

LIFELINES JUNE 2020



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Photo by E.H.

Editor's Corner:

Staying in the present moment is a challenge for me. If I could somehow have saved all of those lost present moments, I expect I would have accumulated at least another life's worth of available time. But my mind wants to outline the future, get all my expectations in a row, and then steer towards that destination. My past provides all the warnings, what if's, and negativity that it can muster to add that very familiar element of fear for the future and to anticipate any glitches that could happen to my plans.

Time does not work that way. It cannot be swept up and saved for a later time when my mind decides it is safe to concentrate on this very pinpoint of time. I cannot recapture and reuse the moment that has just passed. It's a "live it or lose it" deal.

I cannot be where I am not. I cannot be in the future because I exist here in the present. When I strive to be ahead of myself in time, I disconnect myself from the present moment. So I'm neither here nor there.

When I unbundle all the clutter that races around in my head, when I manage those instances of really experiencing being in the NOW, I find my WOW moment. Unburdened of all the past and future worries, my mind can focus on the gift of this moment, I have all that need. I am provided for. And the stronger becomes my sense of serenity. Serenity for me exists only in the NOW — the WOW moment.

I have not had many of these moments, but I have had them, and they have been a great gift. They strengthen my faith because I have touched and been touched by Something bigger and more benevolent than me. My job is to remember these experiences so that I can draw my ongoing experience, strength and hope from them.

So, when my own will wants to say "move along, move along" to something more practical and more in tune with how I think the world should be and where I have decided I want to be going, I still possess a reminder that this isn't about what I want. It's about being as closely linked as I can be to the gift of the present moment.

Gratefully in service,

Elaine H., Lifelines Editor

If you are able to, please consider making a donation to our RIAFG and to our WSO. Our new virtual meeting world has had a serious impact on their finances.

Now could be the time to finally write and submit your recovery experience to Lifelines and *The Forum*.

Please Consider volunteering to work on the Fall Workshop

***DEADLINE FOR THE JULY ISSUE IS JUNE 28TH.**

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 an upcoming Al-Anon event to announce? - an inspirational photo? - a personal share? - etc. Please email these to lifelines.riafg@gmail.com

\$ HOW YOU CAN HELP RIAFG AND WSO \$

Bursting with Gratitude for Al-Anon



TRADITION SEVEN

“EVERY GROUP OUGHT TO BE FULLY SELF-SUPPORTING, DECLINING OUTSIDE CONTRIBUTIONS.”

Currently our groups are not able to meet face-to-face and, therefore, aren't able to physically *pass the basket*. However, our responsibility to be self supporting continues. Many of our groups, the Rhode Island Area Al-Anon/Alateen Family Groups, and the World Service Office continue to have operating expenses that must be paid. Here are some ways you can continue to support Al-Anon through your voluntary contributions.

- Make a personal donation to the Rhode Island AFG by sending a check to:
RIAFG
106 Rolfe St.
Cranston, RI 02910
- Make a donation to the World Service Office online at <https://al-anon.org/contributions/> or by sending a check to:
AFG Inc.
1600 Corporate Landing Parkway
Virginia Beach, VA 23454
- Some groups members are choosing to create their own personal *7th tradition envelopes* for their weekly donations and either send their donations to the group treasurer once a month or save their donations and give them to the group treasurer when they resume meeting face-to-face.

Whatever method you choose, it is important that we continue to support our groups, Area, and WSO.



Al-Anon Family Groups
Help and hope for families and friends of alcoholics

Dear Al-Anon and Alateen members,

On behalf of the Finance Committee, I am writing to inform you of the impact COVID-19 is having at the World Service Office (WSO). Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, donations and literature sales have decreased significantly at the WSO. I know many of you are experiencing similar situations at your home group, District, Al-Anon Information Service (AIS), Literature Distribution Center (LDC), or Area.

At the end of April, literature sales were down 75% and contributions were down 34% and we are projecting a \$1,600,000 operating deficit at the end of 2020. Given reduced revenues, the Board has approved a transfer from the Reserve Fund to the General Fund of \$250,000 to provide cash necessary for operations. Significant cost cutting measures have been implemented including elimination of Staff merit and cost of living increases for 2020; all Staff travel through the end of the year; and Board, Executive, and Finance Committee travel through the end of August.

