



Page 1

Share Your Stories & Group News

The newsletter can bring a world of local information your way. Send in your stories & news from your groups! Email the Newsletter Coordinator at district5news@ncbermudaafg.org You can find & print this newsletter at www.charlottealanon.org. Spread the word! - KC, Newsletter Coordinator

District News

* The District Literature Office is open from 10-2 Tuesdays – Fridays, and the 2nd Saturday of the month.

* Volunteers are needed for the AlAnon booth at the N.C. School Counselors Conference. It will be held Wednesday November 8th through Friday, November 10th, at Embassy Suites by Hilton, Charlotte Concord Golf Resort & Spa, 5400 John Q. Hammons Dr. NW, Concord, NC. 28027. Contact Vita to volunteer. district5dr@gmail.com 704.798.4105.

* The district is looking to start an AlAnon Meeting at UNCC. We now have a public outreach card containing our District's QR Code to place throughout the Campus. The next step is getting members together to help launch the meeting. Here are the available days & times:

Mondays, 4-5 pm

Thursdays, 1:30-2:30pm
Thursdays, 4-5 pm

Please let me know if you have any interest in serving. It is a wonderful opportunity to reach young adults suffering from our shared disease. - Debbie B, at (704) 737-3677 or d5.alateen@ncbermudaafg.org.

Alateen News

Tell all parents and grandparents in your groups to bring their Teens and Teens' Friends. The only way that Alateens can get to meetings is if Alanons or AA's drive them! Try 6 meetings! All kids from 11-19 are welcome!

1. Serenity Alateen AFG is Meeting on a New Schedule!!!
8-9pm on the First Friday of Each Month

The next meeting is Friday September 1, 2023

2. KISS Alateen AFG Continues to Meet
8-9pm Every Monday

3. Teens Helping Teens At The Lake Alateen AFG Continues to Meet
6:30-7:30pm Every Monday

We can offer more days and

locations as Alateen interest demands.

We'll also need a few more Alanon members to host these meetings. Contact District 5 Alateen Coordinator Debbie B at 704-737-3677 or d5.alateen@ncbermudaafg.org for more details.

What a Rewarding Service Opportunity!!! See you soon!, Deb

AMIAS Needed

We need two Alanon Members Involved in Alateen Service (AMIAS) attending and hosting each Alateen meeting. The Teens run the meetings. The following requirements apply to Alateen members and Al-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service (AMIAS).

1. Every Al-Anon member involved with Alateen service must:
 - a. be an Al-Anon member regularly attending Al-Anon meetings (an average of 4 meetings per month).



Page 2

- b. be at least 21 years old.
 - c. have at least two years in Al-Anon in addition to any time spent in Alateen.
 - d. not have been convicted of a felony, and not have been charged with child abuse or any other inappropriate sexual behavior, and not have demonstrated emotional problems which could result in harm to Alateen members.
2. There must be at least one Alateen sponsor at every Alateen meeting.
3. Any covert or overt sexual interaction between any adult and any Alateen member is prohibited.
4. Conduct contrary to applicable laws is prohibited.
5. The North Carolina Alateen Medical Information and Travel Authorization Form is required whenever an Alateen member is transported to an Alateen meeting or an Al-Anon/Alateen function.
6. Any Al-Anon member, prior to being certified to be of service to Alateens, must complete the required training on the North Carolina/Bermuda AFG, Inc. Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements. Annual completion of this

course of training is required to maintain AMIAS status.

- 7. Receive a satisfactory result from an annual background check at no cost to the applicant.

Powerlessness

When I arrived in Alanon, the first step filled me with fear. I'm powerless! Growing up with a violent alcoholic father, powerlessness meant uncertainty and despair, along with verbal, emotional and sexual abuse. I had no choice then. Why, as an adult, would I choose to embrace powerlessness, the very thing that made my childhood chaotic and unmanageable?

Thankfully, my HP sent gentle, patient Alanon members to lovingly lead the way to and through Step 1. I kept showing up. They kept showing up. Over time my understanding of powerlessness matured. The program literature and the promises it contained were lived out in lives of those in the rooms. Their shares helped clear away the cobwebs of assumption, worry, projecting and fantasizing that I once thought were reality.

