



DR: District 14 Events

ANNUAL PICNIC

On June 26th, District 14 hosted its annual Summer Picnic. This was our first picnic serving food since the beginning of the pandemic. In the first year of this panel, we had a summer Zoom speakers' meeting in lieu of a picnic. Last year we had a bring-your-own-food-and-beverage-picnic. This year we had a full picnic with fried chicken provided by the district and an array of delicious sides brought by the picnickers.

Our featured speakers were Jim R. and Christine M. R. We had Conference Approved Literature as attendance prizes, a quilt raffle and received pledges for our billboard project.

The picnic began with a horrendous rain during our set up, but then the weather cleared, and it was cool and sunny. A perfect picnic day.

WRITERS' WORKSHOP

In July, we had a Writers' Workshop during our regularly scheduled District 14 Meeting. Marilyn M., the Missouri Area Forum Literature Coordinator came to us through Zoom to tell us about writing guidelines that the World Service Office has for those who submit articles and photos for publication. Lynn C.-R., the Alternate Coordinator, prepared a PowerPoint Presentation about *The Forum*. In it she included some writing prompts so that those of us attending could engage in a few minutes of writing

time. So look for articles submitted by Al-Anon members from Missouri in future issues.

NEW GROUP IN DISTRICT 14

Also In July, District 14 received news that a new group has registered with the WSO within the district boundaries. Avoidance AFG began in early July. It meets in person on Friday evenings at 6:00 at the Steps Alano Club, 3974 Humphrey, 2nd floor, room 3. Welcome to our newest group. If you are looking for an extra meeting, I encourage you to attend in support of the Avoidance Group.

UPCOMING:

KNOWLEDGE-BASED

DECISION-MAKING WORKSHOP

On September 8th, at the District 14 semi-monthly meeting, Meagan M. will present a Knowledge-Based Decision-Making workshop. KBDM principles are being used at the Missouri Area as we make important decisions that affect our Area. KBDM has four elements that are consistent with Al-Anon principles: open communication; dialogue before deliberation; decision makers have access to full information and the process takes place in and builds upon a culture of trust.

This process focuses on questions that help groups think through their decisions. It is something that

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(D14 Events continued from page 1)

can be adapted to individual groups, used at the District level, the Area and with the World Service Conference. Come and learn how to develop a way to preserve unity in your group conscience decisions.

Our District 14 meetings continue to meet in person with an electronic component. The KBDM Workshop is scheduled for Thursday, September 8, 2022, at our business meeting (6:30-8:00).

In Person: Redeemer Evangelical Church, 6450 S. Kingshighway, St. Louis, MO 63116 (at Gravois and Kingshighway). Fellowship Hall – Church Library: Enter through red ground level door, walk down a few steps, turn right. Parking available at adjacent school parking lot.

See flyer and emails for Zoom link info.

--Respectfully submitted, Marge O., D14 DR



I Don't Have To Participate in the Drama

I could have written a novel about what alcoholism and addiction did to me and those around me, but today my novel would be completely different. Working the Al-Anon program helped me move past the anger, bitterness and lack of healthy family experiences that came with growing up with an alcoholic. It also helped me face the effects of leaving home very young to create my own chaotic marriage and eventual divorce from an alcoholic/addict.

Al-Anon opened my eyes to a sunnier, happier life. I learned that I am in control of my own life, thoughts and behaviors. I could no longer blame the past, my dad, my ex or others for my choices. Today, I have a choice to smile and welcome the sunshine of healing into my life. I have a choice to pick up the phone and call a friend when I'm feeling blue. I have the choice to go to a meeting and embrace the warm hugs and healing sharing. Alcoholism is still causing chaos in our blended family, but I don't have to participate in the drama. I am so thankful for all the healthy changes in my life. I found a wonderful friend in Al-Anon—me.

By Daisy P., California

From The Forum August 2017, page 4. Reprinted with permission of *The Forum*, Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc., Virginia Beach, VA

Al-Anon opened my eyes to a sunnier, happier life."

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

14 Sunnen Dr., #144, Maplewood, MO 63143 T: **314-645-1572** E: aisoffice@stl-al-anon.org W: www.stl-al-anon.org

Illinois Area: District 18: N. Metro East Meetings: www.siafg.org. or call **618-463-2429** **District 14:** Southern IL, call **618-398-9470**

Al-Anon Sense is for your whole group!

To get newsletter, email: modistrict14news@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, Reviews, or Announcements, Photos, Articles, 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.