Additionally, after prayerful consideration of our projected cash position, Staff furlough and layoff actions were taken Friday, May 1. All Staff who were impacted are eligible for the expanded unemployment coverage due to COVID-19.

Despite these actions, the WSO is doing business as usual, processing literature orders through customer service and shipping products ordered, fielding calls for public outreach and electronic meeting information, and keeping our presence known on social media and other services. To continue, we need your help. Some thoughts I have been having about Seventh Tradition donations:

- Do your groups, Districts, or Areas have money that was planned to cover Group Representative, District Representative, or Area officer travel which could now be donated because the District or Area meetings were held virtually?
- Is your group making announcements at your meetings to let members know they can go online and donate directly to WSO?
- How is your group handling the May Appeal Letter during this time of meetings happening virtually? Will it even be read?
- How can we keep the Seventh Tradition money flowing through the links of service from the groups to Districts to Areas to the WSO?

In the past, when members have been asked to help the WSO your response has been overwhelming. So once again we are coming to you. The pandemic has increased the incidence of alcoholism. The WSO would appreciate any contributions you and your group, District or Area can provide to help us continue to serve the families and friends still suffering in these uncertain times.

We can process checks mailed to the WSO, 1600 Corporate Landing Parkway, Virginia Beach, VA 23454, or you can use the link below to contribute online.

Love in service,
Cathy T.
Treasurer
Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc.

FALL 2020 WORKSHOP

*** SOMETHING TO LOOK FORWARD TO ***



RIAFG NEEDS YOU!

Have you enjoyed going to our Fall Workshops in the past?
Did you know that the previous coordinators have outlined how to set up the workshop?

So you don't have to reinvent; the guidelines are there for you to use!

Think how wonderful it will be to **see each other face to face.**

Imagine how great it will be to have **an entire day** devoted to your recovery.

ALL THIS CAN ONLY HAPPEN WHEN RIAFG GETS VOLUNTEERS.

Please consider discussing this at your meetings and
with your Al-Anon friends.

You do not have to do this alone.

Please consider volunteering so RIAFG can continue enjoying this workshop.

AREA CHAIR'S CORNER:**Welcoming Newcomers to Electronic Meetings**

With the challenge of living during the time of the COVID-19 pandemic, many AI-Anon groups are choosing to temporarily meet virtually, using some of the same platforms that permanent electronic meetings are using. It is clear that members realize the importance of being able to welcome newcomers and offer hope despite the restrictions of the pandemic, leading to the question of how to provide information to newcomers.

In response to that question, WSO is providing temporary virtual meetings with information on how newcomers can receive the welcome email used by the permanent electronic meetings. Groups are encouraged to share this link al-anon.org/welcome with any newcomers who enter your virtual meeting rooms. The link will prompt the newcomer to enter their personal email address for them to receive the welcome email.

In addition, if your group has a newcomer, I am offering to personally send them a Newcomer Packet. Just have them email me their name and mailing address at chair.riafg@gmail.com and I will send one to them.

Phyllis H., Area Chair

Let it Begin With Me. When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help - let the hand of AI-Anon and Alateen always be there, and Let It Begin With Me.

TASK FORCE COMMITTEE:**Meeting on Thought/Task Force Chair Guidelines**

The Task Force Committee will be having our **next meeting on Thursday June 4th at 6:15pm via Zoom.**

A task force is a temporary unit of people established to work on a single defined task or activity. It uses available resources such as perspectives of members of the task force and staff knowledge to complete its task or activity. (AI-Anon/Alateen Service Manual 2018-2021, pg. 71). This Task Force is working on creating guidelines for people to use as Thought/Task Force Chairs so they have a document to follow that describes their responsibilities as a chairperson.

If you have any questions about this task force, please email us at - taskforceguidelines@gmail.com. **To join our next Task Force Zoom meeting**, paste the following link in your browser - <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89454668008?pwd=dUtrNSs3V1VJWmRCTGYvS3V3cENkdz09> or join manually - Meeting ID: 894 5466 8008; Password: 645991. **To join by phone**, call (646)-558-8656; Meeting ID: 894 5466 8008; Password: 645991.

Thank you in advance for your service and participation. We look forward to working with you!

