

SCV-AFG Intergroup Newsletter

DISTRICT MEETINGS

District 20 Meeting

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

INTERGROUP MEETING

Second Tuesday of even months, 7:00-9:00 pm.
February, April, June, August, October, December.
Zoom ID: 829 3562 4652
Passcode: 999

CONTACT INFORMATION

Santa Clara Valley
Al-Anon Family Groups
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Room Q82, Campbell CA
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Website:
<http://www.scv-afg.org>

The Al-Anon International Convention



[Click on this image for a moving experience!](#)

Hello Trusted Servants!

I was fortunate to attend the Al-Anon Eighth International Convention this year in Albuquerque, New Mexico from June 29 to July 2, 2023. This Convention has taken place every five years since 1990, when Al-Anon separated from AA to hold its own separate International Convention. Our last International Convention was in Baltimore in 2018, and in Vancouver in 2013. Of over 4,500 attendees this year from around the world, about 100 were from Northern California. It was a beautiful experience! I am so grateful for Al-Anon and my experience of the Convention.

Thursday, June 29 was the “Day of Connecting,” a day to celebrate Service in Al-Anon. All sessions were geared towards increasing awareness and understanding of the importance of service and how the Al-Anon service structure works. An important take-away for me: service and recovery are not separate: they are intimately intertwined, and go hand-in-hand. I was reminded of the value of understanding the service structure of Al-Anon. If you haven’t seen the new Service Structure, check it out in the Service Manual. (<https://al-anon.org/pdf/WSC-Structure-Graphic-11x17.pdf>)



Our Delegation had fun at the Language of Love Parade! The California poppies showed up in full bloom, and Beekeeper Penny joined Redwood Tree Patricia to greet the folks back home! And that VW Microbus from the 60's hit the spot!

For me, Al-Anon service is a safe place to practice the Traditions and Concepts. It is very necessary for me to have a Service Sponsor, someone I can talk to about a particular aspect of service, and how I can use the Program to help move me forward through a particular issue. For me, I also need to practice good self-care to continue to serve. It's not easy. Higher Power is everything.

Thursday afternoon we met with most of the California North members for a group photo in front of the convention's Al-Anon sign! There was a "Party in the Plaza" that evening with music and food.

On Friday was the "Language of Love Parade!" The Parade recognized the sixty-eight Areas in the World Service Conference structure, as well as International structures from around the world. This was a chance to represent your state or country walking together through the Convention Hall. About 500 Al-Anon members participated. Many parade participants dressed in costumes that represented their country

Three Ways to Donate to SCV-AFG

Check out the Quarterly Appeal on page 6, and please share it with your group members! The three ways you can contribute to support our recovery work include:



1. VENMO: The simplest and easiest: @Inter-group-treasurer. Confirmation number 1916.
2. ZELLE: If your bank provides Zelle as an option to send money to others, please use it. To set it up, add email or mobile recipient and please use email: alanonscvtreasurer@gmail.com
3. CHECK: mail your check to: SCV-AFG Santa Clara Valley Al-Anon Family Groups
1 West Campbell Ave.
Room Q82, Campbell, CA 95008



We're California Dreaming in our ersatz VW Microbus!

or state. I went as a California redwood tree, and many from Northern California went as poppies. Penny went as a bee keeper!

The Convention Center is a huge facility that covers two city blocks with a Sky Bridge connecting East and West Buildings. Its Kiva Auditorium, where we had the parade held 2,300 people.

The Parade was followed by the opening speaker meeting with three speakers from Al-Anon International structures. These speakers were incredibly inspiring. We heard their personal stories, how Al-Anon has helped them live a beautiful and abundant life despite challenges. What I heard was the importance of attending meetings, to keep coming back, how only our Higher Power can break our denial, the importance of loving ourselves, and to turn our pain into stepping stones—all possible through Al-Anon. One theme I heard again and again was grief and loss, and how Al-Anon can help me to feel encouraged and to persist: that this too shall pass. We are not alone. We can recover, through service and the fellowship.