I began to see powerlessness in a new light. Like a child who starts

bicycling without training wheels, life was wobbly at first, but letting go of the illusion of power (since that's all it is, an illusion) freed me up to see things as they actually were. I'm powerless over people, places, things and above all, this disease.

Gradually, I started to see the power I did have over myself. Choices, tools, nature's beauty and even some hope were mine. I'm powerless but not over everything. Not so bad. Maybe even good.

Now the first step pours over me like warm sunshine. Relief! Freedom! When I work my program with diligence, the first step feels like fists full of glittery truth that I toss left and right as I walk through life. Like Oprah bestowing gifts to everyone. In my spirit, I see the glitter fly, "I'm powerless over YOU, my angry child!" "I'm powerless over YOU, my rude coworker!" And the crazy driver who cut me off, the gossipy neighbor, the irritable spouse, EVERYONE gets a shower of powerlessness glitter!

Better yet, everyone is free to handle what's theirs, and me what's mine. This silly mental image has served me well. My family would probably say it's served them too. I didn't cause, can't control and can't cure alcoholism and other difficulties in



Page 3

their lives but I sure could complicate things by jumping in to “help”. A sponsor once told me that I could only “help” if I first spoke out loud what my actions were saying. “I believe you are unintelligent, weak and incapable. So, stand aside while I handle things and steal your dignity.” I would NEVER say that to someone I love, but my actions sometimes have.

Now I shower them in the glitter of my powerlessness along with affirmations of their own capability and my faith in them. Then I get about the business of my own selfcare, boundaries, joy and play, strengthened by my HP’s assured dignity. From fear to acceptance to celebration of powerlessness. This useful continuum of spiritual fitness keeps my vision clear. If I drift back toward mere acceptance or even fear, I know my spiritual condition needs some maintenance. I don’t have time to go backward. The hand of Alanon and Alateen must always be there. Let it begin with me and a fist full of glittery freedom.
- Elaine H.

**Letter from our
District Rep**

Greetings District 5 AlAnon Family,

I have always loved the letter A. It represented a standard of success, perfection, ability, capability, surpassed only by an A+. Growing up, it was what I lived for academically. Outside of school, I looked for that “A” of approval from Mom and Dad, Gran and Gramps, Aunts and Uncles, brothers and how can I forget all those cousins. For me, to be the very best, not only in school, but to grab onto that highflying “A” in all my relationships, meant I was looked upon with awe and admiration!!! That is exactly what love meant to me, it was a distortion, based on the fickle feelings and thoughts of other human beings. Along the way, I lost who I am, in trying to please others, to be what I thought they wanted me to be, in order to feel loved.

When AlAnon’s “Three As” Awareness, Acceptance, and Action entered my world, curiosity and wonder was tweaked. Little did I know these A’s would change the trajectory of my life. My first awareness began with a question. Why were my loved ones so unhappy when I was bending over backwards to make them happy? I thought I had put the very best ingredients in making the happy cake. No amount of sweet smelling scented candles, 5 star meals could stop arguments,

grouchy moods, bad tempers, and the endless consumption of alcohol. I stayed with this question for a very long time, years in fact, until I began to Accept, among other things, that I was attached to a self sacrificing, delusionary, demanding, self defined fixit god, whose love was filled with guilt, blame and shame. I was spent trying and the grade “A” brain had run out of ideas. Alcoholism had won many battles; AlAnon won the war. Slowly, like a gentle breeze, a soft whisper, I began to enter the world of my Higher Power (Steps 2 and 3). The HP that I open my heart to is love that is goodness itself, kindness itself, caring itself, a love that does not hurt. A love that always wills the good of another. A relationship of trust develops on my part as HP reaches deep into my heart and mind in ways that I, a very fragile and limited human, never could, and untangles the knots that have twisted my thought process. Today, life is not so serious and heavy. Why??? I’m not carrying the burdens of my loved ones in worry and fear, rather I’m on my knees giving their burdens to HP and doing my small, tiny part in giving myself and everyone around the dignity of living their lives the way they choose, even if that choice is so very painful to watch.