SUBMISSION DEADLINE—Friday, October 7, 2022

Errata: *If you notice any factual errors or omissions, please email us at: modistrict14news@gmail.com*

STATEMENT: *Al-Anon Sense* is published 6 times a year by AFG District 14 in St. Louis, MO. *Al-Anon Sense* is not copy-righted 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

al-anon.org

Writing as an Act of Service



One of the ways the family disease of alcoholism shows up in my life is that, if I'm not paying attention, I can find myself ruminating. I get stuck on a hamster wheel of compulsive thinking, trying to come up with the perfect plan of action on my own before I share with anyone else what I am going through.

My recovery in Al-Anon shows me that this is backwards. It's only when I get those often-distorted thoughts out of my head—by talking to my Sponsor or another Al-Anon member, sharing in a meeting, or getting them down in writing—that clarity emerges. As I write about my problem, I identify my feelings. Tools and slogans come to mind. Al-Anon's spiritual principles begin to resonate and illuminate the next steps along my path.

In the same way that sharing in a meeting is an act of service that helps both me and those who hear me, sharing my recovery in writing is also an act of service that helps me, whether it gets published or not. But sharings submitted to [The Forum](#) have a better

chance of being published when they meet some basic criteria. A written sharing should:

- Be about and from the Al-Anon perspective—how the writer was affected by another's alcoholism and how Al-Anon helped.
- Speak from the member's own experience rather than giving advice or teaching.
- Focus on *one* thing, such as how a member applied a slogan to a particular situation, how an Al-Anon principle helped improve a relationship, or how the program brought freedom from a particular self-defeating attitude or habit, etc.

[The Forum](#) also needs sharings that:

- Focus on *one* of the **Twelve Steps, Traditions**, or (especially!) **Concepts of Service** applied to personal life.
- Represent the experience of minority members, for example, sharings from men, from members in countries outside the US, from members in the LGBTQIA+ community, etc.

The most important thing, though, is that members share from their hearts. Member sharings *are needed* and are received with respect and gratitude as acts of service to our fellowship. You can download a detailed Writing Guideline for *The Forum*, check out all our writing guides, and send *your* sharing.

*By Carol C., Magazine Editor
The Forum, June 2022*

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

My Journey to Self-Worth

I have had low self-esteem for a long time. My alcoholic ex-husband constantly put me down, abused me, told me I was not good enough, and demeaned me. Why did I allow it? I guess I thought I deserved it and was afraid to fight back. I felt I had to keep the family together, but in staying in that

marriage, I damaged the self-esteem of myself and my children. However, Al-Anon was my saving grace. There, I learned not to let anyone put me down. I learned that, if I do, it is my fault for taking it. I will not be a victim anymore. If I get confronted or put down, I just respond by saying, "I am sorry you feel that way, but this is me and I like myself." I still have progress to

make on this journey to self-worth and self-esteem but there is hope in this program where there is no judgment and where I find understanding and loving new friends.

By Barbara H., Florida

From *The Forum* September 2019, page 2. Reprinted with permission of *The Forum*, Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc., Virginia

*"Al-Anon was my
saving grace."*

Al-Anon Service Expanded My Personal Recovery

Like most of us in Al-Anon 'rooms', my first service was filling a chair at a meeting. I was assured by our literature and members that attending meetings was indeed service – it keeps meeting doors open. Then I started helping pack up after meetings. That didn't seem like a lot – but it helped the group and was a lesson in both 'participation is the key to harmony' and 'rotation of service' where tasks are rotated so it's not always the same people with all the responsibility.

Later, I volunteered for the open group treasurer position. I started learning more about the AFG service structure after going to other events. I was curious about district meetings and after visiting one I volunteered to be our Group Rep – a position that had been vacant for a while. Going to the MO Area Assembly as a GR was quite a lesson and put our program and principles into perspective for me.

Prior to doing service work, my impression was that I needed a 'perfect program' and to know the Service Manual, 12 Traditions, and 12 Concepts of Service backwards and forwards. What I found is that, as in our groups, there are all levels of AFG experience at the district meetings and area level. Some are even newcomers who volunteered to fill long open positions.

I stepped down as GR after two panels but stayed involved in district level service. I no longer had a vote, but I still had a voice and could share my home group's concerns.

At an early assembly, they had an information fair where they shared info about the MO Area service positions. I was interested in one but doubted my ability. I didn't volunteer at the area level but later I did that service at the district level.

That was a growth experience because I wasn't perfect at it, made some mistakes, and no one

yelled at me. I was probably harder on myself than anyone else. After receiving that grace and encouragement, I was able to do the same for myself, allow my human mistakes to be just mistakes and not an end of the world crisis. I received a new awareness and lessons in Easy Does It and Progress Not Perfection.

