

Lifeline

January 2012

Connecticut Area 7 Newsletter for Al-Anon / Alateen

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Announcements:



Events:

- AFG Convention Planning meeting
Sunday Jan 15, 2011, 1:00 pm
Crowne Plaza, 100 Berlin Rd., Cromwell, CT
- CT Al-Anon Convention - "Hand in Hand We Can"
March 30, 31 and April 1, 2012 (register now)
Crowne Plaza, 100 Berlin Rd., Cromwell, CT
- Al-Anon International Convention
July 5-7, 2013, Vancouver, BC (save up now)

Anniversary:

Sunday, January 29, 2012, 2:30 pm
Southington Al-Anon M.E.S.H. Group
First Congregational Church
37 Main St., Southington, CT
Join us for Lunch, Speakers following lunch
Conference approved raffle items and
a dish will be appreciated

Need Support:

Tuesday 12:00 Noon New Canaan
St. Mark's Episcopal Church
111 Oenoke Ridge Road
New Canaan, CT 06840
Enter in rear of brick building.
Meeting is 1st classroom on right.

Friday 8:00 pm Hamden
at the Arden House (conference room)
850 Mix Avenue (corner of Mix Ave. and Skiff St.)
Hamden, CT
Service opportunities available.

HAPPY NEW YEAR

Printable Schedules: <> NEW <>

There is now a link on our Al-Anon website www.ct-al-anon.org for the printable Area Schedules. It is located on the main page below the CT map called "**Printable November 2011 Al-Anon Schedule Book.**" It is in PDF format and when opened will look like the paper schedule. Thank you Sandy and Mark for your suggestion and setting up the link.
Janet, Area Schedule Coordinator

Starting the New Year

It seems fitting to me that I start the New Year off right by sharing the gratitude that I have for Al-Anon. My life continues to be full of serenity and peace thanks to the principles that I live by today. Although I have learned to live one day at a time and appreciate the wonders that I find in my life, I have to say that it took a long time to get to this state. I came into Al-Anon a beat up, worn out person who didn't care if I lived or died. I didn't come to program expecting anything from anyone or for anyone.

I was just looking for a way to feel better. What a surprise when I discovered that alcoholism was what was driving my life into shambles and I was the person who was causing it to be the way it was.

Nobody had any answers for the way I was living. But then, I lived in half-truths and hidden secrets. I started to

believe that people that I heard talk at meetings knew something profound and I couldn't get enough of what they had to say. Members were kind and loving and treated me gently and through the years I have made many true friends in Al-Anon. They are gifts from God.

I got what I was looking for when I came to these rooms and that was to feel better. The way it happened was not the way I thought it was going to be. I had to learn to apply the steps, slogans, traditions; use the Serenity Prayer, go to meetings, get a sponsor and listen, do service, trust and believe. All of this may seem overwhelming and certainly it was in the beginning. But I learned that inch by inch it's a cinch!

District 1, A Grateful Member

"The journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step."

- Lao-tse

quoted in *Courage to Change*
page 3



"Step One:

We admitted we were powerless over alcohol - that our lives had become unmanageable."

The Forum Jan. 2012
page 30



GRATITUDE

The definition of gratitude is: A feeling of thankful appreciation for favors or benefits received; thankfulness.

So here we go again, with another sharing on Gratitude, but I would like to put a little spin on it.

It is easy to be thankful for the good things:

I have Al-Anon, my Higher Power, my health, a house, friends, etc. However, I would like to concentrate on being thankful for the bad things/difficult times. I have learned that Gratitude can turn a negative into a positive.

- I have shared about how that power outage has affected me. I think I am jumpier than before because of the neighbor's tree limbs that kept falling, missing most of

my house. However, I now realize how grateful and happy I am that, with all those limbs gone, I now get wonderful powerful sunshine into my house. I love the sun!

- This week, even while I was on the phone I heard drip, drip, drip in my kitchen. It turned out to be coming from my refrigerator. I pulled it out, (thankful it is on rollers) fixed the leak and wiped up the water. I have no idea how that drain came apart. However, I know that in the past I would have been terribly upset it leaked, and probably obsessed about what caused it for days. Thanks to this program, I am thankful I could hear it, thankful I could fix it, and thankful it did not cause any serious damage.

