



# Lifelines

The Newsletter of the RI AFG, September, 2011

## **Sharing Experience, Strength and Hope**

### **Can I Learn Tricks from a Dog?**

Years ago, before program, I remember lying in bed awaiting the return of my qualifier. I really had no understanding of what was going on. I was in a monogamous, loving relationship; working daily. My partner was working second shift. Life should have (aha!) been good. But there were those nights when I heard the door open that I became scared and uncertain. Anxious as to what would happen next. Why was my partner so late coming home?

I found out I had a barometer by my side, our loving dog. She adored us and was very affectionate. I soon noticed that this loving animal had a wonderful 6<sup>th</sup> sense. She would run down the stairs when she heard the door open. So happy. I, in the meantime, was holding my breath upstairs in the bed. I found that our "baby" knew exactly what was going on. If my partner was sober, the baby stayed downstairs and soaked up the affection. On the other hand, if my partner was "under-the weather", I found that darling little dog running back up the stairs as fast as her little legs would take her. What would we do? Feign sleep and hide under the covers. God was I thankful for that living barometer with the big heart. She allowed me to be an ostrich—hiding from any problems.

It wasn't until years later and some time in program that I thought about those moments in a much different way. I had only learned to hide...I hadn't learned anything else. What I now take away from those moments and the many more that followed was the true lesson. I learned in program to not engage an alcoholic; to not join in the fight. In the words of another member, just shut up! What I never realized was that my best friend, my baby, was trying to teach this old dog that new trick. For years, she had turned away from the alcoholic, not engaging in the fight. I never realized that this was the message. Not hiding...but learning to walk away and let the alcoholic have at it, without me as part of the big event—the fight!

So, as the years pass by, I realize that an old dog can learn a new trick!! And I learned it from the dog!

### **Anonymous**

Did you know, **AI-anon WSO** is on Facebook?  
<https://www.facebook.com/pages/AI-Anon-WSO/172402452825446?sk=wall>

**The next World Service Area Meeting will be on Tuesday, Oct 18th at 7PM.**

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\* A copy of the full minutes for every Area meeting and Assembly are available to all at the Area office

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### **Inside This Issue**

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## Al-Anon Web Sites

- ▲ Our local, Area 49 Web site  
<http://www.riafg.org>
- ▲ The Al-Anon Members' Web site  
<http://www.al-anon.alateen.org/members>
- ▲ Podcasts <http://al-anonfamilygroups.org/Podcasts/FirstSteps/>
- ▲ Online meetings and outreach <http://www.olais.org>
- ▲ Public Al-Anon/Alateen site  
<http://www.al-anon.alateen.org>

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*Our Area Web site is a great central reference point for information applicable to the entire Area!*

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*The Members' Web site is a password-protected site; the password is the name of your group plus the letters "afg".*

*This site is loaded with valuable program information and resources.*

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## Sharing Experience, Strength and Hope

### Thinking Abundantly in Service

Recently I was looking at the Al-Anon WSO Members website (<http://al-anon.org/members/>) and decided to check out the Blogs. I will be the first to admit that I am cautiously slow about exploring new technological communication forums. Although I have a smartphone and have entered the world of texting, I haven't tried tweeting or blogging and I only use Facebook to see pictures my friends have posted. However, I was feeling adventuresome that day and thought "why not see what they are blogging about". So I clicked on the blogs link and was instantly intrigued by one of the topics "Thinking Abundantly In..." I decided to explore further and saw "service" as the most recent blog topic. How apropos I thought, since we will soon be electing a new slate of area officers. I read the sharings with great interest and found myself relating to what they wrote. Did I write something on the blog? No, but it did spark my interest enough to want to share with you what thinking abundantly in service means to me.

When I introduce myself in meetings I frequently say "I am a grateful member of Al-Anon". Grateful doesn't even begin to do justice to my feelings about this program - it has given me a life that is beyond my wildest dreams. In a couple of months I will be celebrating my 26<sup>th</sup> anniversary in Al-Anon, and I know that without full participation in all aspects of the program I would not have grown as much as I have.

I was but an infant in this program when my first sponsor got me involved in service with baby steps (setting up and putting away chairs, setting out the literature). Over the years I have served in many positions in my home group. Four years ago I stepped up to service at the area level when I discovered that Rhode Island AFG was in need of a webmaster. Even though I am by no means a web guru, I am able to use my limited skills to ensure that the information on our website is accurate and current. Three years ago I accepted the position of Group Representative (GR) for my home group. Last November I added the title of Alternate District Representative (DR) to my service repertoire.

