

NEW YORK SOUTH ASSEMBLY AREA (Panel 57)

P.O. Box 30, Radio City Station, New York, NY 10101



Speak-Easy



Fall 2019 / October - December
nysaafg.org



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The Officers and Coordinators of Panel 57



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The **Speak-Easy** is published four (4) times a year:

The **Fall** edition (October, November and December),

and will ready for the September AWSC, and the October Assembly.

The Winter edition (January, February and March), to be ready for the January AWSC, and the February Assembly.

The Spring edition (April, May and June), will be ready for the AWSC in March, and the Assembly in April.

The Summer edition (July, August and September), will be ready for the May AWSC, and the June Assembly.

Dates for 2019:

AWSC = Sunday, January 6 / Sunday, March 3 / Sunday, May 19 / Sunday, September 8

Assembly = Sunday, February 10 / Sunday, April 7 / Saturday, June 1 / Sunday, October 6

Thoughts From Our Officers

Area Delegate / Taaj J.

For the first time, and by request of the groups, we are posting the delegate report for the World Service Conference on our NYSAAF.org website, so all groups can read it in its entirety, the report from the 2019 WSC. This was the first WSC held in three languages, with simultaneous interpretation occurring in all sessions.

Also, the Conference Summary can be downloaded from Al-Anon.org, also in 3 languages. And currently, the paper copies of the Summary can also be ordered in 3 languages, and is always a wonderful tool for in-reach to groups not being connected.

The TEAM event will be re-configured, and the new option will be presented at the 2020 WSC in Virginia Beach.

In New York South, groups are now receiving regular updates via a Delegate Blast, using a Mail Chimp Service, so once again, groups that have not been previously connected, may receive information that was not previously disseminated.

October is our election Assembly so the rotation of service will be in full swing. All GRs will rotate out as well, so our hope is that the newly elected GRs and service workers will attend so as to become oriented while the outgoing panel is still in place.

It has been an honor to serve and I will be excited to welcome new members to service shortly.

Editor's Note: For more information and exceptions on serving as a GR, see page 149 of the Service Manual.



Alternate Delegate / Emily D-C.

If you've ever had a group inventory, you may recall hearing about Knowledge-Based Decision-Making (KBDM) when reviewing the following questions:

“Are group business meetings conducted in a manner that members feel safe to share their opinions?”

“Does our group have a process for the minority voice to be heard even after we've made a decision?”

Many members have never heard of Knowledge-Based Decision-Making. They're more comfortable using Robert's Rules of Order. Each group is free to decide how to reach a group conscience decision (3), but when members hear that there are spiritual ways to conduct group business meetings, they're often interested in learning how.

KBDM was first introduced at the 2006 World Service Conference. The Conference Chairperson's intention was to reclaim “Al-Anon's original core values and principles,” and to “make the quality of the decision more important than who makes it.” (3) KBDM was then adopted by each subsequent World Service Conference, and by our N.Y. South Area Assembly.

Some of the hallmarks of KBDM include: “dialogue before deliberation” and “common access to full information for all decision makers.” (3) This is in marked contrast to Robert's Rules of Order, in which motions are made and seconded before any discussion is had. I find that premature motions create the urgency of a “ticking clock”, with winners and losers—those making a motion, convincing others of its merits, and then calling for a majority ruling.

In KBDM, our aim is to discern Higher Power's will for our group and promote unity. This approach is consistent with Tradition Two: *For our group purpose there is but one authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.* KBDM also reflects the spirit of Concept Twelve, Warranty Three: *that all decisions be reached by discussion, vote, and whenever possible by unanimity.* Our Service Manual states: “By sharing information as equals, taking time for discussion, and maintaining principles above personalities during the discussions, groups are often able to reach unanimity in their decisions.”(1) When it comes to group business meetings, these words help us replace urgency with patience, open-mindedness, and the assumption of good will.

To learn more about Knowledge-Based Decision-Making, here are some good references:

- 1) *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual: Business Meetings and Group Conscience* (pp. 49-51)
- 2) *Paths to Recovery: Tradition Two* (pp. 145-153)
- 3) *Many Voices, One Journey*: (pp. 363-367)

Area Chairperson / Ellen D.

A day at a time almost three years have gone by since I first accepted this service position as NYS Area Chair. To say that I have been changed by this experience is an understatement. I have often heard that service provides opportunities to work on defects of character, I can personally attest to the truth in that. When I stay in my comfort zone, I am of course comfortable, however, I do not grow. As a matter of fact, I lose sight of the many possibilities that await me if I just take a chance and say yes to all this wonderful program has to offer. I have learned that this is a program of repetition and self reflection; that I cannot force another to understand, believe, or follow the principles I hold so dear. What I can do is attempt, one moment at a time, to practice the principles found in the Steps, Traditions and Concepts in all my affairs. Clearly, I fall short and so am reminded that I have an opportunity to try again. The changes I have made in my life have been directly related to my willingness to make mistakes and learn from them.