A gratitude list has always gotten me off my pity-pot. Now I have learned that when I can be thankful for my troubles, they can be turned into a blessing.



Great friends

Reality seeing clearly

Al-Anon/Alateen

THINK - Thoughtful, Honest, Intelligent, Necessary and Kind.

Individual

Time to go to meetings

Unafraid

Dis-ease

Electricity

- Anonymous

Reflections of Connecticut Al-Anon - 1961- 2011

It is with great excitement that Connecticut Al-Anon Family Groups has produced a book reflecting the memories of 70 long-time Connecticut Al-Anon members. These long-timers have been in Al-Anon at least 25 years and their memories reflect a total of more than 2,400 years of recovery, sharing their experience, strength and hope, one day at a time.

The book was introduced at the Fall Assembly. Many of the long-timers gathered at a reception prior to the Assembly, enthusiastically reconnected with long-time friends and signed each other's books prior to being introduced to the Assembly members. The first printing sold out immediately and the second printing is now available.

Reflections begins with an interview with Ruth L., who walked into her first Al-Anon meeting 50 years ago (then called *AA Wives*) and was welcomed by a woman who said, "Hi, my name is Lois. What's yours?" The greeter was indeed Lois W., co-founder of this amazing, beloved program. Lois strongly encouraged Ruth to immediately be of service to the group by making goodies for the following week because "Lois didn't have time to do so".

Some 39 members cited *One Day at a Time in Al-Anon* as one of their favorite pieces of literature. They tell their stories of sponsorship and service as they share their challenges and successes. They tell of the first Connecticut Convention in Middlebury, the first Assembly in New Haven, the first Workshop in Terryville. There are many diverse opinions about issues that surfaced over the years – adult children, gays and lesbians, dual members, men in Al-Anon, Alateen (a surprising number served as

Alateen sponsors). Some 68 home groups were mentioned. The interviewees share their experiences with the difficult resolution of divisive issues such as Alateen Guidelines, incorporation, the move of the World Service Office to Virginia Beach, the establishing of the Connecticut Literature Distribution Center, opinions regarding "crosstalk", changes in the closing prayer, and memories of some of the pioneers of the program who were especially remembered for their early contributions to the program.

We are a diverse group – all with strong opinions. Most of the long-timers experienced their greatest growth through service – both positive and not so positive experiences – but all added to their personal development and recovery.

The interviews started as a Long Range Planning Committee project, to record memories for the archives. It soon became apparent to the committee that these interviews should not be just hidden away in the archives files, but shared with the current membership because they tell a fascinating story of how Connecticut Al-Anon came to be as it is today.

We are especially indebted to the 20 volunteers who conducted the interviews and past delegates, trustees and WSO staff for documentation, historical research and verification of details.

The second printing is now available for \$10. Shipping costs are additional. To order your copy, email reflections2002-afg@yahoo.com. The book will be available at the Serenity Breakfast and the AFG Convention on Saturday afternoon, March 31, 2012.

Ellie L



Reflections of Connecticut Al-Anon

*A book of memories, stories submitted by
Longtime CT Al-Anon Members.*



Hello all Al-Anon and Alateen members:

I am so grateful to start this month off by feeling healthy, sane and so full of hope for the New Year. In looking over the past year I feel that I am again at a new beginning, of course I know today that can start any time.

My first introduction to Al-Anon literature was the One Day at a Time daily reader. How important this little book became to me. Page one started me off on the right foot immediately. Yes, Al-Anon was my last resort because alcohol was too much for me. I have been so fortunate to embrace this program and all that it has to offer. And in the daily reminder at the end of the page I know I was guided and found a Higher Power because I believed the members that spoke to me; I trusted them and they helped show me the way I must go.

One Day at a Time has many, many inspirational pages. I had this book for so long that one day I took off the cover

and it disintegrated right in front of me at a meeting (everyone laughed, including me). Thank goodness they had one for sale and I bought it immediately.

I hope you have found some of your inspiration within these pages too.

I have received a report from the World Service Office regarding the *Forum*. It seems that our subscriptions are down again, so I encourage all of you to talk about the magazine at your meetings. I try to help by offering a subscription to all the anniversaries I attend when I can and some of our groups are giving some subscriptions to some community services as a Public Outreach project. What a great idea!!

Have a Very Happy New Year and hope that all of you are blessed with peace and joy.

