



Lifelines

The Newsletter of the RI AFG, December 2008

Al-Anon Online: Program Resources on the Web

by Melissa S, Jenny N, Leah D, Sharon F, and Deb E

Our program affords us many tools: meetings, sponsorship, literature, conferences and workshops, and audiovisual resources. Ours is a multimedia program. This is especially true on the Web.

One *Lifelines* reader wanted to learn more about Al-Anon and Alateen resources on the Web and asked if we could have an article about it. Boy, did that open a can of worms! There are tons of great information, resources, tools—and especially experience, strength, and hope—available to us online. This article couldn't cover them all, but we will cover the following Al-Anon online resources:

- ▲ Our local, Area 49 Web site (www.riafg.org)
- ▲ The Al-Anon Members' Web site (www.al-anon.alateen.org/members)
- ▲ Podcasts
- ▲ Online meetings

There is also a public Al-Anon Web site (www.al-anon.alateen.org), which we couldn't cover here—but feel free to browse the site and discover all the resources it offers to newcomer and longtime member alike. Resources for Alateens are described on page 4 of this issue.

Rhode Island, Area 49, Web site (www.riafg.org)

Our Area Web site offers information for newcomers to Al-Anon Family Groups as well as current members. We have the most current meeting schedules available in both Microsoft Word and PDF format for reference, as well as the "20 Questions" to determine whether Al-Anon, Alateen, or Al-Anon Adult Children is for you.

We also provide links to the recent Area *Lifelines* newsletters for reference and general information in the following categories:

- ▲ RI Al-Anon Events—Upcoming anniversary meetings, conferences, and Area and service meetings.
- ▲ Service Opportunities—Listing ways that you can provide service to the Area and Al-Anon as a whole.
- ▲ Meetings Announcements—About new meetings, closed meetings, location changes, and meetings needing support.
- ▲ Area Literature Purchase Form—For groups who wish to place a literature order with our Literature Distribution Center (LDC).

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Rhode Island Al-Anon, Area 49

Summary of Area World Service Committee Meeting, October 21, 2008*

The Monday morning "Living Recovery" meeting in Coventry at Sts. John and Paul's Church, 10 AM, needs support with attendance.

2008 Fall Workshop: Judy S. (Workshop Committee Chair) thanked all who helped make the workshop a success, especially Missy B. There were compliments from several attendees. Forty-five people attended. There were 12 raffle baskets plus a quilt. Leah D. (Literature Coordinator) had a literature table. Judy has a breakdown of attendees by town to see where people were coming from.

AA Liaison: The Area approved funds for Jen N. (AA Liaison) to cover half of her room, the registration, and a meal with the speaker for the AA convention.

2008 Area Election Assembly: Mary Ann R., trustee from CT, spoke at the assembly. As a courtesy, members were asked to submit any questions for her to Barbara M. (Delegate) by November 1st. Liz P. (Area Chair) prepared an outline of the agenda for the Assembly. The procedure for election of officers in the *Service Manual* had never been followed. It is important that people be aware of what the *Service Manual* states, as this is how positions would be elected this year.

The next Area meeting will be Tuesday, January 20, 2009 at 7 PM. (See last page.)

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

All Area officers were asked to submit a report for the assembly and a proposed budget for expenses for their positions for 2009. This budget process would give the groups an idea of how their contributions are spent. The budget is only a guideline for expenses and may be adjusted during the year.

May the changes of the season bring you serenity.

Photos in this issue submitted by Linda F.



Al-Anon Online

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- ▲ Al-Anon Family Groups World Service Office—A link to the WSO public Web site in English, Spanish, and French.
- ▲ Al-Anon Guidelines—A link to the WSO guidelines page for reference.
- ▲ Subscribe to the *Forum*—Link to subscribe to the WSO monthly Al-Anon Family Groups magazine, for group or individual subscriptions. Often called a “Meeting in My Pocket.”

Finally, the contact information (address, e-mail, office phone/fax, and hours) are always available on the Web site. It’s a great central reference point for information applicable to the entire Area!

