

Lifeline

November 2011

Connecticut Area 7 Newsletter for Al-Anon / Alateen

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Announcements:

Events:

- AFG Convention Planning meeting
Sunday Nov. 13, 2011, 1:00 pm Come get involved.
Crowne Plaza, 100 Berlin Rd., Cromwell, CT
- CSCYPAA with Al-Anon participation
November 25, 26 & 27, 2011
Crowne Plaza, 100 Berlin Rd., Cromwell, CT

- CT Al-Anon Serenity Breakfast
January 15, 2012 (register now)
Crowne Plaza, 100 Berlin Rd., Cromwell, CT
- CT Al-Anon Convention - "Hand in Hand We Can"
March 30, 31 and April 1, 2012
Crowne Plaza, 100 Berlin Rd., Cromwell, CT
- Al-Anon International Convention
July 5-7, 2013, Vancouver, BC (save now)

Anniversaries:

- Tuesday, November 15, 2011
Woodbridge First Church of Christ
Meetinghouse Ln., Woodbridge, CT
7:00 pm food, fellowship, raffle
7:30 AA, Al-Anon, Alateen Speakers
- Wednesday, November 16, 2011
Serenity by the Sound AFG
26th Anniversary
Robert A. Johnson Community Center,
2nd Floor
201 Noble St, West Haven, CT
6:30 pm Buffet
7:30 pm AA, Al-Anon Speakers, Raffle
Finger foods appreciated



- Saturday, November 19, 2011, 10:30 am
New Haven Saturday
Let It Begin With Me, 22 years
Church of the Redeemer,
35 Cold Spring St., New Haven, CT
AA, Al-Anon and Alateen Speakers
Donations of refreshments and
raffle items appreciated
- Monday, November 21, 2011
Litchfield Alateen 11th Anniversary
St. Anthony's Church
49 South St. (Rt 63) Litchfield, CT,
Rear door
Food 7:00 pm, Alateen Speakers 8:00 pm
Finger foods appreciated
(normally meets at St. Michael's,
25 South St.)

New Meeting

Sunday 6:00 - 7:30 pm "Steps To Recovery"
Woodmont United Church Of Christ
1000 New Haven Ave, Milford, CT
Week 1 Step, 2 Tradition,
3 Concept, 4 Discussion

Need Support:

Monday 7:30 pm Hamden NEW TIME
Step meeting
Spring Glen Congregational Church
1825 Whitney Ave (Across from Best Video)
Hamden, CT

Saturday 10:00 am Manchester
Al-Anon Adult Children Group
Manchester Memorial Hospital, Conference room E
71 Haynes Street, Manchester, CT
Would like to see new faces.

Friday 7:00 pm Windsor
Step Study Meeting (One step each month using
CAL, Last week of the month will be open topic.)
Windsor Recovery Club
118 Palisado Ave (RT 159)
"A great way to end your week
or start your weekend."



I Found Hope

Two months ago I felt there was no hope for my husband and myself and that divorce was inevitable. I hated myself for yelling at him in front of my child, and we had no communication other than fighting. Through my therapist, I was made aware of Al-Anon. I walked into that first meeting crying and desperate for something to show me there was hope. Although there is still some animosity and tension, I have learned to take those feelings and use them to my advantage. I have found hope in our marriage, our family and life. I have so much work to do in Al-Anon, and I am really looking forward to that work, not dreading it. I have found a new sense of myself, be it positive, be it negative, and I will use these both in a matter which will make me sane again.

Krysten S

Meeting Moved

Monday 7:30 pm New Fairfield
to St. Edward the Confessor Church
Adult Ministry Center
Macbean Drive in New Fairfield off Gillotti Road
located next to the church across Macbean Road
diagonally across from Consolidated school.
White cape with black shutters.
Ample parking in the church lot.

Meeting Change:

Wednesday (formerly Thursday at the Food Pantry)
Stairway, 11th Step Meeting
7:00 pm, Center Congregational Church, Manchester, CT
(second floor, in the Minister's study)
Needs support.

