

Lifeline

December 2013

Connecticut Area 7 Newsletter for Al-Anon / Alateen

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Announcements:

Al-Anon Events: (see page 6)

- Serenity Breakfast January 19, 2014, Crowne Plaza Hotel, Cromwell, CT
- CT Al-Anon Convention, March 21-23, 2014, Crowne Plaza Hotel, Cromwell, CT

AA Events with Al-Anon participation:

- MA AA Roundup with Al-Anon/Alateen participation Holiday Inn, Mansfield, MA, Feb 14-17, 2014

Meeting Format Change:

- Sunday 7:00 PM at Gaylord Hospital, Wallingford second entrance, stone conference building Chauncy Conf. Bldg., Gaylord Farm Rd, Wallingford One Step per week with Tradition at end of month Serenity on Sunday before the hectic work week.

Time Change:

- Unionville Women's Saturday Step Meeting 4:00 PM - 5:30 PM Starting (11/2/2013) Farmington Youth Center 23 School Street, Unionville, CT 06085



New Meeting:

- Fridays 12:00 noon to 1:15 PM *Blueprint for Progress* 4th Step Inventory meeting First Congregational Church 1 Walton Place, Stamford, CT 06901 Handicap accessible

Young Adult Meeting:

- Young Adult Al-Anon Meeting University of Hartford Tuesdays 12:00 PM - 1:30 PM 200 Bloomfield Ave (Rt 189), West Hartford

From Main entrance proceed to Parking Lot F. Konover Building, a.k.a. Village Market is unmarked blue building to right of Lincoln Theatre. Enter building through second exterior door to left of main entrance. Meeting room just inside this door. Handicap Accessible

Help Wanted:

- LDC needs volunteers: email ldc@ctalanon.org Tuesdays and Thursdays 9:30 PM - 3:30 PM, Fridays 12:30 PM - 3:30 PM *** Please call ahead 860-244-0022 ***

LDC will be closed December 21 through January 6.

What Being a District Representative Has Meant To Me

November 2, 2013, was the last Assembly I will be attending as DR (District Representative) of District 12. As the Group Representatives (GRs) and Alternate Representatives (Alt GRs) came walking into the Assembly taking their seats, I was overwhelmed with the emotion of gratitude for the support they have given their District and their District Representative for almost three years.

In the beginning of my term I was nervous about the role I took on as District Representative. Thoughts popped into my head such as, "Do I have enough recovery under my belt to do this job?"; "What if I screw it up?"; "What if no one shows up at the District Meeting?" and lastly "What could I possibly give to them in return for their service and support?" My first year was challenging with educating the GRs and Alt GRs as to our primary purpose in the Al-Anon program, using our three legacies, moving meetings in a healthy direction. There were meetings that felt they did not need representation and what the heck was all that business talk about during the meeting. Some groups felt they did not have to keep the Al-Anon focus. So I relied on my Sponsor(s) and my Higher Power for the guidance that I would need as phone calls or "Do you have a minute?" began three years ago. As usual the information was right at my fingertips, the *Service Manual* (P-24/27), *Conference Summary* (P-46) and *Many Voices* (B-31) as well as other valuable pieces of literature.

Walking in the first night of the District Meeting I thought "What did I get myself into?"; "Do I have what it takes to be the District Representative?" I remembered reading in Al-Anon that I'm never ready for service however the Higher Power gets me ready for service and the only requirement for me is to remain reachable and teachable. One of my favorite readings from *Al-Anon Family Groups* (B-5), in "Application of the Twelve Tradition to Group

Problems" is "obedience to the unenforceable." As a District Representative I have experienced many challenges in my recovery whether at an Area Meeting or District Meeting but always rely on the Traditions and Concepts to get me through whatever issue is presented to me. The most important to me was to keep my humility in that I didn't have to have all of the answers or pretend I do know the answer. I remember early on in my recovery my sponsor shared with me that the three most important words to say are "I don't know, but will try to find out." I have also applied the Q-TIP "Quit Taking It Personally" philosophy when individuals did not like the answer, after all I am just a trusted servant.

At the Fall Assembly, I saw the cohesiveness of District 12 GRs who were well informed on the budget for 2014 which enabled them to make educated decisions based on information provided to them which was shared with their groups. These individuals gave up many Monday evenings to sit in a District Meeting acting as the vital link to their group to disseminate information to their members.

