

Keys To Serenity

a time for family recovery



12/1/2017

Final Report on 2017 Area 61 Convention

Cathy T., Convention Chair

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Report

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The first Area 61, Wisconsin and the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, was held on the weekend of October 20, 21 and 22, 2017, at the Chula Vista Resort in Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin. The planning began with four of us visiting two venues in the Dells area, Chula Vista and the Kalahari. Chula Vista gave us the best deal by far with \$99 guest room rate and no charge for meeting rooms. Mary Sk., our Convention Coordinator did her negotiating magic in getting them to agree to a minimum amount of guaranteed guest rooms and banquet and breakfast meals.

With the venue set, Ann and I began the planning process by asking fellow members to serve as committee chairs and were able to fill all positions but one that being Entertainment Chair. Our committee:

Convention Chair, Cathy T.

Convention Co-Chair, Ann J.

AA Program, Jo Mc.

Alateen, Connie O.; Co-Chair, Mary Sc.

Banquet/Decorations, Jami C.

Greeter, Rhonda P.

Hospitality, Sandi H.; Co-Chair, Ellyne J.

Program/Speaker, Carol V.

Publicity, Alanna K.

Raffle, Jan S.; Co-Chair, Gerry L.

Registration, Sharyl M.

Volunteer, Linda D.

As Convention Chair, I tried to hold regular meetings either in person at Assemblies or as a Teleconference. I think this worked well for the most part. Ann and I created Convention Guidelines which we based off of the Illinois Convention Guidelines. I did ask for guideline examples from a couple of other areas, but did not receive any answers. We did our best to tailor these guidelines to our area and will continue to tweak them in the coming years. Personally, I would like to assist the 2018 and 2019 Convention Committees on the guidelines.

In the beginning of the planning stage and throughout process, I was hoping we would have at least 100 registrations for the convention and thought 200 registrations would be wonderful. In the end, we had a total of 302 registrations! This included 40 AAs and 12 Alateens. I was bowled over when I heard the final number. Thank you, thank you to all the committee members, volunteers and participants. It is my hope that this number continues to grow in the coming years.

The preliminary Financial Report shows the gross revenue at around \$6,000.00. (Yes that is six THOUSAND dollars.) This includes all major expenses having been paid, which includes all the

printing and the billing from Chula. Ann will have the complete report as soon as she is sure she has gotten all the expenses from everyone – committee, speakers & anything else.

Over all, everything went well. Of course there are some things we could have done better or differently and thing that should be carried over into the next convention. Here are some of the comments from our wrap-up meeting held immediately after the close of the convention on Sunday, October 22:

Hospitality:

- For next year: Please clean before noon on Fri., vacuum Sat. am. and Sun. am (early), take out garbage on Sat. am. and Sun. am.
- Need 6' extension cord
- Reserve room: (done/ Mary Sky 10/23/17)
- Note: email information early with notes: hospitality info, map, nature trails
- Program out early online

Alateen: Need more AMIAS volunteers; possibly have a box to check on registration form if they are an AMIAS

Volunteers:

- Get the list of volunteer names on schedule for each category ahead of time.
- Maybe ask for 1 hr. from each pre-registrant
- Central location for volunteer master schedule
- Literature Volunteers: overlap the “newbie’s” with trained volunteers

Registration:

- Chair needs to be at table all the time. (Registration)
- Online registration? (Possibly another person do this with Sharyl next year)
- (See next page under Publicity)
- Meal tickets: need thicker stock paper (Mary Sky has been informed)
- Signage in the hall: better sign/ maybe we do

Program/Speaker Chair:

- Need two chairs for this: One for speakers, and one for the meetings, panels and workshops.
- Scheduling: Have step meeting the same time as step meeting; topic meeting the same time as topic meeting (alleviate some meetings being overcrowded) Maybe have afternoon speaker meeting right after lunch such as 1:00 to 2:20 with afternoon meetings/panels/workshops then scheduled 2:30-3:20; 3:30-4:20; 4:30-5:20.
- Sign: “Quiet please” in the hallway
- Speakers: Have seven speakers again next year: 3 Al-Anon, 2 Alateen, 2 AA

AA: Open panels (Al-Anon welcome) , possibly recorded

Public Outreach:

- Liked location. People visited / took candy☺
- Could use a couple chairs next year for sitting to peruse

Archives:

- Please move out into room more
- Could use a laptop to play a short CD (need hotel equipment). . . equipment: panels in morning, Archives in afternoon?
- Could use a couple chairs as well.