Saturday was the "Trailblazers Breakfast" workshop sessions and the Saturday night speaker meeting. About six hundred members attended the breakfast. The Trailblazers Breakfast had three speakers: two longtime members in Al-Anon followed by the Area Secretary for the Global Electronic Area.



A Little Time for Myself

The long awaited Al-Anon Daily Reader, *A Little Time for Myself*, was introduced at the Convention! And we have it at the bookstore now! An advanced sign up list was available at the bookstore and it quickly filled up. A few extra copies were ordered for people who didn't sign up in advance, and those were also sold. So the new reader has been reordered. Go to the Bookstore to get your name on the NEW advance order list, or call the bookstore and ask to be put on it. When the books come in, you will be notified, and given ten days to come in and pick up your order before it is returned to inventory. Price per copy with tax and handling is \$20.29.



After the breakfast, there were workshop sessions on all varieties of topics: Sponsorship; Let it Begin with Me; Healing from Our Losses; Boundaries; Working Through Conflict.

Some take-aways for me:

- Al-Anon meetings are a source of comfort, I always feel better after I attend one.
- It's important for me to review the *Essay on Leadership* by Bill W., on page 200 of the *Service Manual*. It's so powerful! Bill W. had such vision and intuition. I forget about this!
- Connection for me is vital, it's important for me to avoid isolation. With healing my losses, I need to use all of the program: my sponsor, service, meetings, phone calls, CAL, allow myself to grieve, pause, pray, love myself through it, and I know I will move forward.

The last day of the Convention included three spiritual speakers; one Alateen, one Al-Anon, and a special guest speaker from AA—the Executive Director. All three were very inspiring and so very relatable. I felt filled with gratitude throughout, and especially at the end of the convention.

After the closing of the Convention with the Al-Anon Declaration, there was live drumming and chanting from a local Native-American tribe as everyone said their goodbyes, shared photos, hugs and thanks.

I highly recommend attending to anyone who is interested in the Al-Anon International Convention. It takes place every five years. The next one will be in 2028: dates and location are yet to be determined, and will be announced at the 2025 AA International Convention in Vancouver, BC.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my experience at the 2023 Al-Anon International Convention. It was very spiritual, positive and energizing for me. I highly recommend it.

Patricia B.

District 20 Representative



Service in Al-Anon

I have been in the program several 24-hours. I first felt the call to service at my home group starting as a Treasurer. I was sure I was going to do it “wrong” but there were others there before me. The past treasurer showed me how she set up the books and her process. Soon I was doing it and it was not as hard as I thought. I passed the position on and was able to help the next person who stepped into that position.

My next level of service was about a year or so, and I stepped up to secretary. It started in a summer month and the attendance dropped a bit. I was certain it was because I was the secretary not because it was summer and folks’ travel! The attendance did not stay low and I grew from this service.

Later, I felt called to serve as the GR (Group Representative). This was nerve-racking for me—terrifying! I was taking over for the current GR after she asked me to be an alternate and then later decided she could not complete the commitment. I was so scared walking into the meeting for the first time. Everyone else had been there for longer than I, and I was sure I was ten paces behind. I was welcomed with open arms. I was embraced and treated as an equal. There were no judgements, nothing negative. I was treated with respect. I felt the love in the room.

Later, after that commitment ended, I stepped up to be the Intergroup Representative*. Later I took another support position to assist with Intergroup.

The groups I served made me feel welcomed and supported. The District Representative heading my group was amazing, introducing one tradition each meeting. We were able to ask questions and share our perspectives. I learned so much, and not just about program. I learned about the processes, the tools used in Al-Anon and I learned about myself. My own growth was magnificent. Also, the GR’s were able to bring the challenges of our group to the meeting, and we worked as a group to come up with ideas for solutions.

Service is love—I mean, to me it is. I give what I can, and do what I can, and now I can ask for help when I need it, or want support. It is amazing. I have met new faces and connected with others I have met at meetings. It no longer feels like I do not know what I am doing—okay,

*This position is now called Intergroup Service Representative (ISR).



Sometimes Wisdom Comes in Handy!