In the past several years, through my involvement in service at the area level, my circle of recovery has expanded allowing me to grow in a way I never would have imagined. I find that I feel better about myself and my recovery. My self confidence in all types of group settings has improved as a result of my participation in Area World Service Committee (AWSC) meetings, area Assembly meetings, and other area-level committees. At these meetings, I have discovered that I have a voice and that others are interested in my input. I am more self-confident and I feel great when I give back to this life-saving program, knowing that I am helping to ensure that the hand of Al-Anon and Alateen will always be there.

I also took some time to review past issues of Lifelines and, in particular to re-read service-relevant articles. Here are a few of the "gems" that caught my eye:

- ❖ Participation is the key to harmony
- ❖ Are you ready to take your program to the next level?
- ❖ Consider stepping up to service in November
- ❖ Step Up Your Program and Step Up to Service

Love In Service, **Phyllis H.**, Website Coordinator, District 4 Alternate DR, Forever Hope GR

## Sharing Experience, Strength and Hope



### BRADY

He is always there when I need him, unconditional love :) watching over and weathering the storms.

He is a 95 pound male boxer eight years old now- gentle as can be and loves children.

Wendy McK  
Al-Anon member

### FACES OF SILENCE IN AL ANON

1. Ah, Silence. Peaceful. Meditative Quiet. A chance to meditate. Listen to your higher power or your own inner voice. A time to take care of one's self. A chance to let the mind calm and thoughts settle. To be alone, and be in the present moment.
2. Silence. The right behavior in the moment. Staying on one's own side of the street. Letting go. No advice giving without being asked. HALT present, and not the right time to be making decisions.  
An angry outburst from the alcoholic, which would only be made worse by engaging in argument, is a proper time for silence. - Detachment.
3. Silence. Hurtful, purposeful punishment directed to another. Icy, cold silence. Full of resentment and anger. Silent treatment as a way of getting even. Who's the real victim here?

**David G**



# Sharing Experience, Strength and Hope

## SHATTERED

Years ago, my inner self was shattered like the sea-glass, and like the sea wearing on the glass, time and repetition slowly changed ME.

When I came into the program, I didn't realize how little of me there was and how I was built on the thoughts, likes, dislikes, behavior and expectations of others who for generations suffered from the family illness of alcoholism. I had lived a life of deluded thinking and behavior. Reality always distorted and my feelings and thoughts didn't exist.

Working the steps & traditions, meetings, a good sponsor and trusted fellowship friends gave me a sense of self, an opportunity to FEEL and a voice. These are a few of the awesome gifts given to me freely.

5 events this summer shattered my believe in me and my world. Some of the events were good things with stress baggage. All I know is one day I woke with all this sadness and no strength to work through it. No voice to be heard. I feel now and that be overwhelming.



We have all been shattered in some way. My program friends have been so supportive. When I start to gather all the pieces of my program, friends, and new felt feelings, I find we can be very beautiful in our own special way. I am slowly healing, finding my voice and looking at the beauty of it all.

**Linda F**



## POSITIONS VOTED ON AT THE NOVEMBER AREA ASSEMBLY IN NOVEMBER

By written ballot:

1. Area Delegate
2. Alternate Area Delegate
3. Area Chair
4. Area Secretary
5. Area Treasurer

By show of hands:

1. Alateen Coordinator
2. Archives Coordinator
3. Email Coordinator
4. Group Records Coordinator
5. Lifelines Editor
6. Literature Coordinator
7. Office Coordinator
8. Public Outreach Coordinator
9. Website Coordinator
10. AA Liaison





## Sharing Experience, Strength and Hope

The first part of Concept 9 tells us that good personal leadership is necessary at all levels, that being: groups, districts, special committees, events, assemblies and at the area level. With the upcoming assembly and rotation of our area officers, as well as group and district reps too, I have to think about who would be a good leader for our area, groups and district. In Al-anon, one may think that we don't have any leaders, but that isn't true. We have our group reps which help run business meetings and bring us news from our districts, assemblies and world service conference. These members learn how to be leaders and be the voice of our groups or districts. When our assemblies meet we trust our GR to vote in good conscience on our behalf. That is leadership! Maybe just setting up the literature or carrying the key to the meeting room. This effort is leadership which requires responsibility and consistency. When I think about this concept, I think about the responsibility of the person taking on the role, before I vote. What do we know about the person, for instance would a group give a newcomer the job as treasurer? What do we know about this newcomer, is it really a wise decision to give a newcomer an important job so soon? It's not about judging or excluding, at least not for me, it's more about what is good for my group, district, area, or world service office. Being a leader means showing up, being responsible, fulfilling the commitment (including the entire term) and continuing to lead by example. This includes using our legacies to be able to listen to others opinions, to be kind, and accept the outcomes of our group conscience.