I have a service mentor who has a lot of Al-Anon experience. They were helpful for those times when I needed to find my way back to balance and serenity.

For me, the Al-Anon service journey, has been an essential part of my personal recovery program. Somewhere I heard that we bring all our 'stuff' to the meetings, so yes there may be conflicts.



My experience was that it's also true for the district and area levels. It doesn't mean that I'm not working my program, it means that I'm human. I get hungry, angry, lonely, or tired, sad, or frustrated. What it means is that I don't have to be Ms. Al-Anon or have a PH.D. in AFG. It means that I can stand for any position I'm curious about or maybe just because it's unfilled and I want to and am able to help. It means that I will learn new things, use my own personal skills, meet new people, and most importantly help keep the AFG Links of Service connected – for my own benefit and our groups. My AFG service journey has been a way to put my program to work, practicing our Three Legacies. I still don't have my AFG PH.D. but I'm okay with that because I'm always learning new things – and I find that hopeful and satisfying.

One person told me that the most important thing for doing service outside of the group is to keep working our own program and attend our meetings. That exemplifies the AFG oxygen mask story where we need to put on our own oxygen mask first so that we can help those around us. I know that works for me. If I miss a meeting, my old patterns start circling like a shiver of sharks and before I know it, I'm reacting all over the place. So, I made sure to keep going to my meetings. When I did miss one, I doubled up on CAL, talked with an AFG friend, or attended another meeting.

The AFG booklet titled "*When I Got Busy I Got Better*", suggests that being busy will help my recovery. It certainly can. However, I check my motives first. Am I avoiding a personal issue that needs some AFG work, or do I have 'balloon hand' where I feel compelled to volunteer because "it's all up to me?" In either case, I really need to step back, take a sip of AFG oxygen, and work my personal program first.

What propelled me forward into service was talking about it with my service mentor, AFG friends, reading about service, attending the district and AIS meetings. I saw that just like in our groups, there is no judgment, a lot of encouragement, help when I ask for it, people with less experience, people with mad skills – yet we were all equal in AFG service.

The person who encouraged me to keep up with my home group while doing service said that service was 'taking our AFG program on the road.' I took that to mean that yes there will be challenges. And that conflicts might happen (being human and all), so we need our program with us. To practice these principles in all our affairs.

If you're interested in any level of AFG service, my suggestion is to gather information, assess your current interests and capabilities, meditate, pray, talk with an AFG sponsor, mentor, or friend. You will know when to say 'Yes' to service.

By Connie L.

D14 MEETING HIGHLIGHTS 7/14/2022

TREASURER – 1/1/22 beginning balance - \$1,529.86. YTD receipts - \$1068.30; YTD expenses - \$867.41. Billboard donations = \$771.00. D14 has \$230.75 in available funds after subtracting our \$1,500.00 ample reserve.

PUBLIC OUTREACH – Billboard donations received - \$771.00. We discussed what to do with any donations over the Billboard \$1000 cost. Loretta proposed putting excess donations in the general coffers, as D14 makes annual donations to the MO Area and WSO.

DAY IN SERVICE REPORT – Marge O, thanked everyone who worked on the MO Area Day in Service. She said there was depth to the presentations and that they were enjoyable. Time was spent educating members on service opportunities and reflecting on what it means to be in service. There were lighter moments too.

Members who attended the DIS commented favorably on the abundant, satisfying food offered, the large turnout, the enthusiasm of the participants and the excellence of the keynote speaker.

PICNIC REPORT – Marge expressed concern that most attendees were outside D14. She said we need to encourage more participation from D14 members.

Discussion about low picnic attendance: Early bad weather; competition from PRIDE events downtown and other social justice events that weekend. We did a good job of publicizing the picnic and some issues were outside the control of the picnic organizers. It was suggested that D14 add our annual events to the MO Area and St. Louis AIS calendars in January, allowing D14 and members to plan around the dates.

The picnic was close to breaking even this year, as attendees were

very generous. A 50/50 raffle, raffle baskets, and mail-in quilt raffle were proposed as future fundraisers. Discussion was held regarding asking groups to underwrite such items as beverages or chicken.

FALL FESTIVAL PLANNING – Marge will set up a committee meeting the week of July 18. A save-the-date flyer will be published before the next D14 meeting.

GROUP ISSUE DISCUSSION – Marge offered members color copies of the “Not Everyone Trapped by Alcohol” poster for distribution within the district.

WRITERS’ WORKSHOP – Marilyn M., MO Area Forum/Literature Coordinator, led the workshop regarding writing for *The Forum*, the monthly AFG WSO publication.

