

LIFELINES

JULY 2018

RIAFG NEWSLETTER

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Editor's Corner

The God of my understanding is beyond my capacity to understand. However, I do experience my Higher Power through the example of caring people and the beauty of the universe. This universe of ours is so vast and so timeless and I am so small and finite in comparison.

I trip over God when I experience gratitude. I need reminders that my life is a gift. Demeaning or limiting myself is an act of ingratitude. So I am grateful for the life I have today and the amazing people who have been a part of it.

I didn't create myself as a baby. I didn't determine my aptitudes, race, ethnicity, nor to whom and where I was born. I was a tiny seed; a gift containing amazing potential. To bring that potential forth, I need to discover who I am, I need to learn, to meditate, to pray, to educate myself, in other words, to nurture this gift.

My Higher Power cares and helps. I don't understand why, and I often don't realize how until after the fact. Some of the worst, loneliest, difficult times have caused me to grow in ways I probably never would have had I not faced those challenges and fears with the help of Al-Anon and my Higher Power. My insights are the fruits of reflection after the fact.

This gives me hope. I have some experience under my belt of seeing how this Force for good threads itself through my life. When I felt the most abandoned, I was not alone. When I thought I would never move beyond the tough times, I took it one day, one minute, at a time. When I thought I couldn't go on anymore, a gentle nudge kept me in motion. My past experience helps me trust this Higher Power.

For me, this is how I understand humility. I gain an understanding of where I fit into my world. I realize and accept that I am not the Higher Power for anyone else and certainly not for myself. I realize and accept that all my potentials are gifts. They are not of my making. My job is to receive them with gratitude and continue to develop and grow aided by my Higher Power, an attitude of gratitude, and this wonderful program of recovery.

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

YOU'RE INVITED

TO THE

“CHANGE WHAT YOU CAN”

AL-ANON FAMILY GROUP

31st ANNIVERSARY MEETING

SUNDAY ~ AUGUST 5, 2018

10:00-11:30 AM

Pawtucket YMCA

Summer St

2nd Floor

Handicap Accessible

Guest Speakers:

AA, Al-Anon, Al-A-Teen

Refreshments

All are welcome

Did you Know?

(This is a new section which will hopefully deliver some answers and insights into how our groups and Al-Anon as a whole works.)

“Warranty One: That only sufficient operating funds, including an ample reserve, be its prudent financial principal. The spiritual principal of prudence suggests that groups avoid accumulating money beyond current needs and a small but ample reserve, with just enough funds to pay the GR expenses to Assembly and group expenses for a couple of months. This can be decided by making an informed group conscience decision. Group expenses may include: rent..., Group Representatives expenses to attend and participate at District and Area assembly meetings, Conference Approved Literature... Miscellaneous expenses agreed to by the group conscience, such as babysitting... The group supports Al-Anon/Alateen financially at all levels of service by contributing to: Their District, Al-Anon Information Service... and World Service Area (state/province) structure..., and the World Service Office, which serves all groups.”

Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual, 2018-2021, pg 55-56.

Forum Article:

A Mother Practices “Live and Let Live”

Our son was struggling with his addictions and needed a place to live for just a few days. I strongly felt I should bring him back home. My husband was more skeptical, and I didn't blame him. The year before, our son had pawned many of my husband's possessions to feed his addiction. However, I soon realized that our son would be staying more than a few days, and I became nervous. Even though I had my Al-Anon group, and focused on taking “One Day at a Time,” I was juggling my work schedule so I was home while my husband went to work. Our son did not have a job, and we both felt we could not trust him to be in our home alone.

It crossed my mind that this could be a great opportunity for my husband and my son to start rebuilding their relationship. Before Al-Anon, I would have been giving each of them all kinds of suggestions and advice on how they could do that. But Al-Anon taught me to stay out of other people's business and keep the focus on me. So that's what I did. I didn't say a word, although I was tempted several times.

The amazing thing is they figured this out on their own. A week after my son moved in, my husband's boss offered our son a temporary job. My husband thought it was a good idea. I wasn't so sure because that meant they would be spending more time together, and I was afraid that would be too much togetherness. However, just the opposite happened. They would come home from work deep in conversation. I even heard them laughing a few times about something that had happened during their day at work.

Our son ended up staying for ten weeks. After he moved out, my husband said they had talked more in those last few weeks than they had in the last 18 years. Things are far from perfect, but I am awestruck by how much this situation improved our relationships. I firmly believe that an entire family can benefit, even if only one member follows Al-Anon's principles.

by Debbie

(Reprinted with permission of The Forum, copyright issue July, 2016, Al-Anon Family Group Hdqtr., Inc., Virginia Beach, VA.)**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.