Progress is never perfect
 –Michael H

If I were not thinking about my problems, what would I be doing?—Michael H

I think I'm getting some outside help that I don't really need –B.B. King

God: Good Orderly Direction
 –12 Step Saying

There is nothing to fear but fear itself --Franklin Delano Roosevelt

Know the difference between a commitment and an obligation –Ken K

You have to feel to heal
 –12 Step Saying

Say what you mean, mean what you say, but don't say it mean –12 Step Saying.

I may feel that way at times, but I know I won't be judged if I do not have an answer. I found I grew in unexpected ways. I learned (and am still learning). I practice the tools I have learned on my spiritual journey. I learn new tools. I see recovery in action in the service of others. As much as service is a gift to those you serve, it is a bigger gift to you.

I found my confidence grew and my program was strengthened by service. My

connections to my Al-Anon family grew stronger and my family grew in size. I learned to balance my work and personal life with my service life. My confidence grew and my resilience increased. I found I loved being in service! Now I can support the newer group members who step up to service. I can use the skills I learned and can assist in business meetings. I can feel part of something bigger than my own recovery, in the recovery of others, and in the balance of the organization.

We are but trusted servants. This is true and it feels right when I step up to service. Not only am I helping others but the growth I get from the experience is amazing. Service is unconditional love that I get to share and receive. Like my program, I get out of it what I put in. Most of the time, I feel like I get more than I am giving.

I will keep coming back. I will keep stepping up to service when I can and feel called to do so. I am filled with gratitude for the journey I have and am taking and the growth that is blossoming.

So, when I put my hand in yours, know you are not alone and neither am I. Thank you for letting me be of service. Thank you to Divine Spirit that I have found this path and this new family who understand me and my journey; thank you for the love you have shared when you did not know me yet and for loving me, flaws and all. Your Trusted Servant—CJ



Bookstore Thought Force Report

Read the report in full at Google docs:report link <https://docs.google.com/document/d/>



Wrap Up: Bookstore Thought Force

After months—no wait, it's been years—of debate and study, Santa Clara Valley Alanon Family Groups (scv-afg.org) decided to keep a physical presence in the community! One significant factor is: it's the last physical outlet in the Bay Area where members can come in and browse CAL (conference approved literature).

Advocates for closing it down favored of a “virtual” bookstore: it could lower overhead, require fewer volunteers, redirect of Al-Anon assets and volunteer participation to other services.

A KBDM* Thought Force Committee was formed to reason it out, bringing all of the available resources, arguments for, arguments against—to Intergroup with recommendations on how to go forward.

The Thought Force Committee investigated the financial history of the bookstore, the services it provided, the role it played in the local Al-Anon community. It also sought advice from our sister organization, Alcoholics Anonymous, to learn how their bookstore fitted into their organization. This committee work took months. It compiled all of the information it had gathered, conducted a member survey of the local Al-Anon community, and came up with surprising results that favored keeping the Campbell Bookstore. It turns out that anecdotal input is not the same as statistical input: ninety percent of survey respondents wanted to keep the Bookstore! Statistics gave us the verifiable answers we need to go forward.

The Thought Force was charged with creating recommendations to present to Intergroup and the Task Force which follows it. Ten recommendations were created, the “Bookstore Thought Force Recommendations.”

1. “LDCs (CAL bookstores, called Literature Distribution Centers or LDCs) provide Al-Anon members with local access and quick delivery of Al-Anon books, pamphlets, booklets, kits, posters, films, guidelines, and other Al-Anon material” (**Guideline 18**). Intergroup’s responsibility to Districts 20, 21 and 22 members, therefore, is to facilitate this access.
2. SCV-AFG’s brick-and-mortar Bookstore/LDC in Campbell stays open and available to the membership because this is what the majority of members want, based on survey responses.

*“Knowledge Based Decision Making” (an Alanon process)



Stepping Up!

We have a Facilities Coordinator at last! Cristin B, one of our valued Bookstore volunteers, has stepped up to take on this position after months of appeals to membership. Meanwhile, Penny has been filling in, in addition to being our Intergroup Chairperson. Thank you for your service above and beyond, Penny.

Now we just need a Tech Services Coordinator, and will have the basics covered!