She encouraged members interested in submitting articles to review *The Forum* Writing Guideline (F-1) and the Guidelines for Submitting Photographs to *The Forum*. The writing guideline covers word count limits, topic ideas, regular features of the magazine, tips for success, and pitfalls to avoid. The guidelines include a form for submitting sharings. The photography guidelines cover appropriate subject matter, technical requirements, copyright issues, and ownership rights.

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WRITING FOR THE FORUM:
“Inspiration can come from anywhere but should reflect the writer’s personal experiences and avoid teaching or giving advice.”
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Marilynn encouraged writers to reflect, write, share, and submit, in that order. She provided some prompts to spur reflection and members were invited to practice writing during the workshop.

- Prompts included:
- While watering the garden, a butterfly landed on my hand. It reminded me...
 - I watch my dog sniffing and digging holes in my garden, always doing the same thing, and expecting different results. He is like I was before Al-Anon...
 - I never thought much about the 3 Obstacles to Success in Al-Anon, but the unity it gives us ...

Marilynn reminded members that inspiration can come from anywhere but should reflect the writer’s personal experiences and avoid teaching or giving advice.

After members shared their drafts, Marilyn encouraged participants to continue sharing their writings, especially with other members who have been published in *The Forum*. Marge O. and Loretta R. have been published and would be good sources for feedback.

Once submitted to *The Forum*, it may be months before the sharing or image appears, depending on the monthly topic of the magazine and what else is scheduled. The WSO staff ensures the final articles reflect WSO and grammar guidelines.

Members submitting sharings and photographs can decide whether to be credited by first name, last initial and home state, anonymously or through use of a pseudonym.

Marilynn noted that 3 articles from each issue of *The Forum* are posted on the WSO website, and members can reprint those articles. [Please include the Permission to Reprint line.]

The roots of the publication go back to 1951 when Lois W. wrote a newsletter as a friendly, monthly personal letter. It became a nationwide publication in 1954.

--Excerpts from District 14 Secretary, Hilda W.’s report

**NEXT MEETING
September 8, 2022**

AFG Tool Box

Live in the moment
and watch it unfold.

My recovery either begins
or ends with my
degree of willingness.

I'm not responsible for
fulfilling other peoples
expectations unless I had
a part in creating them.

TRADITION 8: Al-Anon Twelfth Step work should remain forever non-professional, but our service centers may employ special workers.

TRADITION 9: Our groups, as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.

CONCEPT 8: The Board of Trustees delegates full authority for routine management of Al-Anon Headquarters to its executive committees.

CONCEPT 9: Good personal leadership at all service levels is a necessity. In the field of world service, the Board of Trustees assumes the primary leadership.

Ledger Balance	
Starting Balance as of 1/1/2022	1,529.86
D14 Receipts	1,093.29
STL Billboard Donations	791.00
D14 FF Quilt Raffle donations	-
Expenses	(882.40)
Ending Checking Balance	2,531.75
Less Future Expenses	(150.00)
Less STL Billboard Donations	(791.00)
Available Checking Balance as of 8/15/2022	1,590.75
Ample Reserve Goal \$1500	1,500.00
Less Available Checking Balance	(1,590.75)
AVAILABLE FUNDS (w/o Ample Reserve) 8/15/22	90.75

Please Mail 7th Tradition donations to:
Connie Lakey, 5702 Chippewa St., St. Louis, MO 63109
Please make checks payable to: MO District 14 AFG

D14 STL Metro Billboard Project



Please Mail D14 Billboard Campaign donations to:
Connie Lakey, 5702 Chippewa St., St. Louis, MO 63109

Make checks payable to: MO District 14 AFG
Please write 'Billboard' on Memo Line

JUNE PICNIC DONATIONS

We had a small and generous group at our June Picnic in Tower Grove Park. With the quilt raffle, jewelry sales and 7th Tradition donations, we came close to breaking even. Although, that wasn't our goal, it certainly helped. Thanks for sharing your abundance. Thanks for attending and supporting our speakers and their service to Al-Anon.

We also received several pledges for the Billboard project which moved us really close to our \$1000 goal. Any amount collected over the goal amount will be placed in our general coffers and donated to AFG service arms.

We hope to see you at our October Fall Festival for fellowship, fun, and some good food!

