

# AL-ANON FAMILY GROUPS CAPE AREA ECHO

EDITION 1 - 2019

## CELEBRATE THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF "ONE DAY AT A TIME IN AL-ANON" (B6-50)

In 1966, the sixth World Service Conference unanimously approved publishing a book of daily readings.

The Chairperson of the Literature Committee at the time compiled, edited and wrote some of the content of One Day at a Time in Al-Anon to submit for review.

Like almost all our Conference Approved Literature, the book was a collaborative effort of many members.

The first print was in 1968.

The third printing, in 1970, included an index.

The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions were added to the back in 1973, and the Concepts of Service were added in 1992.

In 1978, the Conference passed a motion prohibiting any changes to the book without majority approval of the full Conference.

The one-millionth copy was published in 1980.

The five-millionth copy was published in 1998.

A keepsake 50th Anniversary printing of the book with a commemorative cover and gold ribbon was introduced at the Al-Anon International Convention in July 2018.

## 2018 INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION -

### BALTIMORE - 5 TO 8 JULY 2018

On Saturday, 7 July 2018, at the 2018 Al-Anon International Convention in Baltimore, Maryland, the Al-Anon Board of Trustees, in recognition of the 50th Anniversary of the

publication of One Day at a Time in Al-Anon made a special presentation in recognition of Al-Anon special bond with Alcoholics Anonymous



Both the General Manager of A.A., Greg T., and the Chairperson of the A.A. General Service Board, Michelle G., were presented with a One Day at a Time 50th Anniversary commemorative book (B6-50).

As well as a framed Resolution of Gratitude to Alcoholics Anonymous. **(A copy of the Resolution can be found at [al-anon.org](http://al-anon.org) by clicking on the Members tab)**

The International Convention included over 131 workshops, speaker meetings and panel discussions.

There were 4,044 recorded attendees., including 49 Alateens, 271 members of Alcoholics Anonymous (A.A.) and 40 guests

The Convention was highlighted with 3 Main Meetings on Friday and Saturday night and Sunday morning. On the Friday

evening's meeting speakers were from **South Africa**, New Zealand, and the Netherlands.

We had 12 members from South Africa attend, 9 from the Cape Area and 3 from KZN.

## MY BALTIMORE EXPERIENCE

It started with one Al-Anon member saying that 2018 is her 20<sup>th</sup> year in the fellowship, and she is celebrating it by attending the World Convention in Baltimore. 'Am I coming along?' she asked. 'Of course!' I said. Eight more said 'Of course'; and the BALTIMORE BELLES came into being in December 2017.

The next seven months became a hive of excitement, of learning and anticipation. The first real goosebumps moment was when we registered for the convention online. For me the reality of the adventure dawned upon me, when I received the confirmation of my registration.

Then the work started: booking flights; obtaining accommodation; the mental preparation of travelling and living with eight members. I bombarded myself with questions: Will we be compatible? What if...? But I also had the answers: We are not just ordinary travelers. We are Al-Anon members, caring loving and gentle individuals. In our meetings preceding our departure, we agreed that Tradition One would prevail at all times.

Our excitement received an injection when we joined the CONVENTION CHAT named "Itendify ". It was such magic to chat with prospective attendees. We were all looking forward to meeting each other, though I wonder how it would be possible

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to find someone among thousands. (By the way, one could paste your name on a notice board requesting to meet someone..... I don't know what the chances were of that happening) So before the Convention, I chatted to Al-Anon members from all over the world.

We arrived in Baltimore on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July. The Americans celebrated their Independence.

I celebrated, in my heart, I was at the place of the Convention – I made it thus far. My heart opened to receive and to give where I possibly could.

As we walked to the Convention Centre, there on the pavement, we saw the Al-Anon emblem with words of welcome.



And already I was filled with awe! The organizers went to great lengths to ensure that we are validated. Upon entering the Centre, I could feel an Al-Anon presence, I could see it on the smiling faces walking around with great purpose, doing service, for our benefit and convenience. I walked and stared and just had ever present lump in my throat. All this preparation, because I am affected by Alcoholism, and this was the common reason for everyone being here.

I walked past the rooms, ready to receive the 5400 people that have registered. And there was my name at the Registration table. It was such a big moment for me... that my application resulted that my name was on a tag.

We received the program, which required thorough consideration and discussion of attendance with the BALTIMORE BELLES. We wanted to ensure that all the meetings were attended so that we could share with each other afterwards.