Monday Noon Storrs AFG
is now a "closed" meeting
The group meets in Room 322 of the Student Union
on 2110 Hillside Road on the UConn campus, Storrs, CT.
Parking is available (for a fee) in the
North Eagleville Rd. Parking Garage.



Sharings For a New Book

You can submit your sharings for the new book *Intimacy in Alcoholic Relationships* (working title) online, or by mail, fax or email. See the WSO members' website or our members' website www.ct-al-anon.org/members for information. This is planned to be "a new piece of literature on intimacy in general, including sexual intimacy, in alcoholic relationships." You can remain anonymous.

See Spotlight on Literature on page 5.



Every Challenge Is An Opportunity

As I sat in traffic on my way to the monthly Alateen Sponsors' meeting I looked up at a huge billboard atop a multistory building that said, "Every Challenge Is an Opportunity." I read the words, laughed to myself and said to my HP (Higher Power), "Ok, I get it."

I was in a deep, dark emotional hole. I couldn't wait for the traffic to start moving so no one would see my tears. Shame, afraid to show my grieving emotions. Yeah, I got it on my inventory list along with a quite a few others. But, I also have a great sponsor on speed dial, whom I called and was grateful for an opportunity to get help with my challenges.

At the Alateen Sponsors' meeting, I shared my thoughts honestly, read a passage from the service manual and shared in the fellowship. I was grateful for it all even though I cried most of the way home.

The next morning I made a call and realized my will was not to be. So I cried some more and drove myself to the Fall Workshop talking to my HP and saying the Serenity Prayer for comfort. At the workshop I



A Newcomer Shares

I have been happy. But I must be honest with you all, I was really unhappily married to an alcoholic for almost 28 years!!

We got married very young and I have to admit I was drinking with him as well. HOWEVER!! I knew when I had enough and that it was time to go home, my husband of course would say "you go home I'll be home in about an hour." (Yeah, right.) Most of the time I had to drive myself or ask a friend to take me back to where my husband was, only to find him passed out.

I went on for about 3 to 4 more years continuing to drink and finally began going to AA meeting almost every night. I was very lonely and had no one to talk to, because almost all of my friends drank and whenever they would stop by they brought booze (so I would ask them to leave). Then I had my son when I was 37 years old (by this time I had been sober for over 18 years), BUT my husband's drinking began to really increase to the point of him getting intoxicated every night, and then in the morning acting like nothing happened the night before and acting so sorry and sweet and nice (I fell for the trick).

He would come to a few AA meetings with me because I told him that I was gonna leave him because I didn't want my baby son to see or be around someone who I was afraid of. But he only came to the meetings to keep me quiet, because I started finding bottles hidden all over my house. He was a good dad to our first son but was never really around. Then I had my second son at the age of 40 and again his drinking got even more intense, to the point where sometimes I would take my boys and drive to my parent's house, but of course I wouldn't let them know why I was there.

shared in the fellowship with hundreds of my Al-Anon/Alateen family and I was grateful to be there. I heard others struggling with their challenges and I shared the words I had read on a billboard, "Every Challenge Is An Opportunity." I enjoyed sharing the fellowship knowing I was not alone. I was grateful to my Higher Power for another beautiful day.

On Sunday morning I read my three daily readers and one spoke about how my Higher Power lives in me and those around me. He loves me, cares about me and accepts me just the way I am - a work in progress. That night I attended the Best Sunday Night Men's Meeting in the state of Connecticut and I remembered what I had read about earlier about a newcomers impressions at their first meeting: there was no gossip or criticism; people were friendly even though they had differing opinions. No one tried to change others by telling them what to think or how to feel.

My Higher Power can turn tragedy into something positive because out of my difficult childhood has come a God I no longer fear but treasure because I realize like the billboard said, "Every Challenge Is An Opportunity."

