

LIFELINES

RIAFG NEWSLETTER 106 ROLFE STREET, CRANSTON, RI 02910
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Editor's Corner

I recently completed the WSO member survey. I don't usually do surveys. In fact, I hate them because they seem such a waste of time and energy.

However, I found the Al-Anon survey thought provoking. A few of the questions asked about how I felt before coming to the program and then later asked the same questions except the time period was after I began using the tools of our wonderful program. This helped me see my areas of improvement and some things that still need lots of work.

The WSO needs an accurate picture of who we are out here. If only women or retirees do the survey, it will paint an inaccurate picture of our demographic. One of the purposes of this survey is to educate professionals about our program.

So, please take the time to do the survey! This program has given me so much that spending 15 to 20 minutes to help out was definitely worth the effort.

The survey can be found at: al-anon.org/r8membersurvey

Step Two: "Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity." I have had times when I questioned the existence of any Higher Power. I used the strength and love of the people in the AFG groups. I needed to listen to and learn from your experience, strength and hope. Over time I developed a personal relationship with the Higher Power. But, I cannot do this program alone. Toughing it out alone only leads me to that hole that I am very good at digging myself into. My meetings are my rudder, keeping me on course. Without them, I am all over the place and lose focus on what is important.

Steps one, two and three are like a "cha-cha" dance for me. I can always come back to their familiar rhythm: one, two, one two, three; one, two, one, two, three....I've heard them described as "I came; I came to; I came to believe." I use them in any situation in my life and they have not failed me.

I continue to learn the importance of meetings, reading Al-Anon literature, prayer and mediation. I am privileged to have healthy, recovering people in my life today!

A grateful member of Al-Anon,
Elaine H, Lifelines Editor

FORUM ARTICLE

I didn't know my life had been affected by alcoholism until I was an adult

I was born into our family's disease of alcoholism. I never thought there was anything unusual about the way I grew up. There was a lot of celebrating and a lot of drinking, but also a lot of laughter and love in our family. I had a good education and I wore nice clothes. I never realized that my life had been affected by alcoholism until I was an adult.

When I was a senior in high school, my father became a member of Alcoholics Anonymous (A.A.) and found sobriety. I remember thinking that alcoholism was reserved for men who slept on park benches or were homeless. I couldn't think of my father as an alcoholic. However, I knew nothing of the disease, its symptoms, or the destructive effects it had on families. He first encouraged me to attend Alateen and later Al-Anon. He would say, "You know, you were affected by my drinking. There is a program where you can get help." My response was always, "I am fine, Dad, and your drinking never affected me."

I struggled in relationships, even though I didn't marry an alcoholic and there wasn't much drinking on my husband's side of the family. Yet, I had a fierce temper, and although I had a nice home and a hard-working husband, I was never satisfied or happy. We had a daughter together, and when she was four, we divorced. For many years, I felt victimized, abandoned, and overwhelmingly responsible for the care of our child. It was not until much later that I fully understood my part in the breakup.

When my daughter was a teenager, I got involved with an active alcoholic. He drank every day. I knew there was something different about his drinking, something I didn't recall from growing up around alcohol. We had terrible arguments, and our relationship was like riding a roller coaster. The good times were great, but the bad times were horrible. We were "on again, off again," and I lived in fear and constant chaos.

After his first driving under the influence offense, he was court ordered to attend A.A. Since I thought I needed to help him stop drinking, I attended Al-Anon. I was hopeful, and I expected the kind women at the meetings to tell me to leave him. I listened attentively, thinking I would hear a similar story that ended with whether the person stayed or left. I was confused and not sure of my feelings. No one told me what to do, even when I asked.

I found a Sponsor and I called her regularly, usually after an unpleasant conversation with the alcoholic. She listened patiently, and finally one day asked me if I ever thought about letting the phone ring when he called. My answer was "no." It was the first time I realized that I was playing a part in the dysfunction, and that I had a choice (to participate in his verbal abuse or not) simply by not answering the phone.