Members Share:

Below is information about the Maine Al-Anon Convention this August:

27th Maine Area Al-Anon Convention
August 24-26 including Alateen and with AA participation
Ferry Beach Retreat & Conference Center
21 Ferry Park Avenue
Saco, Maine

Thanks,
Kathi

Area Delegates Corner:

My World Service Conference - WSC

I would like to take a few minutes to share with you my Journey at the World Service Conference. The plan: Sunday morning: pack the car, meet with my sponsor and then I'm off.

You don't know what you don't know. GPS will give you options for a faster route, according to traffic conditions and if you don't say NO, it will change your route; hence I take the exit on right, and halfway off the exit I realize this is not 95, I'm not in New York, I'm in CT. So panic sets in. I'm all alone and don't know where I'm going. I'm supposed to be on 95 all the way. What do you do? Well if you are me, you stop at every information center you can find to make sure your going the right way. I turn my phone off and on and set the route again and again because I'm hoping the GPS will tell me that I have changed the route and it's taking me a different way. It does not. So the route I have been studying for months and used driving to NERD was useless. A trip that should have taken 2.5 hours was 4 hours

I get to hotel and just want to have a melt down and a shower. I checked in, take the elevator to my room. On the elevator doors is the saying "Share yourself with the world." I think: are you kidding me right now? I unpack and say to myself, "what the hell are you doing? Why would anyone want me to share myself with the world?" I'm looking thru the paperwork and find my seating assignment. Where I sit is very important. I think, "Great. I'm in the back of the room. Something is going right." I go to "scope things out." I take the other elevator down and on these doors was the saying: "There is a world of discovery just around the corner, take us there." Seriously? I went to the hospitality room and there were boxes everywhere and people unloading Love Gifts and candy, more than you can imagine. By the end of the Conference, I was in Chocolate overload and never though that would be possible. Everyone was welcoming and asking me, "Do you need anything?" They didn't even know me. Was it real? It was a feeling of acceptance that can only be found in AI-Anon.

Monday morning: I go to the meeting room. Ann is in my spot and I realized I was looking at the seating chart upside down. I was in the first row, with the Conference Committee on the left and the mic on the right. I thought for sure, it was a conspiracy and Phyllis did it. Somehow, she called someone. Needless to say, it was a long day and I was on information overload. I opened the door to my room and there were "flowers" waiting for me. I can't express what that meant to me, at that very moment, although I say, "It must be a mistake." I had to text Phyllis to make sure it was for me. I was loved and all of you had faith in me. I was overwhelmed, and I knew everything was going to be okay.

Stepping Stones Visit: we get on the bus (yes, my volunteer assignment was bus monitor and there are two of us). Kay is very outgoing and took over the lead on checking people in. I'm thinking great, I'm just another bozo on the bus.

Stepping Stone was beyond words. Walking thru was amazing. There are things everywhere and every space is filled. It was such a spiritual experience, I'm not even sure how to describe it. Then I think, "Oh my God, she was a hoarder." As I was sitting outside reflecting after touring the house, I realized she wasn't a hoarder. She left their things for us to see. She picked and placed every item, the things that meant so much to her, knowing that she made the arrangements so that they would be there for future generations. What foresight! I'm back to gratitude. Its time to leave, and yes back to the bus. Just let me tell you, I'm the first one there, can't be late, I'm responsible. Let me tell you it would have been easier to stand up in front of everyone and do the Serenity Prayer. I went into Responsibility overload, checking off names, rechecking, and someone was missing. What do I do? We are holding up all the buses. I go into panic mode. Where is she? Who is she? After a 5 minute melt down where I'm in character defect hell and hot flashes and full-blown panic, I ask Kay to help me. I admit what I'm feeling inside, and she says, "Sure." I don't have to suffer. I can ask for help

It was a busy week, meetings, breakouts, PowerPoint, and the fellowship and acceptance was overwhelming. At the end of every day was time for reflections. I shared my experience at Stepping Stones as best I could and then I was possessed. It was an out of body experience. I say, "Make a note, call my service sponsor. I went to the mic!" And thru the laughter I realized my fear was unrealistic. We are all equal.