Thursday 5 July, the DAY OF CONNECTING, was a day of revelation. It was revealed to me to what extent members would go to deliver service.... A level to which I was humbled, and then inspired to s-t-r-e-t-c-h myself, get out there, and do more. I heard by Convention goers, that people who work together, begin to look like each other... that is really encouraging, as we have beautiful, hard-working people.

An amazing presentation, on the Thursday, illustrated that at any given minute, that somewhere in the world, a meeting was being held. What an amazing fact!

In meetings, regarding service, I will take the following from various speakers:

- ❖ By my service, I will strive to set an example to others
- ❖ I will continue to learn
- ❖ Through my defects, my Higher Power will touch me
- ❖ When I do service, I will never be alone
- ❖ To do service is an anti-aging medicine

I will believe that I do have sound ideas; and many more wonderful gems.

For the next three days it was so hard to choose from the many types of meetings. I left each meeting with something to ponder upon: For example:

- ❖ We remember what we need to remember
- ❖ Phone calls from our children, are gifts

- ❖ I must work on my face, and tell my face that I am happy
- ❖ I should do a lot more loving, and less enabling
- ❖ Being enmeshed, is not being loving to myself
- ❖ I must not detach from my dream
- ❖ I must own my own nature
- ❖ I don't have to shrink when someone becomes hostile
- ❖ Parents who deny themselves self-care, don't teach their children self-care
- ❖ My 'NO' has nothing to do with you
- ❖ I like me, when I ...

Then there was the evening of the LOVE PARADE, when we, the twelve South Africans dressed up to be introduced to 5400 people. It was indeed a moment of patriotism.

And then came the big moment of pride and joy for, us, the South Africans, the Baltimore Belles, when one of the Belles shared at that BIG meeting. And what a powerful, moving share it was! We were indeed in awe to be connected to her. Thank you, Gillian G., You kept South Africa in very high esteem.

The end of the Convention was marked with sadness and nostalgia.... But also, with a determination that we will meet again.....in 2023 in New Mexico.

~**Margie D. Area Chair**  
(**Maitland Group**)

**19<sup>TH</sup> BI-ANNUAL (IAGSM)  
INTERNATIONAL AL-ANON  
GENERAL SERVICES MEETING  
VIRGINIA BEACH, USA  
3 TO 6 OCTOBER 2018**

The International Al-Anon General Services Meeting (IAGSM) is a biennial service meeting for General Service Offices/national service structures. The purpose of the IAGSM is to share the experience of Al-Anon National

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Services around the world through its Delegates. It is not a decision-making body; instead, it passes any recommendations to the International Coordination Committee

Due to the members contribution to the groups and in turn the group contributions of R 100 per year and fund raising in the 3 Areas. G&D, KZN and Cape, South Africa was represented at the 2018 International Al-Anon General Services Meeting (IAGSM) which was held from 3 to 6 October 2018 in Virginia Beach, USA.

Our 2 Delegates Terry H. from Cape Area and Nan G. from KZN participated our behalf at the IAGSM. This International meeting encourages the growth of a complete service structure while maintaining worldwide unity through the application of our Traditions. Ultimately, this helps fulfill the primary purpose of Al-Anon as a whole—to seek the best way to carry the Al-Anon message of recovery to families and friends of alcoholics within cultural and language differences.

### MY EXPERIENCE AS A DELEGATE ATTENDING IAGSM 2018

IAGSM is a biennial International Al-Anon General Service meeting where delegates from around the world gather to share their experience, strength and hope in service. We share our successes and our challenges with one another. We offer solutions and discuss what works and what doesn't, in our experience of our structures.

IAGSM 2018 was held in Virginia Beach, USA. There were 15 countries participating with 22 delegates. South Africa sent two delegates: Terry H (First year) and Nan G (First year).

The theme of IAGSM 2018 was “Leading by Example: Structures Supporting Structures”



In the opening meeting we were reminded that this was a Service meeting. We would get the opportunity to participate as presenters and to share our experience on behalf of our structures. The ICC was there to listen and to be able to share information with Trustees. The discussions and sessions would help to have information to carry back to our structures and implement – none of it is governing.

The purpose of IAGSM is to share and to acknowledge growth in structures. To gather as much information that you can to take back to your structures.

The returning second year delegates reminded us, that to make the most of IAGSM we needed to speak slowly as English was the 2nd or 3rd language of 14 of the 22 delegates. To stay teachable and listen for solutions that can lead to serenity.