Bob K

Anyway about a year ago I had a friend that told me about this group called Al-Anon and that it was for people who live with alcoholics. I will be finally getting up the nerve to go to the meeting, because I have had enough of his shit and need to hear what others are saying and what they did to change their lives, because I really don't want to stay in my marriage anymore. I feel more like his mom than his wife, we have nothing in common. The last straw on the camels back was when I got a phone call around 2:15 in the afternoon last month and it was my husband bombed out of his mind at work. He bought a pint and drank it in about an hour (a few of his so called friends told me) and of course got fired. I told him that very day after my boys went to bed to either leave quietly with some of his clothes tonight or I was going to call the cops!!! (He left, and I can't explain the weight and the fear and the anxiety and being frightened all the time just disappeared and I feel so much stronger and safer and the most important thing is HAPPIER.

My 2 boys felt sad because they do love their dad, he never ever hurt them, but he also never did anything with them.

I want every women who's out there to know that you don't have to take the verbal, physical, emotional abuse, and that you can live your life without this person, I'm living proof, You WILL Survive. Try Al-Anon.

Sue A

[Editor's note: Al-Anon is neither for nor against divorce leaving it up to the individual and his/her Higher Power. We do suggest attending at least 6 meetings and not rushing into anything drastic for 6 months to a year after coming into Al-Anon.]

Many Voices, One Journey

These are my views on the book *Many Voices, One Journey* (B-31). Take what you like and leave the rest.

This book started off very slow and very boring. By the time I finished this book I had a much stronger sense of myself. My spirit was completely filled with love. I was so proud of Al-Anon. I was proud of myself. Proud and grateful to be a member of Al-Anon. I would suggest making this book be a requirement for anyone who chooses to do service.

This book starts off with how Al-Anon has gotten to its present status as we know it today. It started off as a history book with a lot of facts. These facts eventually turned into knowledge which gave me the understanding of why we only use Al-Anon approved literature. Every single word and letter has been given an enormous amount of thought, discussion and prayer and eventually blessed by a power greater than ourselves. Once this was done the people involved appeared to “just know” that it was important to make the change or not make the change. This process could take up to 2 to 3 years just to make a change in a sentence. That is the amount of energy that goes into our literature. Talk about “easy does it”! The committees involved in changes of any kind would send out communication in many ways in order to reach all members of the program for their input.



know their soul. I see their soul and they see mine. Some are in pain, some serene. All the souls are different but due to the disease of alcoholism, all our souls know one another. We are kind to one another. Nonjudgmental of one another. Encouraging of one another. Laugh with one another. I am 100% certain I learned this in Al-Anon.

There is section in the book that talks about meetings in Africa. It became crystal clear how strong the program of Al-Anon is. This a place where racial interaction is not allowed yet black and white people are willing to attend meetings and sit in a dirty, hot basement and love and care for one another's soul. Al-Anon is so spiritually strong it does not stop people from attending meetings where an army is outside the walls of these meeting with guns to separate white from black. This can only be the result of a power greater than myself whom I choose to call God. This was so eloquently put by Lois when she said “The healing current of grace seems to be passed best between those who have identical experiences in suffering.” Page 136-137.

I read stories where representatives have traveled to conferences to give the vote of the group. Some of these representatives did not agree with the groups vote once

This would start at world headquarters in NY and reach over the continents. Again talk about taking a group conscience. All steps of the programs are used to make decisions.

I have always known Al-Anon is self supporting however the information in this book really spelled out how an “organization” of this magnitude can operate on a corporate level and not pay out excessive salaries and operate effectively, efficiently and most importantly honestly. I wonder how many conglomerates can compete with Al-Anon. People from Siberia actually get on a train for 2 hours just to go to a meeting. One of Al-Anon rules regarding large donations was limited to a certain amount so as not to have more than they could use. As the years have gone by they have increased that amount which shows that they needed to change and grow along with the economy. For years the suggested amount at a meeting was \$1.00. It has been suggested that \$2.00 would be more appropriate. Again changing with the economy.