With love in service and fellowship,

Your Task Force Chairs
Cindy B., Julia G., & Joel B.

MEMBERS SHARE:

Appreciation consists of humility and worthiness. Before recovery I believed that I had to do everything by myself in order to feel worthy. Being independent, not needing anyone was a sign of success. Little did I know that recovery was going to teach me a healthier way to be successful.

My journey required me to become humble. I could not do this by myself! I was going to need help!!! How frightening. I was going to have to do that terrible act of trusting people, turning my life over to God and working the recovery process. I was going to have to FEEL pain and use the tools of the program to work through those feelings. Wow! This was going to be too much. How can I endure?

A day at a time. An appreciation for the program and humility to relying on God developed the strength to live life on life's terms, not mine. For a long time I was stuck in self-pity over the fact that my will was not going to make my life healthy and functional. My will used ineffective tools that were developed in an alcoholic home. They could not get the job done. Al-Anon showed me how to acquire a new set of tools that work.

In recovery, I had to ASK for help, LISTEN to other people's experience, strength and hope and TRUST suggestions.

What I have learned, I so greatly appreciate. I can take care of myself by being there for myself flaws and all. I feel worthy to receive. I feel humble to accept that everything happens in God's time. I do not have to beat myself up over what the disease of alcoholism has done in my life. And I feel that I have something meaningful and worthy to offer others. With Al-Anon, I can rise above alcoholism!

Ann H.

Knowing myself better - the good, the bad, and the crazy - helps me turn more readily for help to my Higher Power in thanksgiving and in trust. My Higher Power knows what I need before I ask, but it is a gift to know contact with my Higher Power is ALWAYS available.

Jackie W., AA Liaison RI

FORUM ARTICLE:**Al-Anon Changed My Life**

After 911, my partner's drinking increased so much that I decided to go online to find out about staging an intervention. On the A.A. website, there was a questionnaire about a loved one's drinking. After I scored my results, it suggested that I go to an Al-Anon meeting. I picked up the phone and found a meeting near me that started in an hour. I didn't even think; I just got in my car and drove to the meeting.

There, I heard people share their stories, and there was a lot of laughter. I thought to myself, *This is what I want*. I wanted to be able to distance myself from all the pain I had chosen to own. The people at the meeting suggested I go to six meetings to see if Al-Anon was for me. I went to six meetings in six days, and it changed my life. I continued to go to no less than five meetings a week. It's been almost 20 years now. Within six months I was able to work, focus on myself, sleep at night, and feel peace and serenity.

by Anonymous

(Reprinted with the permission of *The Forum* (May 2020 issue, page 6), Al-Anon Family Groups, Virginia Beach, VA)

2020 EVENTS CALENDAR:

(At this time, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, please check the riafg.org website for updated information.)

June 4th 6:15 PM Task Force Committee Zoom meeting, See Task Force Committee for details.

MEETING NOTICES:

*****While we are still not meeting face to face, please see riafg.org for meeting information regarding temporary cancellations, conference bridge meetings and zoom meetings.**
*****For the WSO meeting list, please refer to <https://al-anon.info/MtgSearch/PhoneMeetings.aspx?language=EN>**

Holiday Notice:

The **North Providence Step Meeting will not** be meeting on **any holiday** that falls on a Thursday.

New Meeting:

Gratitude Not Attitude meeting starting Tuesday, January 7th at 11:30AM. Woonsocket Serenity Center, 66 Social St., Woonsocket, RI. Parking in the back, enter Main St. side across from the Salvation Army.
Adult Children of Alcoholics at the Peace Dale Congregational Church, Community Room 2nd floor, 261 Columbia St., Peace Dale.

Needs Support:

The **Cranston-Warwick Daytime AFG** on Tuesdays at 10 AM at the Edgewood Congregational Church, 1788 Broad St., Cranston

Meetings that have Closed:

Let it All Go AFG, Tuesday 7:30 PM, N. Kingstown Methodist Church, 450 Boston Neck Rd., (Rte 1A)
Hope for the Family Disease meeting Friday at 7:30PM in Tiverton at St Theresa's Catholic Church has closed.
First Things First AFG meeting on Monday at 7:00 PM at VA Medical Center, Providence.
The Serenity AFG meeting on Thursday at 8:30 AM at St. Andrew's Church Hall, 183 Willow Ave, Little Compton has closed.