As I started packing on Thursday for Saturday check out (yes, I'm a planner), I'm looking at everything I have to take and worrying about how to get it to the car. Should I start bringing things down each day a little at a time? What if I need something already packed? Overwhelmed at what to do, I do nothing, and then I wake up in the middle of the night on Friday and it hits me - make two trips.

On the ride home, I realized that I don't have to stay in the safety lane. I can pass the person in front of me. On the way down I did not pass anyone. I am accepted and loved, like I have never felt before. Then as I passed the "Welcome to RI" sign, and the song, "**when was the last time you did something for the first time**" came on the radio. I burst into tears, happy tears. I had faced so many of my fears this week and made it back alive. That is what I want for my life: more "first times."

That night I realized:

- * Everything happens for a reason
- * Trust yourself, - if you're willing to change, you're on the right road
- * My life has become an adventure and I can't wait to see what's next
- * I live the saying - don't fit recovery into your life, fit your life into your recovery.
- * The phase I hated most when I first started is true in my life today. - I have a life beyond my wildest dreams
- * And lastly, I want to thank all of you for taking this journey with me

Barbara H.
Delegate, Panel 58
Rhode Island

Information from the RIAFG Spring Assembly, June 9, 2018

Hi everyone. I have the answers to the questions from the Assembly.

1. Is there an AFG connects for Alt District Representative?
There is not. It is suggested that the DR share/forward the information with the Alternate DR
2. Is there a Policy against "chanting" at end of meetings?
There is no policy. It is suggested that you lead by example and not participate or take a group conscience regarding "chanting" at the end of meetings
3. Policy regarding asking someone if they are a new comer at meetings?
There is no policy that I could find prohibiting asking
4. Is there an WSO facebook page?
YES! On the WSO website (al-anon.org) go to the bottom of the page. Your options for Facebook/Twitter/Youtube/Instagram are found there.
5. Access to online Alateen meetings?
On WSO website (al-anon.org) go to the meetings tab. Your options will be there: Alateen and also Electronic, phone, and regular meetings

If I have missed any questions or you need anything else, please let me know and I will do my best to research the questions.

Love in Service and Fellowship,
Barb H.
Delegate, Panel 58 - We Participate, Rhode Island

**RIAFG Spring Assembly
SERVICE BREAKOUT SESSION QUESTIONS**

- ❖ **What works?**
What works for you? In Al-Anon service or in your real-world life? Sometimes our workplace trains us to step up using techniques or methods that are sound and effective, that are fruitful. Any suggestions?
- ❖ **What motivated you to step up to service?**
Could you suggest a way to attract members to service based on your service experience?
- ❖ **What doesn't work?**
What stands in your way? What gets in your way of committing to service?
- ❖ **Do we need to change the number of Area positions?**
- ❖ **Are there positions that can be combined or eliminated?**
i.e. Add the *Forum* to the Literature Coordinator's responsibilities.
Eliminate the Email Coordinator position and have the Office Volunteers handle responses to the emails.
- ❖ **Can we make more of the Coordinator positions non-voting to attract members who can't commit to attending the AWSC meetings and/or attract dual members?**
- ❖ **Should we allow voting members to attend the AWSC meetings via technology, like Skype or FaceTime?**
Perhaps that would make it easier for someone who may have transportation or child care or whatever issues that make physical attendance at the AWSC meetings very difficult for them.
- ❖ **Are there other questions we need to ask?**

Thoughts from the Breakout Session: Attracting Members to Service

Groups broke out to discuss a series of questions, inviting thoughts and suggestions with regards to attracting members to service. These groups were comprised of DR's, GR's, Alternates, and AWSC members.

Some ideas generated from these discussions:

- * Fellowship events combined with service education – e.g. fellowship event with specific topics, traditions, to discuss; dinner party where current and former Area members talk about service; table at Workshop where current and former Area members are available to talk about their experience/ answer questions
- * Group inventory at the area level
- * Service sponsorship/mentorship; sponsors encouraging sponsees to take on service positions and/or modeling behavior
- * Using service as a weekly meeting topic and sharing experience, strength, and hope /program growth as a result of service
- * Asking people personally to consider service, letting them know they'd be good at it AND that they would be well-supported/others will help/what resources are available to them
- * Having small service positions at the group level so members get a taste of service and the "leap" isn't so great to the area level