I began attending meetings as often as I could. I liked what I heard and I thought that perhaps I could learn to be happy. I also thought that perhaps I could make the decision to leave. It was not until I started working the Steps that the fog began to clear. I hadn't realized how distorted my thinking was, and how irritable I had become.

Today, I know that I played a part in every negative situation that occurred in my life. I wasn't responsible for everything, but I wasn't blameless either. I just played a part. I contributed. I tried to fix, manage, and control, and when I didn't get my way, I got angry. I said hurtful things, and I tried to get revenge.

Today, my life is happy. Although I am no longer living with active alcoholism, Al-Anon is my way of life. I had to learn to fix me. I took an inventory. I made amends. I readily recognized my old ways of behaving and, while I am still learning, my life has been completely transformed - thanks to a loving and forgiving God and the wonderful, recovering people of Al-Anon.

The gifts I have received are countless. The friendships and unity I have experienced are lifelong treasures. I learned to give back. I learned to be of service. I am learning that I deserve happiness, and I can solve my problems if I seek the guidance of my Higher Power, "One Day at a Time." I have the courage to change only myself, and I am grateful for the gifts I've received from our program.

Toni J., Florida

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**Editor's Note: Would you like your own subscription to the "Forum?" A subscription form is in the back of all issues. The cost is \$11.00 per year and there is also an online version available.

Would you like to be on the distribution list for Lifelines? Send an email requesting this to lifelines.riafg@gmail.com. These are sent as "BCC's" so your anonymity is protected.

MEMBERS SHARE

Spring Prayer of Fellowship

Thank you for the gifts of life with you.
May I appreciate in full the beauty of our path together.

Thank you for your crimson understanding.
May I accept myself as well as you do.

Thank you for the violets of your patience.
May I still grow, no matter what is left of me.

Thank you for my weedy imperfections.
May I come to love as well as you do.

Thank you for your joyous reaching hand.
May I stand guard against deception of myself.

Jon W.

Note by the author: "I got interested in poetry from listening to people talk. I'd hear music in certain words or a turn of phrase that would catch my attention. This poem came from using the prayers in CAL. I kept a collection of the ones I liked best in the back of my journal. Last May I recited a bunch of them out loud and they spoke to me as a whole.

One theme in the poem is clearly gratitude for life itself. Another theme is how beautiful it is to witness vital growth in oneself and others. This is Al-Anon music.

One surprise to me as I wrote the poem was the mystery of who it is addressed to. I began with the intention of speaking to my Higher Power as the "you." By the time I get to the second line, it seems as if God has a few things to say too!. The poem begins to cast an even wider net, as I reflect on the powerful joys of understanding and patience nurtured by loving fellowship." Jon. W.

AREA OFFICE NEWS

If you are an active member of Al-Anon who has benefited from this wonderful program, please **consider becoming an Office Volunteer or At-Home Volunteer** as part of your own recovery process. We need your help to help others. Please call the area office (401) 781-0044 – and leave your contact info in a message for Jane. We especially invite you to a Saturday morning/midday shift. Currently we are covered for the first Saturday of the month only. Thank you!

Jane A., RIAFG office coordinator

AREA CHAIR'S CORNER

World Service Conference Love Gifts

As I walked into the Hospitality Room at my first World Service Conference, I was overwhelmed by the boxes and boxes of “**love gifts**” that Al-Anon groups throughout the country had sent to their Delegates to share with the other Conference members. It was an amazing example of the love that permeates our fellowship.

If your group would like to send “love gifts” to the 2018 Conference for our Delegate to share, the World Service Office requests that (1) you address the package to: Barbara H., Renaissance Westchester Hotel, 80 W. Red Oak Ln., West Harrison, NY 10694; (2) you include (Hold for WSC 4/16-4/20, 2018) in the address; (3) you put the following as the return address in the event that mail delivery is delayed: Barbara H., RIAFG, 106 Rolfe St., Cranston, RI 02910; and (4) you plan to have the package arrive after April 13th.