Greeters: Place in better spots. Wear a banner or something to designate

Speakers:

- On Sat.: maybe have after lunch so then ballroom can be readied in timely fashion by hotel for banquet
- Lighting dim on the speakers.

Raffle:

- Need to know who to buy tickets from: they can wear something noticeable.
- They don't need so much space. (Use "G" for meeting room?)

Publicity:

- Increase flyer to legal size
- Website for convention
- Possible information printed on back of flyer (like Green Lake)
- Sandi H. will get more info on Shop-O-Fy (sp) possible online pre-registration (plus make printed copies)

Meals:

- Possibility of plated meal for dinner instead of buffet style (more timely service plus helps out the dietary restrictions)
- Breakfast Buffet worked fine (people arrived at staggered times and diet restrictions handled well for this meal)

Chula Vista: Do we want to book for 2019. Yes, we will start negotiating.

Expense of CD's:

- Look into other possible tapers. (not sure who will do this)
- Need: sign for prices of our Convention CD's

MAICO: AA Intergroup from Madison need to have a sign saying who they are as some people were confused between them and our literature.

Meetings/Panels: Need to set aside space in rooms for walkers & wheel chairs.

Committee Reports

AA Chair – Jo Mc

Jo indicated that all the AA meetings were actually Panels and were Open Meetings. She also asked that we consider having the AA Panels recorded next year.

Alateen Chair– Connie O.

Volunteer Hours – For me – Planning (4) – Preparing (4) – During (8)

AMIAS Volunteers – Mary Sc has

Recommend for next year – More easels (I requested 3, but only received 1), Also space near Public Information for Alateen Info Display

Supplies left over – Information Board, Alateen Talk Box and Topic Sheets, Misc. Forms, i.e. Behavioral Guidelines, etc.

WHAT WORKED –

- (1) Having an awesome co-chair. I couldn't have done this without her.
- (2) Participation of teens – There were between 8 and 12. And the sharing was awesome.
- (3) I brought and we used the Alateen red and the Alateen blue books. Wished I had given them to the kids that were new to the program.

WHAT DIDN'T WORK –

1. The Registration Process – I would suggest keeping it near the other, but would need volunteers
2. Not sure we caught each AMIAS and put blue stickers on name tag or red on Alateens. Did others know what they meant or did they even notice. If information was for the Alateen room, I question if we checked badges.
3. Not enough participation from all Active Alateen Groups
4. I didn't have Alateen Speakers check in with me, so I knew they were in hotel.
5. There was miscommunication regarding the 2nd Alateen speaker and meals, but it was taken care of
6. The information boards were not in an area to benefit everyone. Will ask for space near Public Information next year and will need easels.
7. I had too many snacks. Would keep it simple next time. We ended up taking the left overs to the hospitality room.
8. I had too many activity tables. There wasn't much time except for the meetings. I'd have a couple, just in case.
9. I need to keep in mind that a convention is different than Midlake.
10. Would try and get information in Alateen Talk and Illinois and Minnesota contacts.
11. Redo Meeting Opening, Anonymity Statement, and Closing to one page – similar to Al-Anon's)

Alateen Co-Chair– Mary Sc.

\$21.25 CAL for AMIAS Workshop- enough remaining for 2018

7.80 for 100 each red and blue triangle stickers – plenty for 2018 and 2019

26.74 for 10 AMIAS Application sets – just 5 remain; Alateen/Minor Permission forms, Rules for participating, misc.

