

SCV-AFG Intergroup Newsletter

DISTRICT MEETINGS

District 20 Meeting

Third Wednesday of odd numbered months, 7:00-9:00 pm.
Zoom ID: 816 8969 3953
Passcode: 498170.

District 21 Meeting

First Wednesday of all months, 7:00–8:00 pm.
Zoom ID: 632 122 5845
Passcode: D21

District 22 Meeting

Third Wednesday of odd numbered months, 7:00–8:30 pm.
Zoom ID: 958 118 1754
Passcode: district 22

INTERGROUP MEETINGS

Second Tuesday of even numbered months: next meets on April 11, 7:00–8:30 pm. Zoom ID: 829 3562 4652
Passcode: 999

CONTACT INFORMATION

Santa Clara Valley
Al-Anon Family Groups
1 West Campbell Avenue
Room Q82, Campbell CA
95008
Phone: 408-379-9375 Email: info.scvafg@gmail.com



In-Person Meetings Are Opening Up Again!

All over the Santa Clara Valley, In-Person meetings are re-opening. Some have let go of their “Zoom Space” altogether, and are slowly increasing their In-Person attendance. Some have gone “Hybrid,” keeping the virtual Zoom Space and combining it with the physical room. Some opted to go back to the physical room only. Sadly, some closed down. There’s no right or wrong. Part of the genius of Al-Anon is that each group has the autonomy to decide what’s best for it.

Masking and social distancing protocols vary group to group, but most meetings leave it to the members. Mask if your circumstances warrant it, don’t if they don’t, keeping in mind the welfare of others.

One of the surprises of re-opening has been how dated and out of touch our meeting scripts had become. We had to quickly adapt them to the virtual Zoom Space back in the day, now we have to reverse-engineer them to fit the In-Person format again. This gave us an opportunity to do an inventory of how we work our program, and we are benefitting from it.

“Paths to Recovery” on Saturday morning at 10 am is a good example of how the pandemic changed us and is keeping us on our toes. The group decided to go hybrid. Back at their In-Person venue, they opened up pre-pandemic supplies and CAL (Conference Approved Literature), dusted everything off, and got to work. A tech-savvy member donated a monitor to set up in the room, others brought laptops to run the Zoom Space of the meeting. With humor, patience, and time, all of the set-up glitches were overcome. The



AI-Anon: Onboard with Venmo!

Thinking back to the start of the pandemic, we had a lot of adjustments to make—and fast! Some adjustments were a nuisance, to be endured until the quarantine was over. Others actually moved us and AI-Anon forward, streamlining our meeting functions and connections with each other. The latter is how we have come to understand Venmo.

Venmo enabled us to make Seventh Tradition donations electronically. We could take out our plastic credit/debit cards, swipe them, and voila! Off it went to Intergroup. The QR code below is all you need to speed your donation to Intergroup. Give it a try!



meeting took off! At first, about five people came to the in-person meeting, with the majority staying in the Zoom space.

Now in mid-March, twenty-five to thirty people are regularly attending the in-person meeting, and the Zoom Space is still going strong, the two making a total of fifty-something. Plans to start a Newcomers Meeting are in the works. Come see for yourself, and take away some ideas on how to make it work for your meetings!

What IS Conference Approved Literature?

Alcoholics Anonymous is the original recovery program. AI-Anon is the authorized spin off that program. AI-Anon was created to address the family’s side of the disease of alcoholism. The two programs stay faithful to their founding members’ visions.

Over the years, other recovery programs have spun off of A. A., disengaging from it and offering modified versions of “recovery.” With different interpretations of what effective and successful recovery is, they go outside and beyond the A. A. founders’ vision, modifying it to suit. But none are as effective as the original AA and AI-Anon.

That is where Conference Approved Literature comes in. “CAL,” as we call it, is edited and reviewed by trusted servants to stay true to our founders’ guidelines. It is the only literature we provide to our members. This means that members can be confident in our CAL literature. With CAL, we are always guided by our Higher Power, and it always stays true to the Steps, Traditions and Concepts we live by.



Have You Taken the Bookstore Survey?

Al-Anon has supported a bricks-and-mortar bookstore since its early days in Santa Clara Valley. In part due to the dramatic impact our finances took from the pandemic, members question whether this presence is necessary. Could we provide members with CAL (Conference Approved Literature) without the expense of a physical bookstore in the community? How can we figure this out?