Members’ Web site (www.al-anon.alateen.org/members)

The Al-Anon Family Groups Members’ Web site is a great place for you and your group to find member-related information. It’s 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. The home page, alone, offers links to:

- ▲ The full text of the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*
- ▲ The results of the 2006 Membership Survey
- ▲ A sneak peak of our newest piece of conference approved literature (CAL), *Discovering Choices*
- ▲ The full text of the *2008 World Service Conference Summary*
- ▲ Electronic Conference Approved Literature (eCAL), including the results of the eCAL contest earlier this year
- ▲ The new Concepts Web log (known as a “blog”), which is an electronic, interactive discussion of the topic “Using the Concepts in Our Personal Lives”
- ▲ Order forms for the Sponsorship bookmark and *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism 2009*
- ▲ Historical background on sponsorship, including the text of a speech made by Lois W, a talk given by Bill W, and an excerpt from the 1967 Conference Digest

There are also links at the very bottom for ordering literature, information for Alateen groups, a calendar of events, and WSO contact information.

In addition, the Web site features tabs for information covering Group Services, Publications, Public Outreach, Inside the World Service Office, WSO Seminars/Conventions, and Forms. Information found under each tab is described in the following sections.

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The Alateen Web Site

by Missy B

Here are a few things that one can find by visiting <http://www.al-anon.alateen.org/alateen.html>:

- ▲ You can find out what Alateen is, if it is for you, where to find meetings, and literature that is available.
- ▲ You can read excerpts from *Alateen Talk*, which is a quarterly publication.
- ▲ You can see Alateen's 12 Steps and Traditions.
- ▲ There is a link that will take you to the Al-Anon Web site to be able to order Alateen literature.
- ▲ You can look at the Alateen sponsor pamphlet to see if sponsoring might be for you if you're an Al-Anon member.
- ▲ The 2006 survey that was put out to teens shows in graph form how the questions were answered. Questions are related to how alcoholism has affected the teens' lives in relation to school, overall well-being, and health, just to name a few. The graphs also show how Alateen has changed some of those factors mentioned, for the better.
- ▲ Quotes from different pieces of literature are constantly changing in the bottom right corner of the site.



Delegate's Fall 2008 Assembly Address

To: Area 49, Rhode Island—Al-Anon/Alateen Family Groups

From: Barbara M, Panel 46 (Rhode Island) Delegate (out-going)

Today, I address you for the last time as your Delegate. I have been provided with the opportunity of a lifetime by serving our fellowship these last 3 years. The conference theme this year was "Building Bridges—Energizing our Spiritual Quest." I was so proud to represent RI this year at conference, thinking about all the ways we, together, have built bridges between our members and groups, between the groups and the Area World Service Committee, and between our groups and World Service. There has been a growing excitement that is exhilarating when we hold our Assemblies. I took that energy, bottled it up for safekeeping, and opened it up at Conference this April. Your prayers, cards, and the outpouring of love gifts filled me with the sense that I was not alone, and you were all in my heart as I spoke at Conference on your behalf. The bridges we have built in RI have solid foundations. As I leave my current position, I know that my successor will pickup where we left off and continue to listen to the voice of our members in RI and represent you well. That means that each one of us has that responsibility to share their experience, strength, and hope through their service arms and, in the absence of a service arm, talk to your Area officers. Or step up into that empty position and build that bridge for our fellowship and expand your own recovery.

I would like to quote our Conference Chair Mary G., "It is our work to ensure that our groups are strong, our message is clear and a hand is extended in love to everyone who walks into a meeting unaware that they too will have the opportunity to respond to a spiritual call." I have been blessed with serving our fellowship, my spiritual quest expanding beyond my wildest dreams and my relationship with my HP is stronger than it was 3 years ago. Laying bedrock, setting the footings of solid Al-Anon Family groups in RI is the responsibility of us all. Our traditions and concepts help us understand what the spans of our bridges' futures need to be. We can all build bridges by using our program's recovery tools. Each of us is responsible as a member to reach out and help families and friends of alcoholics. I ask each of you to challenge yourselves to build a bridge and energize your spiritual journey. Reach out to someone new, chair a meeting, make the coffee, offer a ride to someone in need, think big, reach out, and show your gratitude for our fellowship. Every bridge we build is service in action. It provides us more momentum to continue on this wonderful journey of recovery. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to grow; I have more gratitude than ever before as I end this journey as your World Service Conference Member. I can now appreciate the words I have heard over and over, that a service position, whatever it is, is a journey based upon love. Love which was given to me as a newcomer 18 years ago, love which was given to me when I was not feeling so lovable, and the love that I now return to our fellowship for all I have received. I would like to close my thoughts with you with a quote mentioned at Conference which I challenge you all to think about; it is from our beloved founder, written in *Lois Remembers*: "Love inspires us to greater endeavor in all fields of activity." I would like to leave you all with that thought for the day. Until we meet again, with love and gratitude for our program.