INSIDE AL-ANON FAMILY GROUPS:**A Spark for Service**

Before starting out in Al-Anon as a volunteer in service, I occasionally would hear terms that were unfamiliar to me, such as District, Area, or Area World Service Committee (AWSC). I was told that these meetings were part of Al-Anon's links of service. During that time, I had just become comfortable with attending my group meetings, and I had no idea what these other meetings were all about. I was focused only on my recovery.

One day I asked someone to share what the focus was for these other meetings, and I was told that they are a part of our service structure — an opportunity for our links of service to come together. I also came to understand that service is a demonstration of our Twelve Traditions and Concepts of Service in action. My curiosity was ignited, and when I later became involved in service, I felt the excitement and spark for service.

When I started working for the World Service Office, part of my role was working with Al-Anon internationally. Within this diverse community of languages and cultures, I learned that, just like I received that opportunity within my community, it was exciting to see that spark ignite in members from around the world, too. After all, Al-Anon is a worldwide fellowship. I saw that enthusiasm indicated that a spark for service has no boundaries.

As our fellowship expands and grows on many platforms and in many places, it is so important for members to keep that spark of service alive. By inviting someone to a District, Area, or AWSC meeting, we will not only keep the spark for service alive, but we will most likely help ignite that same spark in others, too!

by Marsha W., Director of Programs

(Reprinted with the permission of *The Forum* (May 2020 issue, page 18), Al-Anon Family Groups, Virginia Beach, VA)

DISTRICT 2 NEWS:**What's NEWs in District 2 – April 2020 Meeting Report**

Once a month, District 2 meets for about an hour at a named location to unite the individual groups within the district. Topics range from informing groups about Area or World Service news to planning program related events. District meetings also coordinate service and public outreach projects and as such are a great way to see the program in action and get involved in service.

The April 2020 District 2 Meeting was held via teleconference. We opened the meeting with the serenity prayer, introductions, and reading the Tradition of the Month & the Concept of the Month. The minutes from March had not been found at this point so they were not read and accepted.

At this meeting, the main topic of discussion was around the 7th Tradition and what to do about it during this pandemic. And since there was a very small turnout for this meeting, discussion around and updates on some of our regular agenda points - such as the Task Force that's working on creating guidelines for Thought/Task Force Chairs - were unable to be addressed.

As of the writing of this report, District 2 has met again - via Zoom - and we had a record showing of 9! We revisited the discussion around the 7th Tradition and heard from many of the attendees how their group is handling that during this time. In addition, updates were given about the progress that the Task Force Committee is making; that they are still looking for more participation; and that their next meeting will be held on Thursday June 4th at 6:15pm via Zoom. All are welcome to attend. To join their next meeting, simply go to www.zoom.us. Enter this Meeting ID: 894 5466 8008 and Password: 645991. To phone in, call (646)-558-8656. Meeting ID and password are the same. If you have additional questions, the Task Force chairs can be reached at taskforceguidelines@gmail.com.

That's all for this month's report. We are still working on scheduling our June meeting via Zoom. Group Reps, please contact the District 2 Rep for more details. All are welcome to attend and individual meetings are welcome to bring their group's concerns to the District meetings for discussion. We are here to help. Hope to "see you" at our next meeting!

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AI-Anon Declaration: Let it begin with me.

When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help,

Let the hand of AI-Anon and Alateen always be there,

And let it begin with me.

Links of Service

Member + Member = **Group**

Group + **Group** = **District**

District + **District** = **Assembly**

Assembly + **Assembly** = **Conference**

NEWS FROM THE WSO:**2020 COVID Health Crisis**

During the 2020 COVID health crisis, the World Service Office (WSO) remains open to answer phone calls from despairing members, help groups when setting up temporary online meetings, and send Conference Approved Literature (CAL) to comfort those suffering from the family disease of alcoholism. We appreciate the fellowship's continued Seventh Tradition support of our WSO in these efforts. You can find the contributions page at al-anon.org/contributions and remind all members that CAL can be purchased at al-anon.org if the local Literature Distribution Centers are closed.