I saw the slogan “if you want to keep it, give it away” as a general theme throughout this book. There has been more time, energy, love and caring put into bringing the word of Al-Anon all over the world. Meetings have been started in places like Africa.


In my meetings I feel that I may not know someone's date of birth or last name but feel I

they got there and received new information that changed the situation so that the vote no longer seemed to be appropriate. These people struggled but used the Traditions to find their way in making the correct choice in representing the group.

I was extremely surprised to find that there had been a great deal of discord between the members of the WSO and delegates, that there were decisions made that in hindsight were not in the best interest of Al-Anon. These issues were looked at again, discussed, people made amends and were able to take responsibility and find other solutions.

As time progressed, Al-Anon progressed. In the early years of Al-Anon, Al-Anon only had their conventions with AA but eventually found their own identity and started to have their own conventions with AA participation. As technology progressed so did Al-Anon and we eventually established a website. It provides information for times and dates of meetings and a host of information that a person who is not familiar with Al-Anon can go to for help. Once again, Al-Anon changes with the times. For new comers this may be their first baby step before walking into a meeting.

Bev

 **Public Outreach Corner:
Step 12 in Action**

Hello from District 7 Public Outreach!

We have been pretty busy getting Al-Anon literature out. In District 7 we have decided to utilize the letters to professionals which can be downloaded from World Service. These are written for people in various occupations to educate the public about our wonderful program. In June letters were sent to 40 primary care doctors. In September we sent out the "Open Letter to the Human Services Professional" to 43 social workers. In October we sent the "Open Letter to Student Assistance Professionals" to every middle school and high school in our district – 36 in all. In our next meeting in November, we will be sending out the "Letter to Spiritual Leaders." There are also letters for lawyers and police so we plan on keeping busy!



Hello Al-Anon and Alateen:

I hope all Alateens enjoyed the open house during October's Alateen Awareness month and you had many visitors.

Each quarter the World Service Office posts a Sample Chapter of Conference Approved Literature on both the Public Outreach (www.al-anon.org) and the members' website (www.al-anon.org/members). The Sample Chapter for October through December is *In All Our Affairs (B-15)* and the topic is "from denial to awareness." The Sample Chapter on the members' site also includes an opportunity to share on this topic, as well as quotations, meeting topics, a list of where to find the topic in my other literature, and discussion questions from this book that were submitted by groups and members.

Remember that each month the CAL Corner Feature in the *Forum* includes members' sharings on how a piece of literature has enhanced their recovery. The September 2011 articles were *Alcoholism, the Family Disease* (P-4, P-4L) and *The Twelve Steps and Traditions* (P-17) on their 50th anniversary.

In November the topic in the *Forum* will be *In All Our Affairs* (B-15). I encourage all of you to send in sharings as well.



We also participate in two high school health fairs every year and this year we also went to the first annual health fair at Winsted Community College. Members from our groups volunteer to man a table and answer any questions that people may have about Al-Anon/Alateen. We also have plenty of literature on hand. This year we had pencils to give out with the Al-Anon/Alateen phone number and website imprinted on them. They were a big hit. Although not all of the meetings in District 7 have public outreach representatives, we have a dedicated group of members who put their heart into spreading the message of Al-Anon/Alateen. We also appreciate the donations we receive from our groups so we can continue our 12th step work to carry this message of hope.

Loving Service,
Pat R.
PO Coordinator, District 7

A word now about the sharings for the new book *INTIMACY IN ALCOHOLIC RELATIONSHIPS* (working title). Members are able to submit sharings on-line, or by mail or email. Your anonymity will always be protected. The information will also be in the December *Forum*, so watch for that. Please consider submitting your sharing for this new book. There should be announcements from your Group Representatives regarding this. If you have not heard about it, please check with your GRs.

The World Service Office is also working on the *LEGACIES WORKBOOK*. They are still looking for sharings on any of the three legacy blogs found on our Members' website (www.al-anon.org/members). WSO hopes to have this workbook available at the 2013 Al-Anon International Convention in Vancouver, B.C., how exciting.