Over my term I had the privilege of watching group representatives hold business meetings using the guidelines to conduct a business meeting on difficult issues.

I am humbled by these men and women who willingly give up their time to attend District Meetings and Assemblies. I am blessed to have been touched by so many of these individuals in more ways than they can imagine or even put into words. It is bittersweet as I come to the end of my term but will never forget the journey I have made with the Group Representatives, Alternate Group Representatives of District 12. My circle becomes wider and wider each year in the program, however, these individuals will hold a special place in my recovery.

Love in Service, Elaine M.



Life On Life's Terms

At my first Al-Anon meeting I was told I didn't Cause the alcoholic to drink, couldn't Control the drinking, and couldn't Cure it, but I truly thought that if I loved someone enough they'd stop drinking. Then at an open AA meeting I heard them say, "No human power could have relieved us of our alcoholism," and I finally got it -- alcoholics have a Higher Power and it's not me! I soon discovered this is a family disease and the "isms" had affected my thoughts and actions, but the more I focused on myself, the more I began to recover and change. Each December the Twelfth Step reminds me to take a yearly inventory. Am I keeping the focus on myself? Do I do the footwork and trust the outcome to my Higher Power? Which areas in my life need

attention and change? Do I owe any amends? Am I keeping in conscious contact with my Higher Power, praying for guidance and the strength to handle whatever comes my way -- and listening for the answers? And am I practicing the program to the best of my ability day in and day out, being the best person I've learned how to be? Each year my understanding of the program grows deeper and my faith in my Higher Power grows stronger. And as a result of practicing the program one day at a time, my life today is better than I ever could have imagined. With the help of my Higher Power, the program, and my Al-Anon friends, I know I'll be okay no matter what happens. I'm finally learning to live life on life's terms.

Jan

Congratulations! And Thank You!

Congratulations to the incoming Area officers

2014-2016:

Ann B, Delegate
Stacie V, Alternate Delegate
Sue G, Area Chairperson
Donna C, Area Secretary
Carol D, Area Treasurer

Thank You to the outgoing Area officers

2011-2013:

Rita C, Delegate
Ann B, Alternate Delegate
Bob K, Area Chairperson
Gail L, Area Secretary
Stacie V, Area Treasurer



Live and Let Live

Live and Let Live is one of my favorite slogans, and I really like to think about every word in it.

LIVE – this first word has been pretty hard for me. It asks me to actually live my life, not just vicariously live other people's lives, or try to manage other people's lives, or put my life on hold until some future time when every one else is happy, taken care of, grown up, etc. It doesn't say “live if you have time,” or “live if no one else needs you,” or “live after you get everything figured out.” It just says simply “live.” It also doesn't say I have to justify my life by being perfect, or omniscient, or always happy. And it doesn't guarantee anything by asking me to live my own life. And it's not even polite (“please” live!). The first word of this slogan very clearly tells me to live my life.

AND – I love that the next word is “and.” The first word is just for me, but “and” reminds me that I live in a community of others. I don't have to live their lives for them, and it's not either me or others, it's me AND others. I didn't think I could learn to take care of me and let others take care of themselves, but through Al-Anon and a lot of listening in meetings, I began to see how that was possible, and to practice it. I have a responsibility to myself and others have their own responsibilities, and we can co-exist. I certainly had to learn some new ways of thinking and acting, but “And” helped me to do that.

LET – I love this word, too. “Let” is entirely different than “force,” “manipulate,” or “manage,” which is what I used to do. “Let” requires trust, faith, patience, and really is a way for me to demonstrate respect for my own process and for others' processes also. Whew – this is really where my daily reading, meetings, phone calls, and quiet time for myself have come into play. It has taken a lot for me to gradually see that letting myself and others grow at our own rates, and not trying to control all outcomes are the steps to serenity I was afraid to take for such a long time. It sounds as if it should be easy to “let” something happen, and it can be but only if I am willing to give up forcing my will on the situation.

LIVE – and finally, as I get better at living my own life (LIVE), including others as equals (AND), and trusting that the world will not stop turning if I relax my management of it (LET), I can not only allow others to live, but can actually be alive in the present moment and not just regretting the past or worrying about the future.

I had heard this slogan before I came to Al-Anon, and I thought it meant that I could do my thing, and you could do your thing and it was every person for him or herself. I understand it very differently now, and it speaks to me very powerfully of my responsibility to live my own life with awareness and integrity, and to allow and trust that others can and will do the same. I don't even know how to express how grateful I am for Al-Anon.