Barbara

Contributions to the Area

Please note, service positions have rotated and we have a new Area Treasurer, Betsy W. Please send all group contributions to the Area to the Area Office (see last page for address).

Don't forget to put the group name and entire group number on all checks when sending in donations. Your group number is provided on the meeting list.

Al-Anon Online

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Group Services

The Group Services section of the Al-Anon Members' Web site provides valuable information for those seeking to form a new group, for those groups that are already established, and for members who are interested in service. The *Special Needs Catalog* provides information about literature available in large-print, Braille, and audio formats. Members can access the most recent *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* as well as the many guidelines provided by the WSO. Members can also find the Al-Anon Registration/Group Records Change Form through the Group Services section, which allows them to notify WSO of any changes that may have been made regarding their group's mailing address and contact person.

The Group Services section includes a link for Service Plans. These plans provide information for groups and districts interested in service and public outreach. The District Game Plan offers suggestions to help the groups within a district to stay in communication with one another and includes information regarding ways groups can participate in public outreach. "Starting with the Home Group" helps Al-Anon members to evaluate their group as well as how their personal recovery is enhanced by involvement within their group.

We often hear in Al-Anon that no member is ever alone. The same is true for our groups. The information available on the Al-Anon Members' Web site provides us with valuable tools for communication and participation. It is up to us to use them.

Publications

Currently, members can view sample chapters from select Al-Anon books online. Every 3 months, a different book is selected for the Sample Chapter section. Right now, the sample chapter is from *The Dilemma of the Alcoholic Marriage*. The posted chapter discusses the challenges of communicating in an alcoholic marriage. In addition, you can also find an excerpt from the new book about recovery in relationships, *Discovering Choices*.

Another online resource is electronic Conference Approved Literature (eCAL). eCAL is a way to creatively share experience, strength, and hope using a combination of media, like audio, video, poetry, prose, or song. The results of the recent eCAL competition are now available on the Web (<http://www.al-anon.org/members/eCAL/results.html>).

One of the other tools available on the Members' Web site is a subject index of *Forum* articles from 2004–2008, listing the issue date and page number where the article appeared. The index is updated each month. Some of the articles are linked directly to the index, allowing members to reach the article online. The 2008 index includes topics like humor, letting go, higher power, relationships, detachment, and grief.

Also available is an electronic version of the outreach magazine: *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism 2009*. The link is on the bottom of the page after you log in.

The *2006–2009 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* is available in hard copy for \$4.00 at the Al-Anon office. However, any member can access the entire *Service Manual* for free on the members' Web site. The *Service Manual* contains helpful

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suggestions for groups, Al-Anon policies, and service structure. In addition to being a “must read” for members in service, the first section is helpful for all groups (*Al-Anon and Alateen Groups at Work*). It includes a general meeting format, group tips, meeting ideas, how to start a new meeting, and the history of Al-Anon Family Groups.

Literature as a Program Tool

The Al-Anon Web site states that: “Since its founding in 1951, Al-Anon Family Groups has published more than 100 books and pamphlets that share a single purpose: to help family and friends recover from the effects of someone else’s drinking. All Al-Anon literature, including eCAL and Al-Anon’s *Forum* magazine, supplements face-to-face meetings where Al-Anon members share their insights and experiences with each other. It is only one tool of the Al-Anon program and is most fully understood when used in conjunction with other tools of the program.”

Public Outreach

The Public Outreach tab on the Members’ Web site is an extremely informative resource for any and all members interested in outreach. It offers information on the many ways that Al-Anon participates in providing professionals, institutions, the media, and the general public with the Al-Anon message of hope.

A survey indicates that more than one-third of Al-Anon members attended their first meeting as a result of a professional referral. The site provides 13 different service tools specifically designed to carry the Al-Anon message to professionals, including doctors, therapists, religious leaders, nurses, attorneys, police, educators, and judges.

