
District 18's
Voice of Reason

Welcome to 2021!!

Hello District 18!

We are finally in 2021 and done with that *other* year (the one that shall remain nameless). I am super excited to be the Newsletter Coordinator for this panel! I have so many goals that I'm not sure where to start. Ok, yes, I know exactly where to start ~ asking for help. I will need **YOUR** help to make this newsletter interesting and helpful. The guidelines suggest that this be published quarterly. What do you think? Is that often enough? Too often? What do you want to see included in the newsletter? Please take a survey and give me your thoughts. Click on the words [Newsletter Survey](#) below or paste the link into a browser. It's a quick one I promise.

[Newsletter Survey](#)

<https://forms.gle/RcHzgetgm87HVNpg7>

In the survey there is a question asking if you want to receive the newsletter. A "Yes" answer will sign you up automatically. In the future you can also email me at newsletter@alanonsanjoaquinvalley.org to subscribe.

There will be topics for each newsletter (see page 3 for the topics for the next one) as well as some regular columns. There will be a Sponsor's Corner, Events section, Spotlight On... , and more!

When we come to Al-Anon, many of us, including me, were broken and our lives were in pieces. To put my life back together I needed to find the pieces of my puzzle. There will be a section devoted to finding the pieces of our lives that compliment the Al-Anon program and make my life complete. I'd love to hear how you put your pieces together.

And of course, ***I need your shares!*** You can [type your response in an email and send it to Newsletter Coordinator](#) or email a picture of the topic page after filling it out or print and mail it to D18-Newsletter, PO Box 579491, Modesto, Ca 95357-9491

Vicki B

SPECIAL EVENTS

- The first Sunday of every month is the District meeting from 1-3.
Zoom ID: 894 4011 5206, Passcode: 900980
- NCWSA Convention Fundraiser. Jan 23, 2021, 1:00-3:00PM. Suggested donation \$5. Zoom ID: 867 8785 5610, Passcode: 536043
- Save the date!! Sept 2021 NCWSA Convention - More to come soon!

Check the calendar on the District 18 website for more details:

<http://alanonsanjoaquinvalley.org/events.htm>

Check the NCWSA calendar for events in other districts:

<https://northerncaliforniaal-anon.org/calendar/>

Topics for the next Newsletter **Due 2/1/2021**

1. The Serenity Prayer

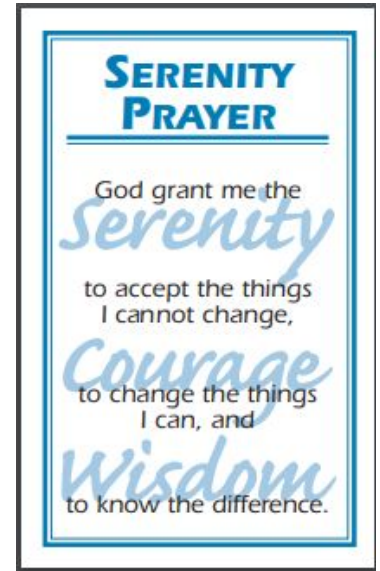
What does the Serenity Prayer mean to you?

How do you use the Serenity Prayer?

2. How do you use the spiritual principles of the program to have fun?

3. How do you welcome newcomers?

You can **type your response in an email to [Newsletter Coordinator](#)** or email a picture of this page **filled out** or print and mail it to D18-Newsletter, PO Box 579491, Modesto, Ca 95357-9491



Topic - Forcing solutions

Is there something in your life you are trying to control?

How do you know when it goes from doing the footwork to forcing the solution?

Suggested reading: Courage to Change page 37

- I'm a problem solver and forget that I'm not in charge while working on it. I'm so busy doing things to solve the problem that I take it into my own hands. It's a trick - it doesn't work!
- The slogan is "Easy Does It" not "Double the effort"! With my family I remember to say things once or twice but I forgot that in my meeting.
- When something isn't working out quite right, I call my sponsor. We can talk things out to see if I am trying to force the solution.
- My sponsor pointed out that she isn't TELLING me what to do. I am actually working it out myself. She is just listening to me do the footwork.
- God paves the way if it was meant to be.
- Maybe we aren't forcing solutions ~ just prompting them!
- When I was new, I heard that I shouldn't make big decisions for the first 6 months. After 6 months I still didn't know what to do. I don't know what the footwork is at times, so I just keep working on myself.
- Sometimes I get triggered by a name or a situation. I want to go, make a decision, force something ~ anything to feel less. Today I know that's not how I want to react, so I don't act.
- Sometimes I play out conversations in my head. I had to get honest with myself about what I wanted if I chose the route I just played out. I'm obviously trying to control the outcome.