Lisa



Hi Al-Anon and Alateen Members,

As we come to the end of another year, it's a great time to check out the wonderful literature available to us. And don't forget that the *Forum* makes a great gift for Al-Anon friends or yourself, a gift that lasts all year.

And if you are like me, you have Al-Anon literature on your bookshelf that you may have read a while ago, but not recently. Now may be a good time to re-read some of it. The holidays can be a stressful time and having the literature on hand can be helpful, especially if you cannot get to a meeting or call a sponsor just then.

Love in Service and Happy Holidays, CAL

Thoughts on “Just For Today” Bookmark (M-12)

When I first came into the program I had trouble grasping everything. But I found I could use the slogans and the practical ideas on the “Just For Today” bookmark (M-12).

1. I spent a lot of time and energy trying to change the effects of the past and worrying about the future. When I went to tackle some problem it seemed that it was so enormous that I couldn't do anything. Here I learned that I can take just one little thing, the next right thing, and do that and leave the rest for later. Maybe I set a timer and just do something good for 15 minutes. Eventually things get done.
2. I found that I was almost afraid to be happy. I kept waiting for the other shoe to drop. I kept looking for the bad and I found it. I discovered that if I look for the good and am grateful for it, I find it and am happier.
3. I spent most of my life like a fish swimming up stream battling my way through. I discovered that if I try to go with the flow, I don't need to spend so much energy. There is much I need to accept because I cannot change it anyway and much of it is not that important.
4. Just as I need to exercise my body to keep it healthy, I need to exercise my mind. The feeling of accomplishment helps my self-esteem.

6. I used to think that being agreeable, dressing nicely, speaking softly, keeping my criticisms to myself was so dumb, so “June Cleaver” or “Father Knows Best.” But maybe these TV characters of the past were onto something. If I am agreeable, I find that those around me tend to be more agreeable. We are told not to judge a book by its cover but I show my attitude in the way I dress and act. If I am pleasant and courteous, people tend to be nicer to me. I do not like to be around people who are always finding fault and complaining, so why would others like to be around me if I act that way? I don't like it when others try to tell me what to do, so why would others like to have me try to change them?

7. I spent a lot of time flitting from one thing to another and not doing some of the things I wanted to. I have found that if I make lists, I nail things down and stop them from flying around in my head. They often seem more manageable on paper. And eventually they get done if they are important.

8. In our modern hurry scurry society I seldom take time to just sit and think before I act. The idea of taking a break once in a while is an old one. I try to start my day by saying “Good Morning” to my Higher Power, reading a thought for the day and thinking about what I have going on today. Often I find I get there faster by going slower.

9. Fear is a big part of my life. Especially fear that if I let down my guard by enjoying something, bad things will happen. But even if I do everything I can, I can't stop



5a. I spent a lot of my life trying to please others so they would like me, not so I would like myself. Here I learned that I must do what seems right to me, not just what I think will please others.

5b. There are things I do not want to do because I am afraid. If I trust in my Higher Power and do them anyway, I will feel good about myself and strengthen the relationship with my Higher Power.

5c. It is so easy for me to get on the pity pot. “I have it so hard.” “They don't appreciate what I try to do for them.” “If he loved me, he would know what I need.” I try to believe that the hurt I feel may not be intended. “Presume goodwill.” I try not to take everything personally and my better attitude may rub off on others.

some things and I've given up a part of my life for nothing. I am leaning that I need to find joy in my life. I have found it to be true that as I give to the world, so the world tends to give to me. If I am pleasant, I don't trigger as many unpleasant responses. If I say, “would it be possible” instead of “could you,” I tend to get a better outcome. If I don't automatically respond to someone's anger but listen and answer in a quiet voice, it tends to take some of the steam out of the situation. People often just need to feel heard.

10a. “Let it begin with me.” If I do what I can to make the world a better place, it will be. I do things not to please someone else but because I believe it is the right thing. Then I feel better about myself and this, too, reflects on those around me.

10b. I want to be consoled in my sorrows, to be understood, to be loved, to be given what I need, to be pardoned for some things I've done or not done. But I can't always have what I want, especially from the flawed people around me. Only my Higher Power can give me these things. So if I accept that and let go of my expectations, I can have a much happier life, one day at a time, just for today.