- * Ensuring that there is no appearance of cliquishness among Area-e.g. only friends asking friends to get involved in service
- * Ensuring communication between Area and groups so all members know what Area service is/ entails
- * More specific job descriptions, so members understand both that they can make a position their own but also a general sense of time commitment and responsibilities (people can't make a commitment if they don't know what the commitment is)
- * Asking ourselves what groups don't know/making sure we explain things at the group level-e.g. the vernacular language, abbreviations, acronyms, etc.
- * Potential of combining positions but dividing tasks
- * Not combining positions to ensure more people involved in service and/or each role is manageable
- * Having fewer voting roles means more power to fewer people (but also true if positions aren't filled)
- * Technology might make meeting "attendance possible" and/or more desirable
- * "Interning" open positions or positions turning over sometime in the near future
- * Potential stigma on empty roles; consider "marketing"/"sales pitch"
- * Having Area officers/coordinators come out to groups to talk about service, answer questions, etc.
- * "Planting a seed" about service positions in advance rather than putting someone on the spot, so they have some time to think about it

Motion: to create a task force who will use ideas brainstormed today in re: the attached questions and bring back an action plan for vote at the next assembly (second, passed)

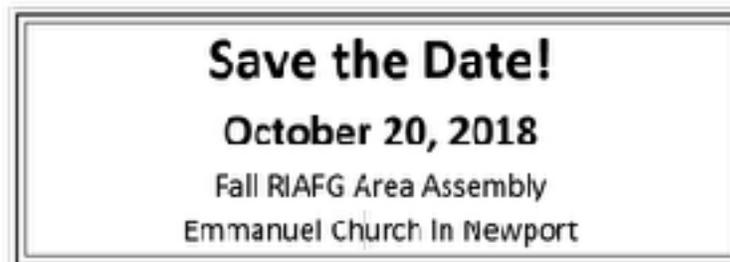
Love in Service and Fellowship,
Phyllis H
Area Chair
Rhode Island AI-Anon

We Need Your Spring Assembly Evaluation Survey

Did you attend the Spring Assembly on June 9, 2018? If you were at the Assembly, have you gone on line and completed the Spring Assembly Evaluation Survey? If not, please take a few minutes to go on line and give us your feed back at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/6BDZYQF>.

The AWSC values your comments and refers to them when planning future Assemblies. The deadline for completing the form is July 15.

Thanks,
Phyllis H., Area Chair



Area Chair's Corner:**Legacy Posters for Sale**

The Area Office has one set of four 2'x3' posters of the Steps, Traditions, Concepts, and Warranties available for purchase. The posters are rollable and tear-proof. We are offering them for \$15 (original price was \$20). Interested persons/groups can contact the office by phone at (401) 781-0044. Leave a message and we will return your call.

Love in Service and Fellowship,

Phyllis H
Area Chair
Rhode Island Al-Anon

Area Office News:

	<p>NEW!</p> <p>This new pamphlet is now available for purchase from our Area Literature Distribution Center. Parents and Grandparents in Al-Anon share their inspiring stories about dealing with young problem drinkers. (\$0.75)</p>
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We currently have 5 Volunteers: Here is the schedule:

Sunday		
Monday	12:30-2:30 PM	Phyllis H.
Tuesday		
Wednesday	12:30-2:30 PM	Paul B.
Thursday	6:00 PM-7:30 PM	Jane A.
Friday		
Saturday	1 st Saturday of each month 12:00-2:00PM	Linda R.

**At-Home Volunteer	(Tuesdays)	Clara R.
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Service Opportunity: 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

News from the WSO:

Trusted Servants, we need your help! We are looking for a member with five years in Al-Anon who also has internet search expertise to fill our "Senior Communications Specialist – Search" position at the World Service Office in Virginia Beach. This position will be part of the Digital Strategy Team and an integral part of our Public Outreach efforts. We strongly believe we will get the best candidates from the efforts of members like you who know a fellow member, if not yourself, who has the expertise for this position. Please get the word out!

Please click on this link to see the job description: al-anon.org/employment-at-al-anon

Help Make Al-Anon's Next Daily Reader Something Special

Al-Anon's three Legacies: the Steps, Traditions and Concepts of Service, are the foundation of our program. Please help the New Daily Reader, working title, be the first Al-Anon daily reader to include sharings on all 36 by submitting your thoughts on any of them.

Type al-anon.org/sharing in your browser to submit your sharings.

The WSO has mailed the **Annual Group Update Sheet** to the registered groups. Please make sure that the WSO has the current information for your group meeting.