To address this, we put together a Thought Force. The Thought Force created a Survey to poll our members. It asks questions like: "Did you know Al-Anon has a walk-in bookstore in Camp-bell?" And, "What Al-Anon literature (if any) do you purchase: print or electronic?" This was followed by "Are you willing to be a volunteer bookseller for a few hours a month?" And more!

The Survey is circulation now! Keep an eye out for it, take it, and return it to us. If it doesn't arrive in your email, it's on our website: scv-afg.org, right there on the front page. You can't miss it. We need your input to know how to proceed with our bookstore!



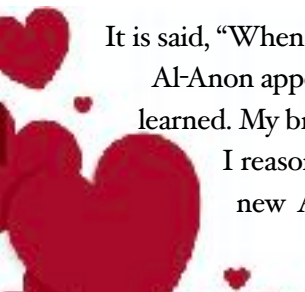
"What the brain does not know, the eye cannot see."

I heard this said recently, but I'm not sure it was in the rooms of recovery. But it could have been. It's an intriguing statement. I had to think about it. It sank in slowly, and I began to get it. It told me so much about my experience of the disease of alcoholism.

My family was not directly affected by the disease of alcoholism, so my brain did not know it. Direct experience of the disease came later for me, and I owe much to Al-Anon for helping me find recovery from it. But the disease was all around me in the neighborhood I grew up in, I just didn't know it, and I didn't recognize it. My eye could not see what my brain did not know.

Looking back, with the advantages that come from listening and learning in the rooms of recovery. I realize now that several of those long-ago neighbors suffered from the disease. Back in those baby boom years, almost every family in the neighborhood had kids. We were in and out of each other's homes all the time. We saw from a kid's eye view how every family functioned. If it was different from our family, it was just different. Cause and effect were not considered.

My father worked at a regular office job, like many of the other fathers. At least, that's what I thought all fathers did. Mothers mostly did not work outside their homes: that was yet to come. Fathers mowed their lawns on Saturdays, took their families to church on Sundays, and most of them grew tomatoes in their back yards. But our neighbor across the street worked irregular jobs, spent a lot of time on the couch in his darkened living room, watching baseball and drinking beer. He had been a professional ball player, but had never advanced to the majors. His lawn was never mowed. In time, his son took over mowing the lawn, and got a paper route. The subject of alcoholism never came up—it was before Al-Anon came into being, and Alcoholics Anonymous was young.



It is said, "When the student is ready, the teacher will appear."

Al-Anon appeared for me when I was ready. I listened and learned. My brain began to know, and my eye began to see.

I reasoned my experiences out with my sponsor and new Al-Anon friends, and have never looked back.

—Nancy B



The Secret of Recovery

The only way to hold on to recovery is by giving it away! The power of this program to heal the families and friends still suffering from the effects of Alcoholism is within your capability to facilitate. You can give it away by volunteering your time, talent, and treasure. There are many ways to do this.

- Stay connected
- Go to several meetings a week
- Get a Sponsor
- Work the Steps
- Volunteer for service in your home group
- Look for opportunities to serve beyond your group

You will find opportunities to give your recovery to others while building on your own. So give it away!



Tradition Four

“Each group should be autonomous, except in matters affecting another group or Al-Anon or AA as a whole.”

Tradition four is about health and freedom in our groups. Really? When I started in Al-Anon I could not see that or understand it. Tradition four gives each meeting the power and freedom to define what is best for the needs of the group. Decisions are made by the group and for the group and for what is best for the group.

How does this apply to me and my life? Tradition four reminds me that I have autonomy and freedom. But I do not have to do it alone. I have program friends and even better, a sponsor. I can make choices that work for my life: but I can check in and bounce ideas, thoughts, and get support in making those choices. I know the choices are mine and I know these avenues of support are not there to give me advice. These special people will help me by sharing their experience, strength and hope and help me find what works best for me, and my success. This tradition gives me the freedom and reminds me that I am not alone, ever. My higher power is always with me, and my sponsor and program friends help me figure out what is best for me in my life.

There is so much comfort in not being alone anymore. I am not alone in my choices; I am not alone in my pain. Yes, the choices are mine alone, but I am not alone. —C. J., *Tackling the Twelve Traditions, One at a Time*



What Are Your Thoughts on Recovery ?



Al-Anon members find recovery in many ways, including thorough sharing at meetings, working with a sponsor, becoming a sponsor, volunteering for service in meetings and beyond, --and journaling,

Journaling. . .Have you thought that others might benefit from your journal writings? Do you have some insights that others might want to hear? If so, consider sending something you've written in to this newsletter. We want to include you in this newsletter! Not just as readers, but as contributors too! You all are the voices of Al-Anon, and we want to hear you!