3. Create a Task Force to determine the costs of keeping a brick-and-mortar bookstore open and inform the membership what donations are needed. (Additional Task Forces or committees could be convened to address Anniversary Chips and storage of IG supplies, financials, and archives).
4. Research and consider an alternative brick-and-mortar bookstore/ office space, with possible meeting space included and/or a smaller book-selling square footage.
5. Educate members and groups about the role that the LDC/Bookstore plays as a service to our membership, and that it is an integral part of the overall IG budget.
6. Reestablish IG Quarterly Appeals and continue appeals on a consistent, quarterly basis to facilitate CAL accessibility for our members.
7. Continue to use a portion of general Intergroup donations to offset the Bookstore costs not covered by CAL sales and service charges.
8. Consider increasing the 10% service charge (which includes shipping) to cover overhead costs not offset by CAL sales income.
9. Allow local area members to vote on any final decisions about keeping a brick-and-mortar bookstore or shifting to an alternative LDC format.
10. Reexamine the decision to operate a brick-and-mortar bookstore in a year or two when fluctuating circumstances surrounding Covid19 are better understood.

These ten recommendations generated lot of ideas on how we might go forward with our Brick and Mortar presence in the community including:

1. Joining forces with our local Hispanic Al-Anon members. (This has already been done.)
2. Holding small committee meetings in our bookstore/office space. (This has already been successfully tried).
4. Holding regular Newcomer and Alateen Meetings in the space.

3rd Step Prayer

God, I offer myself to Thee
to build with me and to do
with me as Thou wilt.
Relieve me of the bondage of
self, that I may better do Thy
will. Take away my difficulties,
that victory over them may
bear witness to those I would
help of Thy power, Thy love,
and Thy Way of life. May I do
Thy will always!

3. Doing a general clean-up and throw-out of years worth of clutter that would make the space more attractive. (This is being planned).
5. Installing a large scale monitor to enable hybrid meetings in the space.
6. Expanding our presence in the community by becoming more visible and more active.

Intergroup is currently negotiating with the Campbell Community Center on renewing our lease, which expires at the end of December 2023. In the course of these negotiations, which include repainting and re-carpeting the two rooms we occupy, it was mentioned that another, larger, better situated space in the Center was available.

Committee members viewed the room, and saw immediately how it could address our needs and aspirations for the future presence of Al-Anon in the community. It is a larger, more attractive, windowed space, opening onto a courtyard with a play area for small children. Picture a vintage grade school classroom with a wall of windows on one side, and you've just about got it. It is right on Winchester Boulevard, with an adjacent parking lot. It offers space for expansion of Al-Anon's programs into the foreseeable future. Everyone who saw it realized the potential of this space. But there is a catch: the rent for the space is higher! Intergroup will be considering this carefully, and taking advice from the membership to come to a final determination on whether to move, or stay in our current space at the Campbell Community Center! Maybe it's about the courage to change? A Task Force will take up this question and show us how we can proceed from here. They will report to Intergroup at the August Intergroup Meeting.

*God, grant me the serenity
To accept the things I cannot change,
Courage to change the things I can.
And wisdom to know the difference.*



Refresh, Revitalize and Rebrand

“Refresh-Revitalize-Rebrand” is a visionary slogan created by Penny P, our Intergroup Chairperson. It fits so well with where we are– “In recovery” from Covid, facing the end of our lease with Campbell Community Center, and whether to renew it or move on, make the Bookstore a Resource Center/Hub where we could hold a weekly newcomer meetings, Alateen meetings, Spanish Intergroup meetings, Special Events, and so much more.

It’s a vision for rebuilding the Bookstore presented at the June Intergroup meeting, following on the Thought Force Presentation for the Bookstore. More will be revealed when hear from the Task Force led by Vassu R.



Refresh!
Revitalize!
Rebrand!

The Task Force Charge

The Task Force is charged to provide scenarios and a financial model for analysis to consider and explore around the following options for a physical space, including:

Stay in existing space?

New room within CCC (L53 is available)?

Move to a new location?