\$55.79 total amount spent

Alateen Co-chair Mary Sc Hours- 18 hours plus planning meetings:

8 during convention; 10 hours prepping materials – permission forms, etc.; perhaps 5 hours would be needed in 2018.

Plus average 1.5 hours each in planning meetings times total number of meetings - do not have the total.

2018 AMIAS volunteer hours needed:

12 hours – 2 each for 6 Alateen Meetings

21 hours - 2 each for 10.5 hours registration based on 2017 convention registration schedule (3.5 hours Friday evening and 7 hours Saturday)

Alateen/Minor Permission forms check-in process:

To eliminate confusion regarding Alateen/Minor permission forms, recommend directing convention pre-registrants to the actual online form: <http://www.area61afg.org/wp-Content/uploads/2017/10/Participating-Minors-Information-and-Permission-Form-10-2017.pdf> Note: The signature of parent or legal guardian completing a permission form for Alateens/Minors attending the convention with an AMIAS **must be notarized**. The responsible AMAS/adults and teens bring this form to the convention; it is not mailed it with registration form.

However, when parents or legal guardians who attend and stay for the convention complete the permission form with their Alateen/minor during onsite registration, their signature must be witnessed by the AMIAS receiving the completed permission form (different than pre-registration). As the AAPP, will work with Alateen Chair and co-chair to clarify this process.

Recommend having a table for the Alateen/Minor check-in with permission forms across the way from the main registration tables near the Alateen Information easels Alateen Chair, Connie O, requested in her portion of the report. Have some tiny flashing lights on the table sign indicating this is the Participating Alateen/Minor Permission Form check-in table.

Banquet/Decoration – Jami C.

Volunteer Hours:

	Pin Production in Hours	Banquet Setup, Tear Down & Packing for coming to and going home in hours	Creative Time in hours looking for ideas, shopping, making prototypes
Total hours for each activity	32	12	40
Estimated total hours overall			84

- ✚ I have already begun planning for our favor for the 2018 convention. The production of favors and center piece materials will begin in January 2018. My committee and I will meet once a month until the Convention.
- ✚ I spent a total of \$607.41 on materials for the convention favors and banquet decorations. I will be using many of the items purchased this year again next year. (See table below) The glass vases, flameless candles, moss, and some of the other decorations can be used for many years to come. I bought four storage bins that hold all 18 vases, the flameless candles and all of the materials used for the center pieces this year. The fabric that I bought for the registration tables can be used for the next two conventions as it has locks and keys on it.

2018 Supply Cost Estimate:

Materials for center pieces and committee nametags	\$48.02
Fabric for registration tables	\$60.08
Materials for center pieces and keys	\$99.49
Vinyl for center pieces & bead hardware for keys	\$53.09

8 center piece vases, moss that went into the vases	\$143.78
Storage bins for banquet materials	\$41.39
Flameless candles for center pieces	\$16.21
Estimated Total for materials that will be used next year	\$462.06

Recommendations for 2018: Equipment, supplies, organization, manpower, etc.

- ✚ The Banquet Chair must be kept in the loop on the meal count as that effects how the number of center pieces and other items need to be provided for the Saturday night Banquet and the Sunday morning brunch. This year I was not included in the convention counts therefore my center piece count was off by 8 – I find that crazy making. Even as the numbers change in the days right before the convention the banquet chair needs to know.
- ✚ I will arrive extra early to the convention next year to put our table clothes on the registration tables and the other tables in the lobby – archive display and the outreach committee. I told the convention coordinator that I had the fabric at one of the convention committee conference calls but it must have been lost in translation.
- ✚ I would be helpful for the convention coordinator to be present before the ballroom is set up for the banquet to handle any last minute changes and/or redirect hotel staff on how the room is to be set up. Drawing a picture of the room set up works only so far. The coordinator needs to be present especially if the coordinator wishes to keep tight control over all the details.

Greeter Chair – Rhonda P.

My suggestions to improve 2018:

- Have the greeters stationed closer in to the convention area. I recommend that we have one inside of the registration room to direct people to register. The other can be nearby, just outside the registration room.
- I agree with others that having a special designation for greeters would help convention attendees easily locate a greeter.