Secrets

“To speak truth about family can feel like a betrayal. Relatives are bound by bloodlines, but also by secrets and lies. And whether spoken or not, families are expected to guard those secrets, accept those lies, and toe the line. It can only be exponentially worse when that family is also a business and institution which calls itself ‘The Firm’ ”

—Diana, Princess of Wales

An Afternoon at the Al-Anon Bookstore

The Al-Anon Bookstore (and Intergroup’s Office) in Campbell Community Center is a welcoming place! Staffed by volunteers, the bookstore sells CAL (Conference Approved Literature) for less than the purchase price WSO charges! (WSO is Al-Anon’s national literature distribution service). Hours are 1-3 Monday, 4-6 Wednesday, 3-5 Thursday, and 11-1 Saturday. It’s best to call 408-379-9375 before coming—just to be sure someone is there.

As volunteers step up to this service, and demand increases, more days and hours are planned. Check the website at scv-afg.org to find out more about pre-ordering before you come to the bookstore. If you pre-order, your order will be waiting for you when you come in to the Bookstore. We do not currently offer shipping service.

Last week, the Bookstore was busy during the two-hour Wednesday afternoon volunteer shift. Two newcomers came in to check it out and purchase some of our favorite titles, including *Paths to Recovery*, and *Courage to Change*. One was a new Bookstore volunteer, eager to look around and get her bearings before doing her first shift. Intergroup Chairperson Penny was there, taking care of Intergroup business, and our conversation about recovery (what else?) was interesting. We all shared insights and stories about what the program means to us. We shelled some new titles, advised the newcomers on literature they might be interested in, recycled literature that came in from a disbanded group, (some of it could have been thirty years old from the look of it), updated the signage on the entrance to the room, and called it a day. That’s what being a bookstore volunteer is about! You are welcome to join us!

Serving as a bookstore volunteer is a rewarding form of service. Many of the people who come in are newcomers who need advice on which



titles and which pamphlets they would most benefit by reading, and which meetings they might benefit from attending. All of this information is at the tips of the nimble fingers of our volunteers. What a service they provide to the newcomer searching for answers and a way out of their distress! It's the personal connection that works here.

The New Website is Coming!

A couple of Saturdays ago, many District Website Coordinators and their committee members met on Zoom to view the new NCWSA website prototype. It was an excellent presentation! Soon the new NCWSA website will be a reality, and our Intergroup intends to be part of it. Here's a bit of history, and how this all played out.:

Over three years ago, before the pandemic, Intergroup and its Service Board faced the reality that we needed a new website. Ours was dated: it no longer met our needs and aspirations for Intergroup. A committee was formed to address this. It turned out to be a convoluted process, but the committee persevered with support from Intergroup. We realized that we needed a professional website developer. The process of finding one got underway. Help and recommendations from our Trusted Servants, led us to one. Unfortunately, the working relationship with this developer stalled, and we had to terminate it. Back to square one, we knew a lot more about what we wanted, and didn't want.

We interviewed more website developers, narrowing the field down to a few finalists. Then we learned that NCWSA was going through the same process of revising their website, and they were ahead of us in the process. Not only that, one of our top finalists was their final choice! We were on the right track!

But—there's more: NCWSA was seeking to partner with the Districts and Intergroup to share its template for a new website —at no cost! All could use the new NCWSA template, populating it with their own content. The only added costs would be for custom elements that a



District might need for their individual website.

We're now working out the details on this partnership. The new NCWSA website will be up and running very soon, and the scv-afg.org website will follow. Three years, many twists and turns, now we're almost there!

Stay tuned!

—Nancy B



**Experience, Strength, and
Hope, Santa Clara Valley
Al-Anon Open Speakers Meeting
and Introduction to Al-Anon***

**Friday, Apr. 28, 2023
7:00 PM – 8:30 PM PST**



**Immanuel Lutheran Church
14103 Saratoga Avenue
Saratoga, CA 95070**



GUEST SPEAKERS



Kim C.
Fremont, CA
Al-Anon

Rosanna H.
Hayward, CA
Al-Anon



In-person or join us on Zoom:

Link: <https://uso2web.zoom.us/j/81818395143?pwd=Zmt4WnBjNHJORmNYY2VhQTtTajA2Zz09>

Meeting ID: 818 1839 5143

Passcode: 573692

Dial: +1 669 900 6833

**This is an OPEN Al-Anon meeting, open to all interested in learning more
about Al-Anon.*

Next Speaker Meeting is September 29th, 2023