This project is based on the membership’s affirmation to keep a physical location for the Literature Distribution Center for at least the next year. Since we are nearing the end of our lease and have the desire to expand our vision and “Refresh, Revitalize and Rebrand “ the Bookstore to a more encompassing Al-Anon Resource Center for SCV- AFG, we hope to encompass space that is able to accommodate the new vision/ideas. Such as:

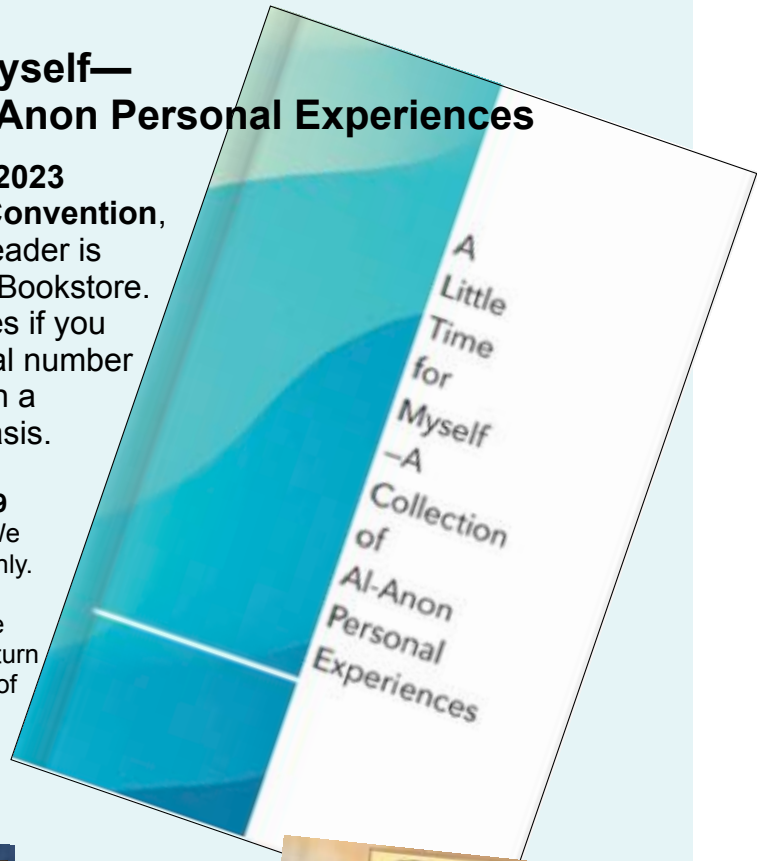
- A place where we might hold “newcomer” meetings on a weekly basis, a place where sponsors could meet their sponsee, a place to relax and talk, with good coffee and tea, a place to which a greater number of people seeking Al-Anon support, resources, and comfort could come.
- The creation of new Campbell Al-Anon meetings (Campbell currently has no Al-Anon meetings!), and the ability to hold other meetings in the space, i.e. Alateen meetings, ISR meetings, etc.
- Collaboration with Spanish Intergroup and Esther’s group, which are willing to share the space and pay their share of the rent.
- A bookstore component offering both English and Spanish books

It's In the Bookstore Now!

A Little Time for Myself— A Collection of Al-Anon Personal Experiences

Introduced at the recent **2023 Al-Anon International Convention**, Al-Anon's newest daily reader is in stock at the Campbell Bookstore. Come and get your copies if you pre-ordered. An additional number of copies are available on a first come, first served basis.

Total cost for the reader: **\$20.29** including shipping and taxes. We accept credit and debit cards only. Advance orders will be held for 10 days from the date you were notified, after which they will return to inventory. And—we have all of our other readers in stock too!





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

**Friday, Sept. 29, 2023
7:00 PM – 8:30 PM PST**



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



GUEST SPEAKERS



Penny H.P.
Morgan Hill, CA
Al-Anon

Katie S.
Aptos, CA
Al-Anon



In-person or join us on Zoom:

Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83426781199?pwd=bHFSVUQzSIUzZXg2SEF3dWQ2VUjiUT09>

Meeting ID: 834 2678 1199

Passcode: 945130

Dial: +1 669 900 6833

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