The Web site explains that the goal of public outreach is to attract and inform newcomers to Al-Anon. To this end, there are an impressive number of tools available through this link. They include institution-meeting starters, pamphlets, professional letters, fact sheets, media kits, public service announcements, posters, press releases, and even podcasts (more on that later in this article). The site makes it simple for any member to get involved in outreach by offering a full spectrum of user-friendly ways to do just that.

Inside the World Service Office

This page of the Members’ Web site describes the WSO as the service center, or “clearing house” for the Al-Anon Family Groups fellowship. The page provides links to the history of the WSO and of Al-Anon through its archives. There is also information about the Board of Trustees, including committee guidelines, the most recent letters to Conference Members from the Chairperson of the Board, and updates from the Policy and Finance Chairpersons.

If you are interested in learning more about the Al-Anon Family Groups fellowship, you are welcome to visit the World Service Office in Virginia and take a tour. The Web site offers detailed information about how to do that and what to expect.

Finally, this page summarizes employment opportunities at the WSO, provides financial information about Al-Anon Family Groups, and describes the Seventh Tradition as it pertains to groups’ support of the WSO.

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WSO Seminars/Conventions

This tab provides information on Regional Service Seminars (RSSs), which bring the WSO from Virginia Beach out to regions in the United States and Canada. Most members do not get the opportunity to visit the WSO, meet the staff, and hear about the work being done. An RSS is the perfect place to find enthusiasm for service and have at least one member of each Al-Anon and Alateen group make a personal contact with WSO staff and trustees.

Forms

This page is full of downloadable/printable forms, including the Al-Anon Group Registration Form; Authorization Agreement Forms for Preauthorized Contributions; order forms for CAL, the *Forum*, and the *World Service Conference Summary*; and a registration form for Regional Service Seminars.

Podcasts

The Al-Anon Family Groups *public* Web site (<http://www.al-anon.alateen.org>) offers information for newcomers and professionals. It now includes a set of podcasts (audio MP3 files you can play on your computer). The podcasts are similar to Al-Anon meetings, with members sharing on particular topics. They were specially recorded to introduce newcomers and professionals to the Al-Anon program. The podcast titles include:

- ▲ Why did we come to Al-Anon?
- ▲ Did we cause our loved one to drink?
- ▲ What does it mean, our lives became unmanageable?
- ▲ Why did I feel afraid to go to my first Al-Anon meeting?
- ▲ What is the First Step in Al-Anon?

To access these, go to <http://al-anonfamilygroups.org/Podcasts/FirstSteps/>.

Online Meetings

Can't get to a face-to-face meeting? Al-Anon offers electronic meetings as well! Electronic meetings can be in e-mail, chat, bulletin board, or telephone format. To request a list of electronic Al-Anon meetings, go to <http://www.al-anon.alateen.org/grpsrvreqform.html> and fill in your e-mail address.

Online Al-Anon meetings cannot replace the human companionship and warmth provided by regular attendance at face-to-face Al-Anon meetings. However, you may find this supplement to be a source of support when it is impossible or impractical to attend regular meetings.

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Upcoming Events

December

Alateen Informational Sponsors Meeting

Sat., Dec. 13, 1:00 PM

Area Office, 106 Rolfe Street, Cranston

All Al-Anon members who are currently involved with Alateen or are interested in volunteering are welcome!

January

Area Meeting

Tues., Jan. 20, 7:00 PM

Area Office, 106 Rolfe Street, Cranston

If you are interested in participating in service, please attend!

Al-Anon—A Community Resource for Family Recovery from Alcoholism

Fri., Jan. 9, 7:30 PM

Bradley Hospital, 1011 Veterans Memorial Pkwy, East Providence

In honor of our 2nd anniversary, the "When I Got Busy I Got Better" Al-Anon Group is hosting an open Al-Anon meeting for professionals who would like to learn more about how Al-Anon can be used as a resource for their patients and clients, and for anyone curious to learn how Al-Anon could benefit them personally. To assist with this outreach project, please contact Leah at enjoybeing@gmail.com or 401-374-0236.

DECEMBER 2008

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JANUARY 2009

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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

Lifelines e-subscription: destre99@yahoo.com (type "Mailing List" in the subject line)

Web: 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 as *Lifelines* Editor, or serving on a *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 Deb E. at destre99@yahoo.com or 401-435-3258 (it's safe to leave a message).