Dear Al-Anon members and Trusted Servants,

At the recent 2020 virtual World Service Conference (WSC), the World Service Office (WSO) shared with the Conference members the email created by the Board of Trustees' Electronic Meeting Work Group to welcome newcomers to permanent registered electronic meetings. For more than 20 years, the WSO has registered meetings taking place online and via phone conference call. These meetings have evolved and grown significantly over time. Today, there are over 300 registered electronic meetings.

With the challenge of living during the time of the COVID-19 pandemic, many Al-Anon groups scrambled to find ways to continue to meet and chose to meet temporarily online using many of the same platforms where permanent electronic meetings have been taking place. It is clear that members realize the importance of being able to welcome newcomers and offer hope despite the restrictions of the pandemic. Meeting in this new environment also brought questions of what and how to provide information to newcomers.

We are pleased to announce that the welcome email shared with the 2020 virtual WSC members can now be received by newcomers to any electronic meeting – whether it be temporary or permanent. We encourage you to share/display this URL with any newcomers to your meetings. The link will prompt the recipient to enter their personal email address for them to receive the welcome email: al-anon.org/welcome

Please don't hesitate to contact GroupServices@al-anon.org if you have any questions.

RFP Opportunity

For several years the World Service Conference and Board of Trustees have been asking the question-how do we attract younger and more diverse members? In the AFG, Inc. Strategic Plan, this question has been translated into one Goal: Public objective-to increase awareness of competition to Al-Anon Family Groups and our differentiation. What we all recognize is that much has changed since Al-Anon was formed and offered one of the few, if not only, options for recovery from the family disease of alcoholism. Today, there are many options for families and friends and we recognize some are attracting a younger and more diverse attendance.

So we want to find out how they are being successful where we fear we may be less so. Seeking to understand, today we are announcing a Request For Proposal (RFP) to conduct a Competitive Analysis. Any member who possesses the skills and interest-or knows a non-member who does-to perform a study of Al-Anon's competitors is invited to respond to the RFP with their proposal. Because we acknowledge the capabilities to perform such a study may very well exist within our fellowship, we have chosen *AFG Connects* to share this exciting information with Al-Anon members. Background information and instructions for this project may be found on the al-anon.org website. For additional information, please contact Natalie M. at competitiverfp@al-anon.org.

The “Dear Abby” Newspaper Column for June 2 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 for “Dear Abby” might appear in print, so please ask to remain anonymous if you identify yourself as an Al-Anon member. Many newspapers have either gone entirely digital or include some bonus content available online only. Consider searching their website for the article and, if possible, leave a comment expressing your gratitude for the recommendation. Please protect your anonymity at the level of the internet by not revealing your membership in the program. 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, including temporary electronic meeting information, so everyone can help newcomers find a meeting. Thank you for offering help and hope to families and friends of alcoholics.



Welcoming Newcomers to Electronic Meetings

Did you know there are more than 300 Al-Anon electronic meetings registered with the WSO? While this meeting list has been steadily growing for the past 20 years, the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic have turned online meetings into a lifeline for many suffering families and friends of alcoholics. We can now extend them the same warm Al-Anon welcome—virtually!

WSO’s Website: A Blog for Members!

Al-Anon hosts a blog for members to share their experience, strength, and hope on a variety of topics. New topics will be added each month.

May’s topic was “How does the program help me to start over?” **The topic for June will be in the June issue of *The Forum* and on the Blog.** Visit al-anon.org/member-blog for more information. Member sharings on the Member Blog may be used in future Al-Anon publications.

How Has Conference Approved Literature Helped You

Please share how any of the following literature has helped you : *In All Our Affairs (B-15)*; *How Al-Anon Works (B-32)*; or *As We Understood (B-11)*.

Send your sharings by **JUNE 15th** to *The Forum*, 1600 Corporate Landing Parkway, Virginia Beach, VA 23454-5617, Attention: “CAL Corner”; at wso@al-anon.org with “CAL Corner” in the subject line; or at al-anon.org/forumshare.

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

STEP SIX: Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.

TRADITION SIX: Our Al-Anon Family Groups ought never endorse, finance, or lend our name to any outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary spiritual aim. Although a separate entity, we should always cooperate with Alcoholics Anonymous.

CONCEPT SIX: The Conference acknowledges the primary administrative responsibility of the Trustees.

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

Photo by T.H.