Fall Workshop:

Save the date! We've set the date for the Fall RIAFG Al-Anon Workshop (w/ AA participation). It will be at Butler Hospital on Saturday, **September 29, 2018**. We have the date, we have our purpose, but **we need more volunteers!**

This year's workshop will be **SHARING THE GIFT: Sponsorship & Service**

It's been heard at meetings: "but I don't have a Sponsor..." ... "people I've asked don't think they can do it..." "Am I ready to be a sponsor..."

We are looking to help empower members to be open to becoming Sponsors, and we hope we can increase newcomer retention through this fabulous service. I believe helping our newcomers feel welcome can give all of us a stronger Al-Anon Family Group! And stepping up to service helps us enrich our own program of recovery. This work is the ultimate gift to all of us!

Thanks for your consideration!
Holly R.

Rhode Island Area
Al-Anon Family Groups



Hope & Help for Families
& Friends of Alcoholics

2018 Annual Workshop

Our Day will include speakers, meetings, raffles, food, fun, fellowship and Most of All- Recovery!



Sponsorship and Service

Volunteers requested! Check <http://riafg.org/> for updates and the workshop agenda.

September 29th, 2018
9:00 am - 3:00 pm

Suggested Donation
\$10.00*

No charge for Alateen

Potluck Lunch
We ask each participant to bring a dish to share.

Butler Hospital
Ray Conference Center
345 Blackstone Boulevard
Providence, RI 02905

CAN YOU DO SERVICE?

Call out for Groups and members to volunteer for service on the day of the Workshop.
To volunteer or ask any questions on opportunities, contact:
2018 Workshop Chair by email Workshop.riafg@gmail.com
or contact the office at 401-781-0044

We welcome Love Gifts to share!

*Do not let Financial Hardship prevent you from attending a day of recovery. To offer to volunteer in lieu of donating or make other arrangements, please contact the office.

Donations Requested
Groups & Members- Please donate gift baskets and/or items for our raffles!

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.

Do you have a story or an Al-Anon event to share? Would you like to share why your home group is so special to you? Would you like to share your insights? Do you have an inspirational photo? Please email these to lifelines.riafg@gmail.com.

Upcoming Events:

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
Aug 5, 2018	“Change what you can “ 31st Anniversary Meeting, Sunday 10:00-11:30 AM, Pawtucket YMCA, Summer St., 2 nd Floor. Handicap Accessible Guest Speakers: AA, Al-Anon, Al-A-Teen
Aug 24-26, 2018	27th Maine Area Al-Anon Convention, including Alateen and with AA participation at Ferry Beach Retreat & Conference Center, 21 Ferry Park Avenue, Saco, Maine
Sept 15, 2018	AWSC meeting, 10:00 AM to Noon, 106 Rolfe Square, Cranston. All re welcome.
Sept 29, 2018	RIAFG Fall Workshop with AA participation 9:30 AM to 3:00 PM at Butler Hospital, Ray Hall, 345 Blackstone Blvd., Providence
Oct 20, 2018	Fall Assembly at Emmanuel Episcopal Church in Newport More details to follow
Oct 26-38, 2018	New Hampshire Al-Anon/Alateen Convention: “Transformation through the 12 Steps.” Margate Resort at Winnepesaukee, 76 Lake St., Laconia, New Hampshire
Nov 17, 2018	AWSC meeting, 10:00 AM to Noon, 106 Rolfe Square, Cranston. All are welcome.
Mar 22-24, 2019	Rhode Island AA Convention with Al-Anon participation

Al-Anon Meeting Updates:

NEW MEETING

“Let it all go” - Tuesday evenings 730pm, at North Kingstown Methodist Church

MEETING CHANGE

A **New Beginning** group, Thursday nights at St Paul’s Episcopal Church Hall, 2679 East Main St., Portsmouth, is no longer a women’s only meeting.

Hope for the Family Disease group, Friday nights at St. Theresa’s Catholic Church, 265 Stafford Rd., Tiverton, is now a ONE hour meeting, 7:30 to 8:30, coincides with the next door AA meeting.

High Powered Lunch Bunch group at St. Stephen’s Church, 114 George St., Providence, is changing its twice-weekly meeting schedule. They are cancelling their Thursday AM meeting and will only meet on Tuesdays, effective February 20th.

You Are Not Alone group, Friday nights at Landmark Hospital, 115 Cass Ave., Woonsocket, has changed it's starting time to 7:00 p.m.

Westerly Friday Night group has moved to a new location: Christ Church, 7 Elm St., Westerly

MEETING HAS CLOSED

The **Block Island Al-Anon group** is no longer meeting.

Women’s Step Study group in Cranston is no longer meeting.

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 Pam D.