FUN in Recovery?
Go to a fair / Have a BBQ / Pick berries / Play golf
See a movie / See a play / Visit the zoo

"Having fun is part of my recovery ODAT"
Hope for Today, page 25

JOY as a Discipline
"I've often heard that happiness is an inside job, and, much of the time, I can be as happy as I decide to be."
Courage to Change, page 212

2022 Area AFG Events

Compiled from the MO Area AFG and STL AIS websites - dates and times subject to change so please verify info before attending an event. MO Area website: www.missouri-al-anon.org and STL AIS website: www.stl-al-anon.org. Check websites for flyers. CALENDAR KEY: MO Area – MOA // STL AIS – AIS [revised 8/18/2022]

PLEASE CHECK THE MISSOURI AREA & STL AIS CALENDARS FOR UPDATES AND CANCELLATIONS

AUG 21, Sun, 3-5pm: D13 Ice Cream Social – Keeping Our Cool With Serenity. Des Peres Park Pavilion, 12312 Manchester, Manchester, MO 63011. Speakers: AFG, Trudy M; AA, Gene M. D13 providing ice cream & bottled water. Bring lawn chair. Basket raffle. **MOA**

AUG 27, Sat, 9am-4pm: MO Area World Service Committee (AWSC). HYBRID. Best Western Capital Inn, 1937 Christy Dr, Jefferson City, MO 65101. **MOA** Registration Link: <https://forms.gle/yRNZ25doECSVTDck7>

AUG 28, Sun, 9am-3pm: Alateen Super Sunday – In Person Only (Area Alateen Business Meeting). Only teens & AMIAS may attend. Same location as AWSC. **MOA**

SEPT 8, Thurs, 6:30-8:00pm – D14 Business Meeting. Hybrid or Zoom Only – watch for updates. KBDM – Knowledge Based Decision Making Workshop led by **D14 Alternate DR, Meagan M.** Redeemer Evangelical Church, 6450 S Kingshighway, St. Louis, MO 63116. Contact Marge O. at modistrict14dr@gmail.com. **MOA**

SEPT 18, Sun, 11am-??: AA Central Services Picnic with AFG participation. Deer Creek Park (Rocket Park), 3200 Laclede Station Rd, Maplewood, MO 63143. 11am – fellowship, 12pm – lunch, 1pm speakers. Antique cars and motorcycles. Speakers: Margaret O – AFG; Gentleman – AA. Drinks, hot dogs & hamburgers provided. Please bring dessert or side dish to share: A-M Dessert, N-Z Side Dish. **AIS**

SEPT 23-25, Fri-Sat: 54th Annual MO Al-Anon/Alateen Hybrid Convention with AA Participation. New Horizons, New You in 2022. In-Person location – 678 Old Kinderhook Dr, Camdenton, MO 65020. See flyer for details & registration. **MOA**

OCT 1, Sat, 1-4pm: D10 Picnic – Tena W. Duchesne Park, 5 Browser Ln, Florissant, MO 63031. Bring own food & drinks. **MOA**

OCT 8, Sat, 11am-1pm: D15 Holiday Workshop: Conflict Resolution. Emmenegger Nature Park, 11991 Stonewood Dr, Kirkwood, MO 63122. Al-Anon speaker, Costume Contest, Attendance Prizes. **MOA**
?? Email panel60area31dist15@gmail.com

OCT 15, Sat. 1-4pm: D25 Serenity Walk. Cuivre River State Park Stone Shelter, 678 State Route 147, Troy, MO 63379. 1 ½ mile walk on Frenchman’s Bluff Trail – relatively easy to hike. S’mores and meeting by the fire after the hike. **MOA**

D14 Fall Festival OCT 9, Sun, 12-4pm

St. John the Baptist Catholic Church Parish Hall
4200 Delor, St. Louis, MO 63116.

*Enhancing Our Recovery
through Abundance, Unity,
and Understanding.*

Off-street parking in rear. Speakers: Al-Anon – Chris G/
AA – Chuck S. CAL attendance prizes, jewelry table,
basket raffle, quilt raffle. D14 providing pasta entrees,
water, and coffee. **MOA/AIS**

NOV 5-6, Sat-Sun: MO Area Al-Anon/Alateen November Panel 63 Election Assembly – Hybrid. Old Kinderhook Golf Resort, 678 Old Kinderhook Dr, Camdenton, MO 65020. See flyer for details & registration. **MOA**

NOV 10, Thurs, 6:30-8:00pm – D14 Business Meeting. Hybrid or Zoom Only – watch for updates. Redeemer Evangelical Church, 6450 S Kingshighway, St. Louis, MO 63116. Contact Marge O. at modistrict14dr@gmail.com.

2022 WSC Theme:
*Enhancing Our
Recovery through
Abundance, Unity,
and Understanding.*