At the IAGSM Nan and I:

- ❖ Spent 4 days of service with 28 delegates and WSO staff

- ❖ Said the Serenity prayer 10 times and heard it in 10 languages
- ❖ Listened to two IAGSM speakers
- ❖ Participated in 2 workshops
- ❖ Facilitated 1 workshop (Nan)
- ❖ Wrote and presented one presentation (Terry)
- ❖ Attended 1 topic discussion
- ❖ Went to 2 Question & Answer sessions
- ❖ Said the 3 Legacies through once each
- ❖ Visited WSO offices and were greeted and hugged warmly by all 25 staff members who lined up outside to meet us
- ❖ Worked in 8 General sessions – topics below:

Topic	Presented by
Incorporating Spiritual Principles into Business and Policy Discussions	Miriam M UK & Eire
Global Participation Through Remote Access	Terry H South Africa
Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual	Jenny A Australia
Concepts of Service	Rosa M Mexico
Challenges and Pitfalls of Social Media for Al-Anon/Alateen	Rauni O Finland
Using Social Media in Public Outreach While Practicing the Legacies	Debbie G./ Gail G., US/Canada
Alateen	Jenny A Australia
Service Sponsorship	Sally-Ann M New Zealand

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Luckily for me – and the butterflies in my tummy – my presentation was the 2nd general session on the first day after the Keynote address by Vali the Executive Director of WSO and the Opening session. I had been imagining and dreading the moment of stepping up to the podium for 8 months as it was in February that I was asked to present on the topic of Global participation through Remote access. When the moment actually arrived at 11am my HP took over and I was totally calm as I knew that I was among friends who were all there in service to learn and to share. The presentation went well – I think I was focusing so hard on speaking S L O W L Y that I forgot about the butterflies. There were a few questions after and most of the delegates from 1st world countries were in awe of us in SA who are using remote access for our service meetings and e-conferences. During the break the delegates came up to congratulate me and to ask further questions. I think I was as surprised in their interest as they were in our participation.

The workshops and general sessions were well planned and presented. To elaborate on all of them would turn this summary into a booklet so watch out for the full summary early in 2019.



Lois' beautiful Garden of Serenity with the Al-Anon triangle in the structure

Being chosen as a delegate to attend IAGSM was a gift. There was so much to learn, and it was so comforting to know that we all have the same problems no matter where you live, whether in a first or third world country.

The visit to WSO; and the privilege of being taken into the literature warehouse and the archives was the highlight of the trip.



The Archives is a very special place and only a few people are allowed in at a time – you must wear white cotton gloves before you touch any of the archives. South African has a spot on the shelves between Slovenia and Spain and we have 4 files of documents which date back to 1955.



Letters between Lois B Wilson and members from Johannesburg and Durban are on record. It was goose bump moments.

One of the delegates from Kilkenny, Ireland who has been in the fellowship since she was in Alateen found letters between her late mom and Lois. Needless to say, we were all in tears. Meeting the head of literature and having the opportunity to put

questions to him on a one-on-one basis was very special. The general sessions on topics such as the Concepts, Social media, Service sponsorship and hearing about the success of Alateen in some countries was mind blowing. The biggest surprise to me was the size of Al-Anon in Mexico; the passion of the Mexicans was awe inspiring.

It was incredible to be able to communicate and to witness the participation of those from other countries who cannot speak English at all, but still have the passion and gumption to come up to the podium to share their view. The delegates from India paid for their own air tickets as their GSO did not have the funds to send them.

Through my attendance at IAGSM I experienced spiritual growth. I gained knowledge to help me both as a member and as well as a member in service. This gift has left me reinvigorated with enthusiasm for my program.

Thank you for affording the opportunity to experience the privilege of service.

~ Terry H. GSC - Literature  
(Courage to Change Group)



## WELCOME TO THE IMBIZO MEETING

We all have different stories when it comes to how we were drawn into service, but what we have in common is that we share a commitment not just to our own recovery but also to the ongoing

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survival our fellowship. A sense of responsibility is one of the qualities of a good leader.

What does it mean to be a leader? Some of us may have a distorted view of leadership because of our experiences of living with alcoholism: a bullying partner who forces decisions on us is not a good leader. A controlling parent who stifles our individuality and creativity, convincing us we don't have the right qualities to think for ourselves and take responsibility for our own decisions, is not a good role model for leadership.

Some of us may have suffered the opposite: a lack of direction of any kind; no boundaries to butt up against, no guidance whatsoever.

In Al-Anon we realise our potential to demonstrate healthy leadership at all levels of service.

We have service sponsors to guide us in the right direction.

But let's remember the ultimate responsibility and authority for Al-Anon belongs to the Groups. Our service structure rests on the responsibility of Group Representatives to elect the Area Delegate who is the channel through which information is brought to our SA Conference, representing the views of each Area, on matters affecting the fellowship as a whole, and that Delegate is responsible for returning to Area with a broader perspective of Al-Anon.