See you in our next issue of the *Lifeline*, CAL

Public Outreach: ‘Putting Love into Action’



As I begin the New Year I am reminded of how grateful I am to all the Al-Anon members who came before me and saw the importance of carrying the message of hope through Public Outreach service. I was guided into the program when a family member entered treatment and at the time thought it was the first I ever heard of Al-Anon. As I look back I can recall many times I dismissed the idea of attending Al-Anon when it was mentioned by a professional or I saw a poster talking about the effects someone’s drinking may have on family and friends. Today I believe that although I disregarded the information at the time, a seed was being planted and when I was ready for Al-Anon it was there for me. In the many 24 hours since I came into Al-Anon I have received more gifts than I ever imagined possible. Today I have a life that is guided by a Power greater than myself,

principles that help me in all aspects of living and the knowledge I am no longer alone.

I feel fortunate to have the opportunity to carry the message of help and hope to those who have not yet found the rooms of Al-Anon and Alateen by doing Public Outreach service. Each one of us does public outreach by practicing the steps, traditions and concepts of Al-Anon. We never know when or how we may plant the seed of recovery for another but I am certain as long as we live the Al-Anon program and practice the principles in all our affairs those seeds are taking root.

If you have a desire to put your love of the program into action, consider doing public outreach for your group or district. You’ll love it!

Deborah C.
CT Public Outreach Coordinator

	<p>A two sentence submission to describe the Convention experience: Smile, step step hug, step step hug, sit and listen. Repeat as necessary to maintain serenity.</p>	
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In Your Community. Where is Al-Anon Visible?

Think about your town for a minute and reflect. Apart from Al-Anon meetings, where is Al-Anon's presence?

Is your local Library well stocked with the *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism Magazine* (annual publication from World Service)? Are copies of the books *Paths to Recovery - Al-Anon's Steps, Traditions and Concepts* (B-24), and *How Al-Anon Works for Families & Friends of Alcoholics* (B-22) on the shelves for patrons to borrow? Do the reference librarians know about Al-Anon and can they recommend material to those searching for information? Is one of the tear-off posters prominently displayed on the bulletin board or the entrances of the Library?

Are your town Social Services, Police, and Community Services' departments informed about Al-Anon for families and friends of alcoholics, so they can make referrals? What about substance abuse treatment centers, women's or family shelters? Do they have a contact for Al-Anon? Are there copies of *The Forum* and appropriate pamphlets available?

Do the school guidance counselor, nurse, school resource officer, teachers and administrators know about alcoholism as a family disease when a student confides in them? Do they know about Alateen for young people? Do college services have Al-Anon information at their disposal? Are the mental health professionals, and medical professionals informed with schedules and literature for their referrals?

Is there an Al-Anon article in your local weekly newspaper with the date and time of meetings? (Many local newspapers have print and on-line listings of community resources.)

Do the radio stations have up-to-date Public Service Announcements (PSA)?

Individuals in the community perhaps will use the internet to look for information and will discover the excellent resources from Al-Anon's website, www.al-anon.alateen.org. In addition, it would be an outstanding personal service to these people to have the resources of Al-Anon/Alateen at hand and a contact person with whom to have a conversation about community needs, someone who **has found help and hope** from participating in Al-Anon.

In *Al-Anon /Alateen Groups at Work 2010 - 2013* (P-24/27), under Public Outreach in the Community,

(p.48) the reminder is very clear "If the community is informed about the fellowship and understands the help Al-Anon/Alateen can provide, our groups will attract many who need our program of recovery. Good public relations are important to our groups as well as the community at large." Further, regarding the principle of anonymity: "We always protect our members' anonymity, but **the Al-Anon/Alateen program is not anonymous.**"

Your personal anonymity is your own decision; others' anonymity is always respected.

At a recent District One Public Outreach Meeting, the members suggested working jointly with other representatives in their towns, or if a person were uncomfortable in her/his particular town, she/he could spread the message of Al-Anon in an adjoining town. However it is organized, the important principle is **the message: Help and Hope for Families of Alcoholics.**

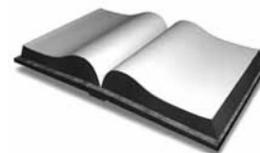
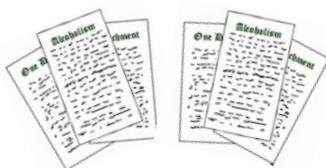
Most of you could probably share right now about five to ten people whom you know, including loved ones, who are being affected by the disease of alcoholism. Among these people are the most vulnerable: children and teens.