Page 4

My Action begins whenever I hesitantly and slowly, pivot my big toe then my foot away from finding solutions for my loved ones' problems and walk toward the softness of HP's infinitesimal love. Yours in Service, Vita

Denial

When I got into Al-Anon recovery, I knew something was wrong in my life, and I couldn't fix it by myself. My life had become unmanageable. Even though I was well aware of the alcoholics in my family, (father, two older brothers, grandfather) I dated in high school and beyond, guys with addiction problems. They were endearing, reminding me of my dad and brothers. Alcoholics are likable people. I was never one to say, "I'll never marry an alcoholic, because I can spot one". Instead, I tried to just give in to what I thought was the inevitable, dating alcoholics until I found the 'right' one.

One alcoholic boyfriend, whom I had broken up with to date my now husband - invited me over so he could say goodbye when I was about to move out of state. In my caretaking persona, I felt so sorry for him that I agreed. He knew that his drinking was an issue for me. He proceeded to get drunker and drunker throughout the evening without me

ever seeing him drink. He must have had bottles stashed all over the house. Suddenly, I had a moment of clarity, and left. Looking back years later, I realize that I wasn't in denial of the alcoholism in the people I was choosing, but I was in denial of the effect that it was having on my life. Early on in recovery, I heard a saying that resonated with me: "It wasn't as bad as I think it was, but it wasn't as good either".

Through my denial, I had developed black or white thinking. When I thought of the alcoholism in our family, it was either a horrible, rage filled drunken mess, or...it was no big deal. It was neither. Denial helped me cope. I know now that there's a middle ground.

Al-Anon doesn't take away life's bumps in the road, it just helps me navigate them.

Through my Al-Anon program, denial is something that I must keep in check. It doesn't serve the same purpose it used to. I don't need it in the same way anymore. It can keep me from experiencing life to its fullest. It can keep me from moving forward and taking action.

Considering that denial could play a part in my decision making process and talking it over with someone

helps me gain clarity. - Pam D.

Fall Assembly

ASSEMBLIES ARE ABOUT BUSINESS. The Group Representatives get together twice a year and bring their Group's voice to the Area level. It is a time to vote on important issues; for example, at the Spring Assembly Group Representatives approved the admission of Electronic Only Groups into the Area. It is also a time to get to know other Group Representatives, talk about issues, learn how to resolve differences, listen to differing opinions, practice respect and courtesy during hotly contested moments etc. A lot of work, thought and preparation is involved to put an Assembly together.

This year District 5 is hosting the 2023 Fall Assembly. It will be held on November 3-4 at Saint Matthew Catholic Church, home to our Annual Winter Roundup. While Saturday the 4th is all business, Friday evening is our time to welcome, greet and bring that special Queen City hospitality and vibrancy to all visiting members. We need your help to make Friday night shine.

Would you please join the Committee and bring your creativity and ideas? We had one meeting on August 21st. Does free dinner, bingo, fellowship and a recovery speaker sound good to you??? What if we threw in some dinner music??? Please contact me at



Page 5

district5dr@gmail.com and I will send you the zoom link for the next meeting. Vita, District Representative-District 5

Winter RoundUP 2024

Winter RoundUP 2024 is scheduled for **Saturday, March 9th, 2024** at St. Matthew's Catholic Church, 8015 Ballantyne Commons Parkway, Charlotte, NC.

We are blessed to have Kitt M. as Chairperson. Please support the District's 46th RoundUp by asking members of your groups to serve on the Winter RoundUP Committee. Here are some of the ways to participate on the Committee:

- Ideas for a 2024 RoundUp Theme
- Lead a Workshop
- Put together the table decorations and setup
- Head the Silent Auction and coordinate the Raffle
- Set up the computer, camera and microphone
- Head Registration
- Chair the zoom meetings/ lead a zoom workshop

Any interested members contact Kitt at: authentikitt@gmail.com

A Little Time For Myself

It was 2014 when Al-Anon's World Service Organization made a motion to develop a new daily reader designed to capture the spirit of inclusion and diversity we, as a Fellowship, embrace today.

The seed planted then has blossomed into our newest book *A Little Time for Myself-A Collection of Al-Anon Personal Experiences (B-34)*. To add perspective, Al-Anon's *Hope for Today* was published in 2002.

A Little Time for Myself is different from Al-Anon's previous daily readers in that each day's quote is no longer drawn from spiritual, philosophical or literary icons of the past or present or from cultural and biblical references. *All 366 pages of the book include a daily quote exclusively from Al-Anon's own Conference Approved Literature*. I find this approach refreshing and commend WSO for relying on the wonderful wisdom and strength found in Al-Anon publications from years past.