Responsibility for the health and wellbeing of the fellowship rests with every single member.

All members have a personal responsibility to show leadership at all levels of service. That's the responsibility we all need to recognize and translate into action and that is what you have demonstrated by your journey to get here today. The responsibility

that comes with recovery. You've come this far in your journey in service but there's more to be done!"

~Gillian G. GSC Chair

#### LOVE YOU LONGTIMERS

#### TEN QUESTIONS FOR AUNTY BETTY, 30-YEAR LONG-TIMER MY STORY

I grew up in the country, reared by my grandparents, and surrounded by the very best. We had various fruit trees and we grew our own fresh vegetables. But my grandma always told me that money and material things can't guarantee happiness and that nothing comes on a silver platter.

And so, it was that the untimely death of my husband brought so much pain, heartache and grief into my life. During the week when his funeral arrangements had to be finalised I fell into a severe depression. While I was in this state I could not express my emotions and I thought God had abandoned me.

My children had their hands full because their mom, who was such a well-balanced woman, suddenly became a nothing. I became so weak and could not walk; I crawled like a baby in my home and my only daughter struggled to feed and bath me.

This was tough on my children; they had just lost their dad and now their mom was in a deep, dark pit of depression.

After my husband's funeral, my youngest son drove to Heidelberg to fetch a lady to come look after me. She was given strict instructions to watch me like a hawk because I had become suicidal.

I was on antidepressants; my head was painful, and it felt like a block of cement.

But today it is with such gratitude that I share my

experience, strength and hope with you.



By taking hold of the God of my understanding, I was able to feel the pain and mourn the loss of my loved one.

My husband attended the AA Retreat Group and I was so happy sobriety had finally come to my home. He was sober for three months and thirteen days when he passed away. God reminded me that He will give me the desires of my heart but on His terms.

It is not the length of his sobriety but the beauty that he died sober that is so special to me and that I will always treasure.

I must admit I have become increasingly calm and suddenly I have a lot of time on my hands. So, my priority is to maintain my serenity. I have my regular quiet time and, weather permitting, I love to go for long walks on the beach.

I also did the Emmaus Walk at the Manyano Centre in Paarl where I walked for 72 hours with the God of my understanding. I can assure you it was a wonderful experience and I have become so aware of my sisters and brothers who are still suffering.

By staying close to God and Al-Anon, together with my obedient heart, I now have a clear direction for my life. Today I choose to apply the slogans. Easy Does It allows me to go through difficult times at my own pace. One Day At A Time reminds me not to think about a frightening future because I only have today to deal with.

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When I stand in front of the mirror today it reflects my personality and character, all because of the Al-Anon programme.

Thank you for reading my story and God bless. Much love.

**~Betty W. Victoria Group (Grassy Park)**

## FAQ's & FGA's

I only recently realised that FAQ's meant Frequently Asked Questions

A member, at our last Service Meeting, asked what was the most FAQ's regarding Al-Anon?

This prompted me to do something I have been meaning to do for a long time. Every time I wanted the "Dos and Don'ts" or "The Alcoholic's Weapons", I would have to flip through all my pamphlets to find the specific one I needed.

So, I have made a list of some pamphlets that are full of FGA'S (Frequently Given Answers)



### Al-Anon, You and the Alcoholic - P2

A list of questions and answers about Al-Anon and what the programme can do for you.

### A Guide for the Family of the Alcoholic - P7

The Alcoholic's Weapons & Begin with Self.

### So You love an Alcoholic - P14

Some Important Do's & Don'ts

### What Do YOU Do about the Alcoholic's Drinking? - P19

A list of things... We may have.... Some of us may have .... & more.

### This is Al-Anon - P-32

In Summary Al-Anon Suggests...

Ideas for the Newcomers...

Members Share What Al-Anon has done for Them...

### Understanding Ourselves and Alcoholism - P-48

This is obsession

This is addiction... & more

This is our obsession

This is our anxiety... & more

I found the information in these pamphlets really helped me when I first joined Al-Anon, and I have used them often in Public Outreach and when speaking to a newcomer.

**~Glenda W. Policy & Planning (Constantia Group)**

### IN THE LOOP SUBSCRIPTION

<https://signup.e2ma.net/signup/1855605/1799701/>



### ARE YOU READY? - "NEWCOMER PREPAREDNESS CHECKLIST"

The holiday season can be a challenging time for families and friends of alcoholics, and even more so for those who have not yet found Al-Anon. Putting a plan in place to welcome newcomers throughout the season will help both newcomers and members alike.