In this new year we urge you to think about your personal commitment to carrying the message of Al-Anon/Alateen in your town in whatever way you feel comfortable. Become a trusted servant for your home group or offer to work with one already doing this work. Public Outreach is ongoing and, in effect, all of us who have found serenity in Al-Anon can be wonderful ambassadors for this spiritual program which Lois Wilson and her Legacy have passed on to us.

2012 is a brand a new year for carrying the message to others in your community. If you need a little prompting, talk to your District Coordinator for Public Outreach or someone in the fellowship who has been involved in this work and you will be encouraged. Invite your Higher Power to be with you in your efforts and include the Serenity Prayer.

Some time later, you **will know** where the presence of Al-Anon is in your community and you will experience joy for your part in bringing that message of help and hope to others. "**Let It Begin With Me.**"

From District One's Co-coordinator for Public Outreach, Maureen and in gratitude for Co-coordinator Gina and our fourteen fabulous trusted servants





CT Convention Questions? Email convention2012@ct-al-anon.org
Check out the AFG Convention page on www.ct-al-anon.org

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 are out and on our website.

Come get involved.

The Dream Team's next planning meeting is Jan 15, 2011, 1:00 pm at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, Cromwell.

The entertainment committee is looking for volunteers and the Dance committee is asking for your favorite song to be included.

Register NOW



Convention Deals

The first **100** people to register for (by Feb 28) and stay in the Crowne Plaza Cromwell Hotel room both Friday and Saturday nights (Mar. 30, 31, 2012), qualify for a rebate of their Convention Registration and half of their Convention Banquet meal. One offer per room. Also they will be automatically entered in a drawing in which **one** of these people will be reimbursed for **one** night of their hotel room.

For more convention deals, see the flyer at your meetings or on the CT website Convention Page.

Spanish Interpretation will be available.

Why Attend the Convention?

When I first came into Al-Anon I heard a lot of terms I was not sure of such as Assembly, Conference, Workshop and Convention. What is the Convention? Why would I go?

The Convention is a 3-day event held at a hotel where I can soak up a lot of Al-Anon love, experience, strength, hope and wisdom. I can hear many great speakers. I can go to the dance, attend meetings, swim in the pool, visit with friends old and new, enjoy a banquet meal, see the entertainment skit, enjoy the hospitality room snacks, make love gifts for the Delegate to take to the Conference, purchase literature, buy tickets for the raffle, purchase Al-Anon CDs, get souvenirs, make friends, visit the labyrinth for some quiet meditation, sleep, talk or listen. Or not. It is a weekend getaway with as much or as little as I want to put into it.

For one \$22 registration fee I can attend one, two or all three days. (Alateens are only \$10.) There is a wonderful skit planned for Friday night as well as speakers. After a day of speakers, for \$28-\$33 I can enjoy the Saturday night banquet and front row seats for the Saturday night keynote speakers. And on Sunday morning we have the spiritual speakers. There will also be Alateen, AA and Spanish

meetings with English-Spanish translation.

All the Friday night, Saturday night and Sunday morning speakers will have Spanish translation.

I can not describe how energized and loved I feel after being with these Al-Anon members for the weekend! The only way to really see what a Convention is about is to attend one. And invite your friends. It's also a good way to introduce someone to Al-Anon.

And if you need more inducement, see the Deals flier, at your meeting or on the Convention page on the website: www.ct-al-anon.org, on how you can even get your registration refunded and a 50% refund on the Saturday night meal or have a chance to get a free room night. You know you really want to stay over at the hotel so that you don't miss a minute of the fun. Sharing a room makes it even more affordable (about \$35 per person per night for 4 people).

But don't wait. The time to **REGISTER** for the Convention and your room is **NOW**.

"Hand in Hand We Can" make this the best Convention yet. I hope to see you all there.

Sue

Deadline for February Contributions is Jan 23, 2011

- Al-Anon **announcements** • **Sharings** on using the Al-Anon tools • Email **Subscriptions** available
- Send your items to lifeline@ct-al-anon.org by **Jan. 23** for the February issue.

Please contribute a sharing this month!

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