Have any of you thought of having a "Gratitude Day" in your district? There is often not enough time at a regular district meeting to hold an event but how about a District Workshop? I would be happy to work with any of our districts to organize one. It could be in the format of a skit or readings from our newest book. Endless possibilities. If you are interested in being the first to host a district workshop, please let Jackie, the Area Literature Coordinator, know.

Through Recovery, Unity and Service,
CAL

35th Annual CT AFG Convention

The CT AFG 2012 Convention "Hand in Hand We Can" will be held March 30, 31, April 1, 2012, at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, Cromwell, CT 06416.

Registration forms out soon and on our website.

Also look for early bird incentives (I can't say too much yet).

Come get involved.

The Dream Team's next planning meeting is Nov. 13, 2011, Cromwell.



Serenity Breakfast

The Serenity Breakfast will be held Sunday, January 15, 2012, at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, 100 Berlin Rd (Rt 372), Cromwell, CT 06416. Breakfast at 9:30 am with speakers at 10:30 am.

Full breakfast for \$25 per person limited to the first 100 people to register in advance.

Look for Registration forms at your meetings or at www.ct-al-anon.org Events-Convention Page-Serenity Breakfast.

An Unhealthy Group

[Based on a skit presented by Taffy P at the Fall Workshop]

Today we will visit with the Reluctant Al-Anon Group. We will ask the members to share.

Member 1: I come here every week to talk about what my alcoholic has done to me lately.

Healthy reply: Members of healthy groups share their experience, strength and hope about how they are recovering from the effects, behaviors, attitudes, and thinking and coping skills acquired as a result of loving and living with alcoholics. They do not whine, complain or lament about others (especially the alcoholic).

Member 2: Steps and Traditions are so boring. I'd rather hear everything that's going on in member's lives.

Healthy reply: A healthy group intentionally studies the Steps, Traditions and Concepts, making sure that they are discussed and understood as well as possible by the members. When I use the Traditions and Concepts to deal with group issues, I take the personality out of the equation and the problem resolves more easily.

Member 3: I'm the Group Representative and have been for 15 years. When I tell you to do something, I want it done and done right (that is, my way).

Healthy reply: Healthy groups have active Group Representatives (and alternates) and members listen respectfully to what is shared from the district, area and worldwide fellowship. Healthy groups also rotate service responsibilities on a regular basis; other members are encouraged to undertake service opportunities for personal growth especially in self-esteem and service.

Member 4: I know we took a vote against selling stuff at meetings but I have started a home business and will use the group list to call you to give you good deals on my products.

Healthy reply: In a healthy group I feel safe. I don't have to worry about being pounced on to sell, buy or volunteer for any activity outside of our fellowship. A healthy group provides unity by taking a group conscience when necessary and adhering to what is the greatest good for the greatest number of people (Tradition 1).

Member 5: I know you. You live next to Bette Schwick on Maple Avenue. You know she's a member here and her husband is in AA.

Healthy reply: Members of healthy groups maintain the anonymity of the other group members at all times.

Member 6: My name is John and I'm an alcoholic. I don't read the Conference Approved Literature because I get everything I need to know about recovery from the AA Big Book and the Holy Bible. I can tell you some really hair-raising stories from before I came into AA.

Healthy reply: Using only Conference Approved Literature (CAL) keeps me from getting confused about Al-Anon principles. A healthy group remembers that "Al-Anon is spoken here." Members of other Twelve Step programs leave these programs at the door. Healthy groups avoid the "Three Obstacles to Success in Al-Anon"- gossip, dominance and discussion of religion.

I hope you all attend healthy groups.

Deadline for December Contributions is Nov. 21, 2011

- Al-Anon announcements
- Sharings on using the Al-Anon tools
- Email Subscriptions available
- Send your items to lifeline@ct-al-anon.org by Nov. 21 for the December issue.

Please contribute a sharing this month!

➔ **Lifeline** is also available online at www.ct-al-anon.org (scroll down)