Here are a few things to keep in mind for your "Newcomer Preparedness Checklist":

Specific meeting location instructions:

- ❖ Is there a special door to gain access to the building?
- ❖ Is there a sign pointing to the right room for the meeting?
- ❖ Are parking instructions needed?
- ❖ Are special instructions needed for late arrivals, e.g., "After 7:00 pm, ring buzzer by door."
- ❖ Are instructions clear enough for out-of-town visitors not familiar with your community?
- ❖ First contact: Is there a volunteer from the group to be a "greeter" for those attending your Al-Anon/Alateen meeting for the first time?
- ❖ Al-Anon Newcomer Packets: Is there an ample supply?
- ❖ Al-Anon/Alateen pamphlets and books: Is it time to reorder? Check supplies.
- ❖ Public outreach materials: Always a good idea to have a few Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism magazines on hand.
- ❖ Meeting schedule: Is it updated? Are there enough copies available?
- ❖ Most importantly, please make sure that your meeting information is up to date, not just on the local meeting schedule, but on the AIS, Area and WSO websites as well. When newcomers, looking for help, call or search online for meeting information, they will know where and when to find your group. We want everyone to feel welcome in our Al-Anon and Alateen meetings!

(FROM IN THE LOOP)



# CAPE AREA ECHO

## TRADITION SEVEN

*Every group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions*

### **Al-Anon has but one purpose to help families of alcoholics**

Tradition Six – Our Family Groups ought never endorse, finance or lend our name to any outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary spiritual aim. Although a separate entity, we should always co-operate with Alcoholics Anonymous.

Concept Twelve, Warranty One Sufficient operating funds, including an ample reserve, should be its prudent financial principle.

I have been pondering the writing of this article for some time. Tradition Six, Tradition Seven and Warranty One, seem to come together as we draw to the end of yet another year and take stock of the previous 12 months, and prepare for the next 12. This time may be a good to look within our groups and see:

- how do I contribute towards my group both financially and spiritually?
- how does my group keep record of the asset that is group contributions – is it kept as safe and well recorded as we do our own financial records, or do we place the bag somewhere without heeding that our members have placed a responsibility of safeguarding their contribution, and that these funds should find their way to the Area office, once the groups expenses have been settled?

We, as members of a group, need to participate in the running of our groups as only then can they be healthy and continue to be available and open for those newcomers who may walk

through those doors. Healthy both financially and spiritually.

Money matters can at times sour the relationships within a group and we should continuously be aware of and strive to avoid this.

Proper measures should be in place in each group to record contributions and these should be transparent within the group and the Area as a whole.



Each group is autonomous, but we all work under the guidance of Al-Anon's 36 principles. Prudent reserves to cover costs within a group for a period of six months is a good place to start. The Area is currently working towards this.

Having a set period for this ample reserve, may assist groups to stay away from accumulating too much money within the group which may become unhealthy, as Al-Anon's primary spiritual aim is to focus on those affected by the disease of alcoholism and not money or prestige. This could possibly take away from the message of the programme.

Fundraising from events under the auspices of Al-Anon should be just that, fundraisers to either cover shortfalls within groups and/or the Area, ever keeping the primary focus on Al-Anon. These should never be for the benefit of one or a few members.

We should constantly remind ourselves that Al-Anon has but one purpose to help families of alcoholics.

*~Fatima D. Finance Coordinator*

## HEARD IN A MEETING:

Here are some of the gems I've heard at the Saldanha Rally, Mini Convention and then a chat I had with a fellow programme member.

- ❖ I have keys to the tool box.
- ❖ Using the tools and changed attitudes
- ❖ Old ways won't open new doors
- ❖ You're not allowed to refuse to share is you're asked
- ❖ We may be joined at the hip, but we're not joined at the head.
- ❖ You cannot love a man into sobriety.
- ❖ We live for today, that we don't have regrets tomorrow.
- ❖ Al-Anon makes the bitter better.
- ❖ Forcing solutions in areas we are not in control of.
- ❖ The difference between uncertainty and serenity is the PAUSE. When you PAUSE you reach out to a Higher Power!
- ❖ When opportunity meets readiness, God makes the introduction.
- ❖ God never stops giving us opportunities, but more often we're not ready. However, he keeps on giving until we are ready. He never abandons us.
- ❖ Step 10 Inventory –
- ❖ Prayer in the Morning: Please guide me through the day. Your will be done.
- ❖ Prayer in the Evening: Thank you for allowing me life throughout the day and if my will took over in certain aspects, forgive me, and help me do better tomorrow.
- ❖ We are determined to become what He wants us to be with His help.