Al-Anon is a miraculous program that exists solely through the service of its membership. It is my sincerest hope that there will be many among us who are willing to step up for service outside of the group. I do understand that we each do what we are able, when we are able. This is a "WE" program and those who have done the service you may be considering will love and support you throughout the term; all you need do is ask for help. Please pray for the willingness to be willing to serve this beautiful program which has given each of us so much.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve New York South the past three years.

**Area Secretary / Sue V.**

That was a quick 3 years!! My service as Area Secretary is quickly coming to a close. The past 3 years have been a true gift of inspiration in furthering my recovery. I can only hope my service has also helped inspire you in your recovery. By serving as Area Secretary, I have been in the unique position of helping to preserve a piece of Al-Anon history in the New York South Area for years to come. I feel so blessed to have been able to practice Concept 4 in this manner. Plus, this service has really helped to get me involved on many levels in the Area including participating on the planning committee for the TEAM event this past June. Serving as Area Secretary has expanded my knowledge of the program while also helping me *practice these principles in all my affairs*. Program has taught me that as long as I keep *passing it on*, the gifts of the program will keep coming. Even during times (and there were many!) when other commitments in my life have increased, I have always found the time and energy to fulfill my Al-Anon service. As we say, "*When I Got Busy, I Got Better.*" It is so motivating to know that when I give service, I open myself to the gifts of the program.

I want to take a moment to thank everyone of Panel 57: Our Delegate, Area Chair, Alternate Delegate and Treasurer as well as all the Coordinators, Liaisons, District Reps and Group Reps. It has been a tremendous 3 years and I will be forever beholden to my Higher Power and my Sponsor for encouraging me to take this step! Serving as an Area Officer is an honor and a privilege. I truly hope that you, too, find the courage to step beyond your comfort zone and try something new – how about serving at the Area level? I'd be happy to talk to you more about serving as Area Secretary!



Treasurer / GraceMarie H.

As I come to an end of my 1 and ¾ terms of service, I would like to share some of my observations.

When I first took the commitment, it was the furthest thing from my mind. I had recently come back to NY from NJ and was the GR for my group in Staten Island. I went to an assembly and there was no treasurer. I was asked to help write up deposits for the area and in the blink of an eye I was talked into putting in my trusted servant's application for Treasurer. Now granted, this is what I did for a living, but I really didn't think I was ready to take on the Area's finances. I had a fulltime job at the time (I'm retired now) and had been through some rough family times. Well lo and behold, the slogan "You don't always get what you want, but you always get what you need" was put into action.

I prayed and meditated considering all the ramifications of being Area Treasurer and took the position. Al-Anon has helped me through many hard times through the years, but service at this level is unbelievable. It has presented so many wonderful opportunities for me that I don't have the time or room to list them.

First it taught me to recognize and take advantage of these opportunities. I met and got to know so many wonderful members, that I probably never would have known otherwise. I was able to ask for and receive all the help I needed to get started and the confidence I needed to do the job.

I learned so much about the program and putting the Concepts into action. I learned to speak up when I felt I had something to add to an issue and not speak up when it was in the Program's best interest to keep silent. I learned to look at issues in terms of the greater good of all the members. I learned to graciously accept the group conscience and understand that it was decided by a Higher Power and not by my will.

My whole outlook has changed for the better. I am stronger and able to look at things with a better perspective. I am able to see more clearly what is truly important to me and to not allow trivia to drag me down. I have grown in putting principles above personalities, which is my favorite Tradition. I learned to listen and be aware not to judge on appearances or personalities. I learned to stand up for myself and have boundaries. I learned to be more discerning in my opinions and gentler in sharing them.

I am far from perfect and I don't endeavor to reach perfection. I have a long way to go and have learned to be grateful and enjoy the journey instead of dreading it. Service at this level is like a catapult on my road to recovery. The experiences are on a much larger level than just a group or district. Service has improved my life in every way.

Would I do it over? In a New York minute!

Thank you for allowing me to serve in this capacity for the Area. I definitely appreciated the opportunity.

Around the Area**Alateen / Gerry L**

"From what we get, we can make a living; what we give however, makes a life." ---Arthur Ashe

It's hard to believe that I am coming to the end of my service tenure as New York South Assembly Area's Alateen Coordinator. It has been a privilege and an honor to serve the Area in this position for the past, almost two and a half years. Service, when incorporated with my daily readings and attendance at Al-Anon meetings, conventions, having a sponsor and being a sponsor has really been what I like to refer to as "recovery on steroids."

During this time, I have had the opportunity to travel across our Area, from Suffolk County up to Ulster and everywhere in between. And, I thought that I had learned my lesson the first time I drove to Staten Island on a Friday during rush hour, but, hey, I'm in Al-Anon...it's progress, not perfection. I'd probably do it again, if I were asked.

I began my service journey helping set up a meeting room, then, coffee, newcomers, literature (never the treasury...never! Lol.) and all the other positions that so many of us have held. Service above the group level seemed so foreign to me. I didn't have a plan to someday serve that way. But, my Higher Power did.