Things that worked well to continue in 2018:

- Continue to have two greeters per shift. This way there is a buddy system – and in case someone backs out, there will be at least one greeter.
- Creating a greeter spreadsheet that includes names, phone numbers, emails, time slots and location (attached).
- Chair checks in with greeters during shift to see how they are doing, answer any questions, etc.

Issues that came up in 2017:

- One of the greeters was helping at the registration desk instead of greeting. I believe she was confused of her role – even though I sent many emails leading up to the

Convention, including the map of the conference center. She seemed reluctant to leave the registration table stating that they really needed help.

- Make sure there are enough volunteers at Registration Table (see above).

Hospitality Chair – Sandi H.

Volunteer hours = 25 (not including 2 people on a shift) includes shopping, planning and at convention. Not attending conferences or conference calls

\$567.00 spent for supplies and food

Leftover supplies will be used next year.

Comments reflected that people were pleased with choices offered. Choices for next year will be changed, less junk more vegies and fruit and cheese.

Recommendations for 2018 Hospitality committee:

Hotel Equipment:

- 2 rectangle tables
- 1 classroom table
- 2 round tables with 8 extra chairs
- Large garbage and recyclables bins
- 1 6' extension card (Nesco), we have 1 extension cord for coffee
- change linens, empty trash and vacuum room every morning before 6:30am

Need to buy for 2018

****use tax exempt number****

***based on pre-registration of 250.. (if more adjust amounts)*

Vegies, Fruit (bananas, pears, cuties, grapes) cheese, (equivalent to 5 trays), trail mix-3, granola bars – 2 boxes, M&M's, Gardettos – 1 bag, Cheezit - 1 bag, donuts – 4 doz, candy – 1 large bag assorted, Cheetos 2 bags, meatballs -1 bag, marinara sauce – 1 jar, Smokey Joes -1 bag, sausage bits – 1 big bag, coffee -3# regular, 2 # decaf, assorted teas, **sugar, sweetener, honey , creamer 2 med. containers, , 320 4 oz bottles water, will need 2 more packages coffee cups
Paper plates
Paper towels

Need to bring:

2 crockpots
trays for vegies
3 carafes
dish detergent and dish towels
big cooler for water
gloves for food handlers
serving spoons
charging stations for phones
signs for coffee, water, schedule and Hospitality

Left from this year:

Zip lock bags,
Napkins
1.5 containers of coffee cups
Dixie cups
Bowls
Stir stix and toothpicks
Little containers

Recommendations for staffing room:

- 2 people per 2 hour shift
- **need people for load in and load out**
- coffee needs to be ready at :45 after the hour before meeting release
- make sure hours scheduled are the same as hours published in program. Put hospitality hours on program.

Program/Speaker Chair – Carol V.

- Volunteer hours: Just mine. Probably 40 before the event and then add on the entire event.
- Recommendations for 2018: Recommend by having a co-chair and maybe one more person. Maybe two co-chairs. One to check rooms, one to help with workshops, and all to help host speakers.
- I don't have all the numbers from the meetings, workshops, and panels but probably could use another panel and/or another meeting room as some of the more popular topic meetings were packed. Also learned not to put topic meetings up against step meetings.
- Realized early during the event that we didn't need a microphone for the panels and if there is audience participation during the panels anyone speaking must come up to the mic to get on the tape.
- The workshops which have a mic must be put one room away from other meeting rooms, maybe use an end room for this.
- Meeting format was good but would also like to add the Steps and Traditions.
- Might want to also get two members for each meeting in case one does not show up. And need phone numbers and emails. Will redesign the sign-up sheet(s)

Publicity – Alanna K.

Raffle – Jan S.