Phyllis H., Area Chair

RI AFG STATE NEWS - Participation at the 42nd AA Convention

Six Al-Anon meetings will be available during the AA Convention. Please consider leading one of the Al-Anon meetings – a great way serve! Meeting leaders are responsible for the \$25.00 registration fee. Registration: <https://aainri.com/convention/>

Special note: Pati S. is our Al-Anon guest speaker and will give her talk Sat., Mar. 24 at 10:15 am.

Sat., Mar. 24 at 9:00 am:	Shine - Let It Begin with Me
Sat., Mar. 24 at 11:30 am:	Finding the Light – Healing Shattered Faith Steps One, Two, and Three
Sat., Mar. 24 at 1:00 pm:	Reflections Shine the Light on Our Character Traits Step Four and Five
Sat., Mar. 24 at 2:30 pm:	Making Up and Lighting Your Load – Steps Six, Seven, Eight & Nine
Sat., Mar. 24 at 5:00 pm:	Grow and Spread the Light Steps Ten, Eleven & Twelve
Sun., Mar. 25 at 8:30 am:	The Light of Fellowship and a Loving God Shines on Us All Tradition 2

If you would like to lead a meeting, please contact Jackie G. by email: aa.riafg@gmail.com or leave a message at our Area Office phone number (401) 781-0044.

Parking is FREE and available at the hotel, though it's limited. The hotel does offer valet parking @ \$20.00 per night. We have a FREE trolley that runs from the Newport Visitors Center parking lot (there will be a sign) 23 Americas Cup Ave from, Friday, March 23, 6-8:00 pm, 9:30-midnight & Saturday, March 24, 8am-8pm, 9:30-midnight: <https://www.discovernewport.org/about-newport/visitor-center/>

UPCOMING EVENTS

- Feb 16-19, 2018** 29th Southeastern Mass Roundup (with Al-Anon Participation)
Holiday Inn, 31 Hampshire St., Mansfield, MA.
- Mar 3, 2018** AWSC meeting, 10:00 AM to Noon, 106 Rolfe Square, Cranston. All are welcome.
- Mar 4, 2018** Forever Hope 30th Anniversary and Celebration of Lois W.'s Birthday. 10:00 AM at West Greenwich Town Hall, 280 Victory Hwy (Rte 102), West Greenwich, RI.
- Mar 23-25, 2018** 42nd RI AA Convention with Al-Anon participation
"Let Your Light Shine" The Gurney's Newport Resort and Marina
Goat Island, Newport, RI
- Mar 23-25, 2018** CT AL-ANON Convention Raddison Hotel, Cromwell, CT
see ctalanon.org for information
- Apr 13 -15, 2018** 2nd Native American Al-Anon Conference
The Lodge at Sante Fe, 750 N. St. Francis Dr., Sante Fe, NM
see the Events Calendar on riafg.org for more details
- Apr 20-22, 2018** 42nd Massachusetts Al-Anon/Alateen Convention
Sturbridge Host Hotel, 336 Main St., Sturbridge, MA
see the Events Calendar on riafg.org for more details
- July 6-8, 2018** International Al-Anon/Alateen Convention, Baltimore, MD
"Celebrating One Day at a Time" Baltimore Convention Center,
Baltimore, MD, see the Events Calendar on riafg.org for more details

PUBLIC OUTREACH

A reminder: The **deadline, February 7, 2018, 5:00 PM EST**, is fast approaching for ordering the second printing of the Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism 2018 magazine. Magazines are printed in March and delivered before April 1, 2018. The order forms are available on the WSO website: www.al-anon.org. 25 copies costs \$18.00. Be sure you specify English, French or Spanish.

NEWS FROM WSO

The **2018-2021 Service Manual** is now available electronically for the English Edition. To find this sign onto al-anon.org, then click on "members" and select "member resources." From there select "manuals and guidelines" and then select the "Service Manual." A printed version will be available sometime in February. If you or your group wants a copy, the RIAFG office in Cranston will have them for a small cost. They are no longer distributed free of charge to the AFG groups.

