punitive or an incitement to public controversy.

I am responsible for my actions, that even if a group or member of my family does follow the guidelines the family sets, that I will not take action to personally harm them. I can discuss this matter with the family and a solution can come from all.

5) That though the conference serves Al-Anon it shall never perform any act of government; and that like the fellowship of Al-Anon Family Groups which it serves, it shall always remain democratic in thought and action.

This warranty reminds me to act kindly toward others, respect them as I respect myself. It gives me freedom to be myself and allow others to be themselves. To strive to think well as well as behave well in the same living perspective. That each member has their individual value as a member of the family or group. No one person is more important yet everyone is important. I am responsible for my actions and they are responsible for their actions.

Concept 12 again reinforces the strength of the Al-Anon program. Through a Power greater than ourselves, we find the courage to make the changes necessary to live differently today. By practicing the principles outlined in the General Warranties, we have the opportunity not only to change our lives, but also to offer our experience, strength and hope to those around us. (*Reaching for Personal Freedom*, page 168)

AL-ANON EVENTS

PLEASE CHECK MISSOURI AREA AND STL AIS CALENDARS FOR UPDATES/CANCELLATIONS

MAY 4-5, Sat-Sun: MO Area Assembly, Old Kinderhook Golf Resort, 678 Kinderhook Dr., Camdenton, MO. Details at www.missouri-al-anon.org

MAY 9, Thurs, 6:30-8:00pm: D14 Hybrid Business Meeting & Workshop. Redeemer Evangelical Church, 6450 S Kingshighway, St. Louis, MO 63116. Speaker Joy W. presents workshop on Public Outreach. Contact Marge O. at [mo-district14dr@gmail.com](mailto:modistrict14dr@gmail.com)

JUN 9, Sun 12 noon-3 pm: District 14 Picnic. Al-Anon & AA speakers, potluck lunch, jewelry sale, quilt raffle, 7th Tradition basket. Tower Grove Park, Humboldt North Pavilion.

JUN 22, Sat 10am-4pm: MO Area Day in Service: How Does Your Garden Grow? Morgan County Library, 600 N Hunter, Versailles, MO. Details at www.missouri-al-anon.org

“...in Al-Anon/Alateen we discover that no situation is really hopeless ...”

-From the Suggested Al-Anon/Alateen Welcome

JUL 11, Thurs 6:30-8 pm: D14 Hybrid Business Meeting & Workshop. Redeemer Evangelical Church, 6450 S. Kingshighway, St. Louis, MO 63116. Speaker Michael C. (MO Area Chair) presents workshop entitled “Happy, Joyous and Free.” Contact Marge O. at [mo-district14dr@gmail.com](mailto:modistrict14dr@gmail.com)

AUG 2-4, Fri-Sun: 74th MO State AA Convention with Al-Anon Participation, Capitol Plaza Hotel, 415 W. McCarty St, Jefferson City, MO. Details at <https://mostateconvention.org/>

AUG 17, Sat Time TBD: District 14 History Day Celebration, Bethel Lutheran Church, 7001 Forsyth Blvd., Clayton, MO.

AUG 18, Sun 1-4 pm: Al-Anon/AA Central Services Ice Cream Social & Jewelry Sale, AIS/ Central Services Office, 14 Sunnen Drive, Suite 144, Maplewood, MO.

AUG 24, Sat: MO Area World Service Committee Meeting, Old Kinderhook Resort & Golf Club, Camdenton, MO. Details at www.missouri-al-anon.org

SEPT 12, Thurs, 6:30-8 pm: D14 Hybrid Business Meeting & Workshop. Redeemer Evangelical Church, 6450 S Kingshighway, St. Louis, MO 63116. Speaker Sue K. (MO Delegate) presents workshop on Sponsorship. Contact Marge O. at modistrict14dr@gmail.com

SEPT 27-29, Fri-Sun: MO Area Convention. Old Kinderhook Resort & Golf Club, 678 Kinderhook Dr, Camdenton, MO.

OCT 26, Sat, Time & Location TBD, District 14 Fall Festival, save the date; more information to come in future issues.

NOV 2-3, Sat-Sun: MO Area Assembly, Old Kinderhook Resort & Golf Club, 678 Kinderhook Dr, Camdenton, MO. Details at www.missouri-al-anon.org

NOV 14, Thurs, 6:30-8 pm: D14 Hybrid Business Meeting & Workshop. Redeemer Evangelical Church, 6450 S. Kingshighway, St. Louis, MO 63116. District members will conduct a District Inventory. Contact Marge O. at modistrict14dr@gmail.com.

Many thanks to the members who submitted sharings for this issue and to Janet R. and the Stepping Stones Foundation for allowing us to reprint their photos. Member sharings welcomed. Please email submissions to d14afgnewsleter@gmail.com