My hand went up, seemingly out of my control at a Nassau County A.I.S. Quarterly meeting when it was mentioned that the Alateen Coordinator position was vacant. I had been an AMIAS for a while at that point. From there it was Chair of the ALISON Board, Nassau County's AIS, and somehow, I ended up here. Again, through the work of my HP. And I am eternally grateful.

I have met the most wonderful people during this time, both at Assemblies and AWSC meetings. All while being of service to the teens. You see, my father was a functional alcoholic, and it took ten years in program for me to discover that. How different could life have been had Mom discovered the rooms of Al-Anon and dragged my butt to Alateen? I'll never know. But, I can give back now. And that is why I chose to serve Alateen. It is my hope that reading this will encourage someone to step up and do the same.

Archives / Tracey S.

Thank you for your contact regarding the Al-Anon New York South Archives and Storage Unit. This email is checked periodically / nys.area.archives@gmail.com

If you need immediate contact regarding access to the storage unit please text or call, Tracey at 845-598-5658.

District 24 / District Representative / Sue V.:

In the spirit of unity and participation, District 24 is planning one more workshop for 2019 with speakers, food and fellowship. We are seeking a date in October and will provide the date as soon as arrangements have been made. We are seeking to bring in a speaker who can talk (firsthand) about Lois and the history of A.A. and Al-Anon. Please stay tuned!

Finally, with the end of the year quickly approaching, District 24 is preparing for the rotation of service as my time as District Rep is coming to a close. To those members who attend meetings in our District, please consider stepping up for this service. It is a wonderful opportunity to grow in recovery while giving service above the group level. In my 20 years of recovery, District 24 has always had a District Rep. Let's keep it going!

Discovery 2019 / Terry L.

I want to let everyone know that our 2019 Discovery Convention is over and we did very well. I had a fabulous group of people as my committee and I am grateful that we all came together and made this year the best that it could be. I want to thank each and every one of you. We had a few challenges and everyone stepped up and helped each other out. We fell short on a few items but all in all we were a success.

TEAM Event / Tracey S.

The TEAM (*Together Empowering Al-Anon Members*) Event, took place on June 1st 2019, and was an inspiring and positive event enjoyed by so many, a true GIFT of RECOVERY.

I have much gratitude to have been asked to coordinate the TEAM event. As the title says, Together Empowering Al-Anon Members, I am grateful for the many members who have supported me on this journey:

My service sponsor who has supported me in the kind gentle, loving & encouraging way. The officers of the New York South Area: Ellen, Taaj, GraceMarie, Emily and Sue. How fantastic to be able to collaborate with Marsha W. from WSO, and to meet and hear Trustees share their story! All the planning members who accepted my need (I don't think it was *their* need!!) for the many emails & meetings. Also, the behind-the-scenes support of having labels printed, local Al-Anon members in Suffern, NY to stuff envelopes and printing for the Archives display.

TEAM has been about encouraging service. It has brought together Al-Anon members who, in fellowship and with love & kindness have created the success of the event.

This experience has truly shown me the wider need to continue to encourage and empower Al-Anon members to grow in recovery through service.

I hope each of you will invite at least one new member to participate in service in Al-Anon below/beyond the group. As together we empower Al-Anon members, we give it away & others have the opportunity to experience what we have been gifted for our recovery.

Please read the report on the TEAM evaluations, and the summary of the questions asked on the Inclusivity panel which will be available through your DRs. -- See attached Supplement.

The Steps, Traditions, and Concepts*October [10] / November [11] / December [12]***Steps:**

- 10 Continued to take inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
- 11 Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as *we understand Him*, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
- 12 Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to others, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

Traditions:

- 10 The Al-Anon Family Groups have no opinion on outside issues; hence our name ought never be drawn into public controversy.
- 11 Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, films, and TV. We need guard with special care the anonymity of all AA members.
- 12 Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles above personalities.

Concepts:

- 10 Service responsibility is balanced by carefully defined service authority and double-headed management is avoided.
- 11 The World Service Office is composed of selected committees, executives and staff members.
- 12 The spiritual foundation for Al-Anon's world services is contained in the General Warranties of the Conference, Article 12 of the Charter.

General Warranties of the Conference

In all proceedings the World Service Conference of Al-Anon shall observe the spirit of the Traditions:

1. that only sufficient operating funds, including an ample reserve, be its prudent financial principle;
2. that no Conference member shall be placed in unqualified authority over the members;
3. that all decisions be reached by discussion, vote and whenever possible by unanimity;
4. that no Conference action ever be personally punitive or an incitement to public controversy;
5. that though the Conference serves Al-Anon it shall never perform any act of government; and that like the fellowship of Al-Anon Family Groups which it serves, it shall always remain democratic in thought and action.

**The Al-Anon Declaration**

Let it begin with me, When anyone,
anywhere reaches out for help,
Let the hand of Al-Anon
and Alateen always be there,
and Let it begin with me!