Let's talk Service!

Definition of "Service"

- contribution to the welfare of others
- the action of helping or doing work for someone
- to perform any of the business functions auxiliary to production or distribution
- a system supplying a public need such as communications

How can YOU be of service?

- Volunteer to proof read the newsletter
- Help edit / type submissions
- Help maintain the list of recipients

If you are willing to help let the Newsletter Coordinator Vicki B know! 209-480-4820 or newsletter@alanonsanjoaquinvalley.org



Why do I want to be a District Representative? What am I looking forward to at this moment?

When Vicki asked me why I want to be District Representative (DR)? My first thought was I did not want to be DR. When I came to Al-Anon, I jumped right into service at the Groups and District 18. I became GR and that took me to service at the Area (NCWSA) and service on many committees and Events. However, DR was never on my radar. My passions were the history of A-Anon (and AA) and carrying the message of Hope to those that still suffer (Tradition 5 is my purpose). I love being of service and as this service panel was coming to an end, I knew I wanted to serve at the District. I began thinking about what position would take me out of my comfort zone and really challenge me. I started to consider the DR position and that scared me a lot. Did I have the experience and leadership skills to serve in this position? I read Bill W.'s essay on leadership in Concept 9 and I thought, what an order, I was somewhat overwhelmed.

I talked to my sponsor and I talked to other DR on how it worked for them. I prayed about standing for the DR position and had many conversations with my God! The message was Stand; it will be ok. I was very fearful that you all would not elect me and, surprise to me, I was the only option, and you elected me. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to serve with all of you. I know that I will learn and grow in my recovery with all of you.

As I looked back through the last 3 years, I was disappointed that GR participation continued to decrease. District 18 is an inspiring district, and I am so proud of our District and how everyone works together in Unity. It's an opportunity that you don't want to miss. But I was disappointed at the low attendance of GR's at the District 18 meetings. I hope with all of your help we will increase attendance by reaching out to the GR's, visiting their meetings, and providing a GR manual that highlights some of the tools they need to do their job. I am so excited, and I look forward to growing and serving with all of you on Panel 61. District 18 Rocks!!!

Love in Service,

Diana C., District Representative



Sponsor's Corner

Welcome to our Newsletter!!! I am thrilled we are up and running again!!

I want to share some of my thoughts with you on one of our key tools in Al-Anon, ***SPONSORSHIP***.

At first, I was hesitant to become a sponsor because I thought I didn't have anything to offer. I did not think I had attained that magical Al-Anon wisdom nor have it all together in my program, to lead another member through the Steps, Traditions or Concepts, and apply these principles in life.

I have found what was told to me to be true, as long as I was at least one Step, Tradition or Concept ahead of my sponsee I was gold. I have found that sharing my shortcomings in our step work is the wisdom that is talked about. It's funny how God finds the right person to sponsor if I am open.

The connection I have felt when listening to a sponsee's sharing, shortcomings, fears, triumphs and growth in our program fuels my own recovery. To me being a good sponsor is not telling my sponsee what to do and how to do it, finding all their faults. No, it is in the listening, non judging and encouraging that helps build a new confidence in them as well as in me.

One of my shortcomings as a sponsor has been not being more honest when some tough love has been needed for guidance. This is a great way for me to work on my character defect as it does feel awkward at times. This means I am growing.

Here are some questions to ponder and I highly encourage you to send any feedback to us at the newsletter at newsletter@alanonsanjoaquinvalley.org Please put Sponsor's Corner in the subject line.

1. What holds me back from being a sponsor?
2. As a sponsor, what has been most fulfilling?
3. What is the most challenging about being a sponsor?
4. How do you maintain the sponsor/sponsee relationship?

I have found sponsorship is a gift for both the sponsor and the sponsee.



One night, at a meeting, the chairperson passed around a jar with slips of paper in it. I was told to pick one and share (if I wanted) on whatever it said. My slip of paper said “Let’s put the *FUN* back in *Dysfunctional*”. It was right up my alley! I want to add some *FUN* into the newsletter and thought I would start with a quote ~

An important part of the serious business of recovery involves recognizing our need to have fun.