Another addition to *A Little Time for Myself* is a Question of the Day, apparently offering the reader a daily "spot check" on their own recovery. Many of these questions seemingly "pave the way" for a possible Al-Anon Group discussion topic.

"Journaling" appears as a topic in three of the pages. Twelve pages are devoted to "Being Human." Seven pages reflect on the

hazards of "Dwelling in the Past." "Self-Worth" is studied in four of the pages, while "Respond not React" is covered in five pages of the book.

What I have found in reading *A Little Time for Myself* is that the personal experiences shared in these pages are inspiring. They seem to transcend all boundaries and limitations. The shares convey, most clearly, that experience, strength and hope are available to all who seek the help offered in the wonderful forum of self-care which is Al-Anon. The thoughts found in the readings of *A Little Time for Myself* remind us though the disease of alcoholism can be a constant in our lives, it need not control, ruin or diminish our very essence. We are encouraged to stand tall in spite of our circumstances. As the times and culture continue to evolve, this new daily reader invites us to strengthen our resolve to maintain, cope and adapt to our varied situations as the future unfolds. *A Little Time for Myself* serves as a reminder that each of us in the Al-Anon Fellowship are the collective colorful threads whose lives and shared experience combine to create the Beautiful Tapestry which is Our Recovery.

-Jim H.

In Memorium

Janet D. passed away July 29th.
Home Group: Twelve Step Study AFG.



Page 6

Treasurer's Report

The District ended June 2023 with sufficient funds to maintain our prudent reserves and address future operational needs. Through June, donations were slightly better than Budget. Book sales net of cost were about \$4,500 above budget, bearing in mind this is misleading as books that are sold need to be replaced and there is a cost for doing that. Book sales will continue to improve as we begin selling the new Daily Reader.
- King, District 5 Treasurer

The space in between (Part I)

At the recent Winter Round Up, someone mentioned Michelangelo's painting *The Creation of Adam* on the Sistine Chapel ceiling as a symbol of man's relationship with God. The most well-known part of that painting is God's and Adam's fingers coming together as God reaching his hand out to Adam to give Adam life and wisdom. But the two hands don't touch, leaving a space in between God and Adam. Michelangelo destroyed most of his

notes before he died so his intent for this small gap is lost. It's possible that Michelangelo is questioning his own relationship with God. It's very likely that it was not meant for the common viewer of that time as the space is only a three-quarters of an inch while the viewing distance to the Chapel floor is over sixty feet. With modern technology, we can see that space easily and ask ourselves what that gap means for us. Are God's and my fingers in the process of coming together or separating? Or is that space in a state of flux, forever moving back and forth like my own faith? Perhaps like the painting itself, that gap is forever fixed because I lack the faith to touch God?

The space in between (Part II)

For a long time, I've wondered why AA gets all the attention in movies and television while Al-Anon is seldom mentioned. I think it's because Alcoholics make for great theater. They are the drunken shouts; the flying objects of rage; the crashes from the impacts of a drunk driver's car; the loud sirens of ambulances; or the bright flashing lights of patrol cars. That excitement sells tickets and ads. What's not shown are the suffering families and friends cowering in the

corner; quietly explaining to the police what happened; the soft prayers next to hospital beds; or the silent mourning at funerals. Al-Anoners, whether swept up in the wake of the alcoholic's antics or enjoying the serenity of Al-Anon recovery, are boring to watch. There is no drama here.

(Please note this isn't a knock on alcoholics but a criticism of Hollywood.)

In the story of alcoholism, the alcoholics make up the sound and actions while we make up the pauses. We, the pauses in between, while not as obvious, are equally important.

The space in between (Part III)

Someone pointed out that the most important space on a tombstone isn't the date when the person was born or when he/she died. It's that dash between those two dates. That dash represents how that person lived.

- King



Page 7

18th Anniversary

The Tuesday Night Men's group celebrated its 18th anniversary on July 18 and had 101 people attend! That's about equal to the anniversary celebrations held prior to Covid.

Alanon members, AA friends and others came to Good Shepherd Church near Carowinds for a potluck dinner followed by a meeting and guest speaker Don F.

Covid canceled in-person anniversary events in 2020 and 2021, but the Alanon group held a celebration last year for active members and had about 30 attend.