

AL-ANON guidelines

The Shared Experiences Of Al-Anon and Alateen Members.

Area Archives

G-30

One of the best ways to protect the future of the Al-Anon fellowship in an area is to look to the past. Of course, our primary purpose remains—to carry the message of hope to the families and friends of alcoholics. We can, however, renew our own sense of purpose by continuing to collect and preserve the rich and meaningful heritage of our past within the whole range of Al-Anon services.

PURPOSE

The purpose of an area archives is to preserve the experience, history and memorabilia of the Al-Anon fellowship from the beginning of the family movement in that locale. This history should be preserved so as to be available to the membership and the serious researcher, within the framework of our Traditions, for the good of Al-Anon as a whole.

ARCHIVES COMMITTEE AND ARCHIVIST

In some areas, an archives committee is appointed first; it then chooses an archivist to coordinate archival activities. In other areas, an archivist is selected as a coordinator at the assembly for a three-year term. The archives committee is usually responsible to the area world service committee (AWSC). It would be advantageous for this committee to be composed of longtime members of Al-Anon, knowledgeable about the history in the area and sources for obtaining historical material. Familiarity with library or archival procedure would also be helpful.

This committee would be responsible for establishing policies, budget requirements and procedures approved by the area world service committee for that particular area. The archives committee maintains final responsibility and authority for the use of the archives and exercises its group conscience in regard to all matters of general policy.

It would be wise for an archivist and archives committee to become familiar with the current interpretations of copyright regulations pertaining to fair use and privacy.

LOCATION

An area archives might start in the home of the person interested in assuming the responsibility of collecting the material. Some areas house the archives at a location such as an Al-Anon information service (AIS) or literature distribution center (LDC) nearest the archives coordinator. Later, the archives might be placed in a centrally located Al-Anon office.

Wherever you choose to keep the material, remember the following:

- material should be kept in acid-free folders, boxes and photo sleeves
- material should be kept in a cool, dry place
- material should be stored so as to protect the anonymity of all members

WHAT TO KEEP AND WHAT TO BUILD ON

Possible categories are:

- various editions of Conference Approved Literature (perhaps autographed)
- local public information literature
- Longtimers' Questionnaires and Group History Forms
- photographs of important events
- directories—world, area and local
- minutes of district and assembly meetings (motions could be indexed separately for quick reference)
- editions of area and local newsletters
- as members serve in various capacities, ask them to save their papers, notes, etc.
- WSO newsletters (*The Forum*, *Inside Al-Anon*, *Inside Al-Anon Xtra*, *Area Highlights*, etc.)
- *World Service Conference Summaries*
- Conference Brochures of previous delegates (including handouts and correspondence)
- relevant correspondence
- scrapbooks of newspaper clippings
- memorabilia, souvenirs, programs of past conventions, conferences, etc.



The importance of clearly identifying all material: people, places, events, dates, etc. cannot be stressed enough. Many items will be identified with the date of origin. (Minutes, etc.) However, photographs should have the name(s) of subject(s) and the date written on the back. **Undated material can add hours of time to the work of future researchers and may sometimes make the document less valuable. SO BE SURE TO DATE EVERYTHING!!**

A taped history might be considered. This could be accomplished by requesting longtime members to send in an audio cassette. The archivist or another committee member may arrange for an interview. The recording should focus on early recollections of how the group started and grew, sharing members' personal stories as well. These tapes, cassettes or even written accounts from longtime members would be a valuable and interesting section of any archives.

The extent of archival holdings depends largely on space. Common sense is a key factor in determining what is history; what will be history in the future, and what can be discarded.

FINDING THE DOCUMENTS

After an archives is organized, a card catalog or other finding aid is necessary to locate material in the collection. Contacting a local library might be useful in establishing a system.

Al-Anon's tradition of anonymity regarding members, regardless of whether they are living or deceased, should always be kept in mind when making material available.

SUPPLIES AND EQUIPMENT (as needed and as feasible)

- acid-free storage boxes and file folders
- shelves for storage boxes
- scrapbooks for photos, newspaper clippings, etc. (acid free scrapbooks, photo sleeves)
- card catalog, index in binder or other kind of finding aid
- display cabinet for memorabilia
- framed photos of places and events for wall hangings
- cabinet for tape storage
- tape recorder (cassette)
- supply of blank tapes
- archival plastic paper clips (to be used instead of staples)
- white cotton gloves (for handling photos, slides and negatives)

A good source for supplies are catalogs from archival supply houses. Check your local stationery store, library or the yellow pages in your telephone directory.

SUGGESTED USES FOR ARCHIVAL MATERIAL

Archival material can be used for workshops at assemblies, anniversary meetings, public information displays, and anywhere that you would like to share your Al-Anon history.

Remember, anonymity is to be stressed when displaying photographs within the fellowship. At events open to the public, avoid displaying photographs or other material that might reveal the identity of individual members.

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Check local libraries, colleges and/or universities for applicable courses, workshops, seminars, etc.