The second part of this concept is about the board of trustee's assuming the primary responsibility for our world service. I am grateful for the leadership of our WSO, certainly the amount of information available at our headquarters isn't something I would want to sort through daily nor do I have the time to commit to this leadership role. Thank you trustees for being good leaders, and thank you RI AFG group, district, and area leaders for sticking to your commitments, and fulfilling your roles as leaders for our fellowship. Much love for our program, **Barbara M.** Panel 46, Past Delegate

### Seen on a t-shirt:

**"I no longer have a subscription to your issues!"**

I came away from today's Al-Anon meeting feeling fully alive.

The power of the group, the power of HP reminds me that I am a special beloved child of God, as I understand God.

Today I was also reminded to think of what nurtures my soul and then to do it.

My list of things that fulfill me is personal to me and ranges from singing to walking in nature. I become focused on the now and filled with the consciousness of the presence of my Higher Power. I am truly grateful that, as a friend once said, I got plucked off the pile of disease and plopped into recovery.

Healing from the devastating affects of growing up in an alcoholic home is the most important job in my life. From my recovery, all good things flow.

In gratitude, I remain, humbly, **anonymous**

# Al-Anon Upcoming Events

## Saturday Nite Live Anniversary

Saturday, September 24, 7:30 - 9:00 PM  
 Calvary Methodist Church  
 200 Wyatt Rd., Middletown (off rt. 138)

## District 3 Meeting

Tuesday, September 27, 6:00 PM  
 St. Michael's Church, Parish Hall,  
 399 Hope St., Bristol

## Friday Night Serenity Anniversary

Friday, September 30, 7:30 - 9:00 PM  
 Ray Conference Center, Butler Hospital  
 345 Blackstone Blvd., Providence

## Area World Service Committee Meeting

**Tuesday, October 4, 7PM**  
**Area Office, 106 Rolfe Street, Cranston**

## Alateen Sponsors Meeting

Saturday, October 15, 11:00 AM  
 Area Office, 106 Rolfe Street, Cranston

## Area World Service Committee Meeting

Tuesday, October 18, 7:00 PM  
 Area Office, 106 Rolfe Street, Cranston

## Area Assembly

November 5<sup>th</sup>, 2011 – more to come

## 28th New Hampshire Al-Anon & Alateen Convention

Friday - Sunday, November 4 - 6  
 The Margate Convention Center  
 76 Lake Street, Laconia, NH

## Rhode Island Al-Anon & Alateen Workshop with AA Participation

Saturday, November 19  
 Ray Conference Center, Butler Hospital  
 345 Blackstone Blvd., Providence

### September 2011

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4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
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25	26	27	28	29	30	

### October 2011

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16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

### November 2011

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

## RI Al-Anon Family Groups Area Office/Literature Distribution Center (LDC)

106 Rolfe Street, Cranston, RI 02910

Hours: Please call the office

Phone/Fax: 401-781-0044

E-mail: [RI\\_Al-Anon@hotmail.com](mailto:RI_Al-Anon@hotmail.com)

Lifelines e-subscription: [Emailmailto:RI\\_Al-Anon@hotmail.com](mailto:RI_Al-Anon@hotmail.com) (type "Mailing List" in the subject line)

Web: [www.RIAFG.org](http://www.RIAFG.org)

An area newsletter is a vital link in keeping groups and members informed. The purposes of *Lifelines* are to: encourage attendance at service events; communicate local, area, and Al-Anon Information Service news; and attract Al-Anon members into service.

If you are interested in serving on the *Lifelines* Committee, please call the office at the number listed above. If you would like more information about the tasks and time commitment involved, you may contact Linda F. at [lin2169@cox.net](mailto:lin2169@cox.net) or 401-855-6009 (it's safe to leave a message).

***A special thank you to all who contribute!***