Member Survey: Reminder! The WSO is conducting a survey of the Al-Anon membership. The findings help the WSO's communication with professionals by providing data about Al-Anon that show improvements in our health and well-being. Information about the 2018 Membership Survey is time sensitive. The 2018 Al-Anon Membership Survey is available online at al-anon.org/18membersurvey **now through February 27, 2018**. The WSO's Al-Anon Membership Survey is Conference Approved, anonymous and confidential. It has been conducted every three years since 1984. This is our twelfth study.

Al-Anon/Alateen in National Media

The "Dear Abby" newspaper column for January 31 will recommend Al-Anon. In communities where editors choose to publish the recommendation to try Al-Anon it would be appropriate and helpful for members to send thank-you notes to the newspapers. Such expressions of appreciation might help editors choose to run more Al-Anon and Alateen items in the future. It is possible that thank-you notes sent to newspapers or "Dear Abby" might appear in print, so please ask to remain anonymous if you identify yourself as an Al-Anon member.

Readers of national media items could contact the WSO for local meeting information. It is always important for groups to provide WSO and all service arm websites with up-to-date meeting information, so everyone can help newcomers find a local meeting.

Thank you for offering help and hope to families and friends of alcoholics.

AL-ANON MEETING UPDATES

HOLIDAY & TEMPORARY CHANGES

The Al-Anon at Noon Westerly, Christ Epis. Church does **NOT** meet on Monday Holidays
ANNIVERSARY MEETING

Forever Hope, 30th Anniversary and Lois W.'s Birthday Celebration. March 4th, 10:00 AM, West Greenwich Town Hall, 280 Victory Hwy (rte 102), West Greenwich, RI; speakers, food and fellowship.

MEETING CHANGE

The new meeting at North Kingstown Methodist Church, 450 Boston Neck Rd., N. Kingstown. has changed their time to 7:30PM to 8:30PM.

Change What You Can group Sunday mornings at 10 AM has moved to a new location: Pawtucket YMCA, 22 Summer St., Pawtucket as of December 10, 2017.

South County Step meeting, Wakefield Baptist Church, Main St., Wakefield is changing its meeting format. The first meeting of the month will be the step for that month; the second meeting, the tradition for that month; the third meeting, the concept for that month; and the rest of the month will be discussion meetings starting in January 4, 2018.

NEEDS SUPPORT

A New Beginning, Thursday 7:00 PM at St. Paul's Episcopal Church Hall, 2679 East Main Rd., Portsmouth.

Hope for the Family Disease, Friday 7:30 PM at St. Theresa's Catholic Church, 265 Stafford Rd., Tiverton.

Cranston-Warwick Daytime meeting, Tuesday 10:00AM at the Edgewood Congregational Church, 1788 Broad St., Cranston.

South County Step, Thursday 7:30pm to 8:30pm at Wakefield Baptist Church, Main St., Wakefield

Parents for Love Hope & Recovery, Monday 7:00pm at Four Corners Community Chapel, 2210 Diamond Hill Rd., Cumberland.

Step Up to the Summit, Monday 7:00 PM, Summit Baptist Church, 1176 Victory Highway, Coventry.

Higher Powered Lunch Bunch, Tuesday/Thursday, 12:10 PM, at St. Stephen's Church, 114 George St., Providence.

First Things First, Monday 7:00PM at VA Medical Center, 830 Chalkstone Ave., Prov.

NEW MEETINGS

A **new meeting** will opened Thursday mornings, 8:30 AM at St. Andrew's Church Hall, 183 Willow Ave., Little Compton.

WEB Sites, Addresses and phone numbers

RI AFG: www.riafg.org Office:,106 Rolfe St., Cranston, RI 02910
Telephone:401-781-0044. Office hours available by calling this number.

WSO: al-anon.org Office: 1600 Corporate Landing Parkway,
Virginia Beach, VA 23454. Telephone: 757-563-1600

**God, grant me the serenity to accept the the things I cannot change,
courage to change the things I can and wisdom to know the difference.**

Photo by T. H.