Items in Tote for next year:

Small box of office supplies Need Tape

1 Roll of Raffle Tickets & a partial *(will need to purchase 1 roll for next year)

Paper bags & sicker dots

6 Aprons
2 plastic ticket containers
2 foam poster boards
Notebook
Raffle sheets for buyers to put name & address.

NOTES

- It suggested we make our Aprons more visible or wear something on our heads so the raffle ticket sellers are more visible.
- The Quilt was a big seller as we sold 210 tickets and 23 tickets for the Paintings and used almost a whole for the Basket raffle. Had a total of 51 members who bought tickets for this raffle. Most people bought \$5 or more.
- Most of the tickets were sold on Saturday and Friday was spent setting up and receiving the baskets.
- Had a separate roll of tickets for the Quilt & Paintings Raffle and had them put name and address & phone # and assigned a number which we wrote on each ticket they purchased.
- Had a total of gift 39 baskets which included 8 for the scarves. Did notice many were in the baskets supplied at the fall assembly.
- Volunteer hours: Before Convention 3; During Convention: 16

Registration Chair – Sharyl M.

Here are a few of my thoughts about the convention as registrar. I did not get too much of the rest of the activities but did sit in on a meeting on self-esteem and also took part in Saturday night banquet and heard the speakers. Also played a game.

1. I thought we had enough meetings as a committee to keep us informed and motivated.
2. We stayed in touch via email.
3. We had information sheets to define our job.
4. You made yourself available to answer questions and assist as needed.
5. The monthly conference calls were helpful as we got closer to the date.

Suggestion I would make from my limited experience are:

1. Each person should know who needs to know what they are doing.
2. I think starting to make reservations and check the PO BOX for so many months ahead is too long. Maybe we could start taking reservations in April or May which would give us 5 ½ months.
3. Using the space in the lobby by the main ballroom as a convening place with interesting posters, information, registration, sign-up boards for volunteering, a person easily identified as the raffle seller circulating, and someone sitting at the registration table at all times for information and help.
4. For myself, as registrar, I would have preferred having one other person to work with, who would be able to handle the spread sheet and make information available from Excel. Also to talk with. However, it sounds like we may be doing the registering on line,

using Event Brite.com or Shopafy which may cut down that need greatly. I would not be that person. If we do it the same way as this year, next year, I would help if I had a person who would work with Excel. Also, we probably have to talk about using credit cards or make it easier for people to use their cards.

5. Make sure all registrations are available and alphabetized for reference as questions come up at time and it is helpful to have that handy

Registration supplies:

1. I turned in my supply cost sheet to Ann, so she has the total.
2. We own a cash box which would not need to be purchased again.
3. We have a tote or two for registration supplies. I believe Ann has them.
4. We have lanyards left, though I did not count them.
5. Signs are made for table and could be reused.
6. I did not submit costs for paper I used in printing out what I needed. I just absorbed that myself.

Volunteer Chair – Linda D.

As Volunteer Coordinator, I estimate I spent 10 hours preparing and updating the various volunteer committee lists. There were no expenses. Email worked well for updating the lists for each committee chair.

General Comments

Survey Results

Here is a summary of the survey we asked attendees to complete. There were 103 completed surveys.

1. How did you hear about the convention (indicate as many as apply)? 55 saw a flyer and 80 heard it announced at a meeting. 25 heard about it from friends. 11 saw information on the area website
2. What did you hope to find? 42 said fellowship/seeing other members/friends; 31 said Speakers/meeting/panels; 23 indicated recovery/living/growth/good inoculation of program before holidays; 16 experience, strength, hope/people living in the solution; 13 to support Area/Al-Anon/first convention; 11 serenity/peace renewal; 11 wanted to experience it/first convention
3. What did you most like about the Convention? 26 speakers-fabulous/included young people; 25 lots of topic choices-options for sessions/meetings; 21 fellowship/surrounded by love/seeing friends/included all – Al-Anon, Alateen & AA; 11 location/resort; 11 meetings – specifically feelings(1) and attitude (1); 8 well organized/amazing way people came together to put this one/ well run/thanks; other items noted: panels, for family, all of it, numbered keys ice breaker, meeting new people, beauty of location/nature