Sue G2

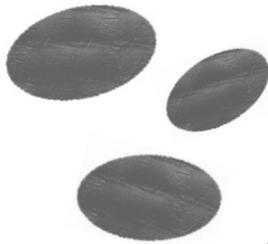


Connecticut AFG “Rocks”

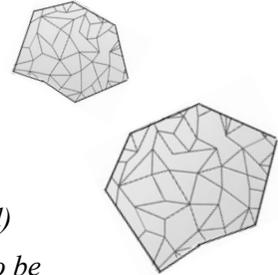
One of our former Delegates was noted for using the phrase “Connecticut Rocks” whenever she spoke before the AWSC or the Assembly. It was these very words that got me thinking about the various ways I could use these rocks/stepping stones in my own recovery. After all, the dynamic AI-Anon groups that I attend gave me the building blocks to transform myself into the person I am today. I continue to build on that foundation so I can become the person I am capable of becoming.

So putting my creative juices to work, I formulated these guidelines on the ‘Connecticut Rocks’ that helped to solidify my own [recovering] foundation.

How to use CT AFG rocks:



- A paper weight to hold down Area fliers*
 - A book-marker for my daily reader or CAL*
 - A stepping stone when I stumble*
 - To keep the door open at my group meetings*
 - To symbolize that I am worth my weight in ‘rock’ (if not in gold)*
 - And a reminder that sometimes things are just what they appear to be*
- a rock



How to use these CT rocks for a stepping stone

- *The only difference between a stumbling block and a stepping stone is the way that I use them. (Go to meetings)*
- *Let it lead me down the right path when I am lost (Use the 12 Steps, Traditions, and Concepts)*
- *Use it to make a stepping stone out of a stumbling block (Call my sponsor)*
- *Remind myself that even mistakes are stepping stones to success (Steps 9 & 10)*
- *Plant it in a garden so that I will remember to bloom (One Day At a Time)*
- *Use as a symbol of courage—I can take one more step than I thought I could (Get involved in service).*

*Love in service,
Taffy P. -Panel 42-CT*



2014 Serenity Breakfast Registration

Full Name _____

Name on Tag _____ AI-Anon Alateen AA Spanish

Email _____ Phone _____

Address _____

Current Service Position _____

Make Check (**\$25 per person**) payable to CT AFG Convention
Mail to: CT AFG Convention, P.O.Box 2224, Bristol, CT 06010 **by January 10, 2014**

2014 CT AFG Convention

Register now for **March 21-23, 2014**

37th Annual CT AFG Convention

Crown Plaza Hotel

100 Berlin Rd, Cromwell, CT 06416

(860) 635-2000

Hotel Code: QAZ



Meet friends in recovery
Grow in Service Have FUN!

Interested helping at the convention?

For more information:

convention2014@ctalanon.org

or see the convention page at

www.ctalanon.org



2014 CT AFG Serenity Breakfast

Sunday, January 19, 2014

(Snow date January 26)

Crown Plaza Hotel

100 Berlin Rd, Cromwell, CT 06416



Check in 8:30 AM- 9:30 AM

Speakers, Music, Raffle 10:30 AM -12:30 PM

Al-Anon, Alateen and AA speakers

Spanish Translation available

\$25 per person

Register by January 10, 2014

Space is limited

Questions: email

convention2014@ctalanon.org

In case of bad weather, check

Convention page on www.ctalanon.org

Hot Buffet Breakfast 9:30 AM -10:30 AM
 Scones, Danish, Bagels
 Butter and Assorted Cream Cheese Spreads
 Sliced Fresh Fruit
 Fluffy Scrambled Eggs
 Egg White Scramble with Broccoli and Onions
 Crisp Bacon Strips
 Home Fried Potatoes
 Fruit Preserves
 Chilled Orange, Apple and Cranberry Juices
 Fresh Brewed Coffee, Decaffeinated Coffee and Tea Selections



See Serenity Breakfast Registration Form on bottom of previous page.



Good Bye

I've been Lifeline Coordinator now for five years. Thank you for your sharings and for letting me serve, but it's time to rotate the service. Please support your new Lifeline Coordinator by sending in your sharings.

Sue G2



Deadline for January 2014 Contributions is Dec. 23, 2013

- Al-Anon announcements
- Sharings on using the Al-Anon tools
- Free Email Subscriptions available
- Send your items to lifeline@ctalanon.org

Please contribute a sharing this month: "There is no Lifeline without you."

Lifeline is also available online at www.ctalanon.org Lifeline under Literature tab