I hear laughing is one of the easiest ways to start so here’s some jokes for you:

- Knock knock. Who's there? Gorilla. Gorilla who? Gorilla me a hamburger.
- Knock knock. Who's there? Tank. Tank who? You're welcome.
- Knock knock. Who's there? Turnip. Turnip who? Turnip the volume, I love this song!
- Knock knock. Who's there? Adore. Adore who? Adore is between us. Open up!
- Knock knock. Who's there? Nana. Nana who? Nana your business.
- Knock knock. Who's there? Hatch. Hatch who? God bless you.
- Knock knock. Who's there? Control Freak. Con— Okay, now you say, "Control Freak who?!"
- Knock knock. Who's there? Broken pencil. Broken pencil who? Never mind, there's no point!
- Knock knock. Who's there? Olive. Olive who? Olive you and I don't care who knows it!
- Knock knock. Who's there? Police. Police who? Police stop telling these awful knock knock jokes!

Vicki B

How Do You Define Serenity During the Holidays?

Pondering Serenity

When I am going about my day, not focusing on other people, places, things or situations as problems or roadblocks or challenges, but accepting the day as it comes with calm anticipation, then I can clearly see the serenity that God has granted me. For me, I recognize that serenity as peaceful, calm contentment within my own mind. It's so nice. I like it there. What happens? Where does it go? Why do I need to pray over and over to be granted more serenity?

I need to because I unintentionally, but willingly, release the serenity, that calm contentment, and start to listen to my doubts, judgments and fears. However, once recognized, choices appear again. I learned to ask myself: is this thought true? Is it from God? Is it what God really thinks about me or others? By learning to doubt my doubts, I have also learned to believe the truths of what God says to me. I've grown in recovery, and now not only seek, but crave, the calm contentment that I cannot manufacture but can accept as a gift from my higher power. The Serenity Prayer is a balm to start or end each day.

Nancy T.

Other shares ~

- Finding new ways to spend time together
- I take care of my health, safety, and focus on gratitude in being positive.
- I stay in a positive frame of mind instead of missing what I didn't have.
- When I'm feeling less than grateful I read Hope for Today page 360. It's a road map to me about how I want my life to be.
- It's a spiritual journey to get Serenity. It's not a race. It's not goal related either.
- I give myself latitude in my life.
- I show up, and I tell the truth.
- I'm not my own higher power. I practice connecting with my higher power daily.
- I am trying to be OK with not being OK.
- Lately I've been struggling with Serenity. It's the stuff in my head. Yes, this year has been hard for all of us.

"SERENITY NOW"

The phrase "SERENITY NOW" from a Seinfeld episode reminds me of how I felt when I first came into Al-Anon almost 18 years ago. I wanted a lot of things NOW. I remember people saying "you are where you need to be", which I hated hearing because I didn't want to be there. I had never felt so lost and in so much pain, which continued for many years until I started to heal. I didn't suffer the whole time though, because I had Al-Anon that acted like my medicine and gave me relief and hope. But during those early years I don't remember feeling serenity or even really knowing what it was. My head knew what everyone was telling me, but it wasn't in my heart. I didn't feel it for a long time. Once I actually started feeling it, I didn't want to give it up. I'm not perfect at it, but I am getting a lot better. Progress not perfection. Holidays have been a trigger for me since I left the alcoholic. It took me many years to recreate new holiday memories, traditions and heal, but this year I wasn't even able to do that. I spent the holidays alone. I Zoomed with one family member on Christmas Eve. I spent time on another family member's porch, visiting while social distancing for a short time on Christmas Day. I made the best of the situation, since my health and wellbeing were more important than traditions this year. I kept expecting to feel the pain of a holiday trigger, but it never happened. I felt serenity instead, because I prayed. I surrendered and I accepted it. God granted me the serenity to accept the things I couldn't change. I am really looking forward to the holidays of 2021. I have faith it will get better and this too shall pass. May next year be a Happy New Year!

Donna D.

Getting & Staying Connected

Can't find a newsletter?? You can log into our website and go to the Newsletter tab to find it or click on this link: <http://alanonsanjoaquinvalley.org/newsletter.htm>

Want to subscribe to the newsletter? Send me an email using the email below. It's free!
newsletter@alanonsanjoaquinvalley.org

In The Loop News from the WSO

To sign up to receive the monthly emails from the WSO, click on the link below fill in the following fields and hit submit.

[In the Loop Sign-Up](#)

District Meetings:

When: The 1st Sunday of every month from 1:00-3:00

Where: In person: Doctor's Hospital Conference Center
(between the parking garage & emergency room)
1441 Florida Ave, Modesto 95350

Virtual: Zoom ID: 894 4011 5206 Passcode: 900980

Who: Open to everyone!