4. What would you add or delete? Add: Nature walk & talk; potpourri meeting; sponsor/sponsee panel; intimacy in alcoholic relationship; skits & interactive; topics better than panels; self love/self care; HP/spirituality; couples – Al-Anon/AA; more AA options; open reflection; old timer panel; grief; anger workshop; boundaries; various levels of Al-Anon service; newcomer; enabling; recovery in all areas of life – sex, money, work family * Delete: feelings was a bust, too negative; have only 1 writing workshop; delete writing workshops
5. What improvements would you suggest? *Meals: meat choice at banquet; less carbs at banquet; fruit w/ breakfast buffet; have a plated dinner; offer tea at banquet *Program & Scheduling: program on-line ahead of time and/or on registration form; more down time for water park, nature walk, visiting; know ahead what meals will be on your own; better define what a meeting/panel/workshop is ahead of time; more time for lunch; have night meetings after speakers
6. Please share your thoughts or comments regarding our speakers. Incredible/excellent/awesome/terrific/wonderful/great/fantastic/fabulous/A+/loved; Very good/liked/enjoyed; nice variety/good mix/timely message/inspirational/so comforting we are not alone/great recovery; Alateen's very good/eloquent/learned much/articulate/maturity/glad we had Alateen;
7. Are there Al-Anon, Alateen and/or AA speakers you would recommend for the future? (Please include any contact info you can). There were many suggestions to pass along for 2018 and beyond.
8. Would you like to have an option for child care even if it costs extra?
Yes: 14; No: 10; 5-Nice for those who need it.
9. Did you participate in the Game Night? Yes: 3; No: 87 Would you prefer another form of entertainment on Saturday night after the banquet such as a dance? Yes: 18; No: 10. Other suggestions: Nothing, more meetings, relaxation time, karaoke; hot tub time, move/for family, skits, prefer entertainment on Friday night.
10. Would you use an on-line registration service to pay by credit card, even if it cost a little more? Yes: 60; No: 36; Maybe: 3
11. The hospitality room asked for donations for items that were provided there, did you like the selection, anything you would delete or add? Room: Didn't go, didn't know where it was, like donation bucket-didn't feel like I was mooching, more monitoring/clean-up/selection; have jig saw puzzles & playing cards available. Food: Liked selection/good selection/great/excellent/wonderful, liked the fruit but could use more grapes, fewer sweets, could have more veggies/veggies were good, more cheese/juices/OJ, add sausage & lunchmeat/nuts. Many more comments, overall very good.
12. Of the members you know who didn't come, what reason did they give? Too expensive: 15/Too far to travel: 11/Other Commitments: 51/Other reasons: 20
13. The 2018 Convention is scheduled for this same weekend, Oct 19-21, at Chula Vista. What is the likelihood that you will attend? Absolutely!: 43/Probably: 33/Possibly: 14/No: 1 (have other commitment)
14. We have contracted to have the 2018 Convention at Chula Vista and soon need to decide about 2019. What do you like/dislike about having the convention here on an annual basis? LIKE: 47 - like/definitely/love it/great/accommodating/atmosphere; 11 – water park/good for families (even if they didn't use); 4 – beautiful setting; 4 – price is

good; 3 – centrally located. DISLIKE: 5 – poor quality of rooms; 2 – 10:30 check out time; Other dislikes: food wasn't great/too many people/fake & overpriced/\$33 is too expensive/no good restaurants in the Dells/meeting room walls too thin/need to improve check-in/carpet hard for wheelchairs. Other comments: Move around-Green Bay/Milwaukee/Neenah/Green Lake; try other places in Dells/be closer to town for lower food prices/hold the second week in October/tremendous amount of work for a few/didn't use water park/same place, same people do the work

15. It will take lots of members help to make our next convention a success (just an FYI the reason we didn't have a dance this year is no one stepped up to fill that position so it was eliminated, let's not let something like that happen again!) I am interested in helping plan next year's event: Yes-20; No-36 Maybe-3. I am interested in volunteering at the 2018 Convention: Yes-41; No-19; Maybe-4. 36 people gave their name & contact information.