

Lifelines

The Newsletter of the RI AFG, June, 2011

Area News

RI Delegate goes to World Service Conference

I would like to begin by thanking RI AFG for electing me to the position of Delegate. Even though my time in this position is short, I cannot quite put into words what it feels like to know that I have the trust of so many Rhode Island Al-Anon members. I am so grateful for the letters and love gifts I received before and during the World Service Conference (WSC). I felt love and trust pour out of every envelope I opened and was in awe of the generosity of kindness and love that came to me from our fellowship. Thank you all so very much!

I wasn't really nervous about going to the WSC. I knew that I would be spending a week with Al-Anon family, and I made up my mind to go in with an open heart and an open mind. I was not disappointed. I was welcomed with open arms. There were no major expectations placed on me from the other attendees. There was no judgment. The Delegates and Trustees were so happy to have Rhode Island represented, and I heard over and over again how much Rhode Island had been missed the year before.

I was in the unique position of serving as Delegate for the last year of a three year panel. At times I felt as though I was stepping into the middle of a conversation in which I did not have all of the information. The other Delegates of Panel 49 did their best to include me in everything that they did, and I appreciated that so much. It would have been very easy for me to isolate from others, but there was no opportunity for that. They made it clear that they were happy that I was there and that they wanted me there! That's huge for someone like me!

It was an incredibly busy week, and parts of it are still a blur. I enjoyed the playfulness of the other attendees. I came back with a lot of information, and I have enjoyed the experience of a lifetime! I have a better understanding of our worldwide fellowship and of how our service structure works. We are a part of an awesome fellowship, and I look forward to hearing from our future Delegates!

Thank you so very much for letting me be of service! –**Jenny N.** – RI Delegate

The next World Service Area Meeting will be on Tuesday, Sept 20th at 7PM.

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



RI AFG Soaring Into Service

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Treasurer by **Betsy W.**

Being the state treasurer these past 2 ½ years has helped me build my self confidence level. It has shown me that I can do an important job and do it to the best of my capabilities without judgment which I had been so used to most of my life. The treasurer position has made me focus on the important issues such as paying the bills and working on the budget for a bigger 'household' than I have been used to; and also made me aware of what goes into the makings of a service business. I will now be able to look at the bigger picture of the State and my personal affairs with different appreciation.

I am very grateful for the opportunity to be a part of the service in this wonderful fellowship!

District News

As for District 3: Schedule of District 3 Meetings

- Tues, Sep 27, 6:00 PM, St. Michael's Church, Bristol
- November Assembly
- Sat., Dec 3, 6:00 PM, Calvary Methodist Church, Middletown, RI-Final meeting for Marguerite as DR

As for District 4: Schedule of Meetings

- Alateen Meetings
Tuesday 5:30pm Coventry Senior Center, Coventry
Friday 8:00pm St Luke's Church, East Greenwich
- District Meetings
September 14 Wednesday 6:30pm 106 Rolfe St
December 10 Saturday 10:00am 106 Rolfe St
- Meetings Needing Support
Mon 10:00 AM Mon 7:00 PM
Thurs 10:00 AM Thurs 7:00 PM

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>

Districts 3&4 Conflict Resolution Workshop

Highlights from the Conflict Resolution Workshop that **Barbara M.** facilitated at Butler May 14th, 2011. To begin, it was quite well organized and to the point. I'm glad I went.

We all have conflict in our lives, but it is especially poignant when we are living with active alcoholism. It is easy to discount the messenger bearing conflict, but we can learn to listen to the underlying message without accepting the invitation to a fight. We can apply the Al-Anon tradition of "principles above personalities." There is no need to argue at all if we are confronted with what we can recognize as an irreconcilable difference. We can just respond with a few neutral words, like "You might be right," or something even simpler than that, like a guttural sound that can't be interpreted either way.

The tools we can use to turn conflict into constructive experience are self-examination, honest communication, find a solution, and plan of action. We can ask ourselves questions like, "Am I trying to win, or am I trying to solve a conflict?" "What is the common good?" (This comes from Tradition One). "Do I clearly understand what I need to resolve?" "Am I willing to move on?" "Have I placed the outcome in my Higher Power's hands?" "Is this a good time to attempt resolution? Am I hungry, angry, lonely or tired?"

In honest communication I will listen for key points, be sure all sides are heard, acknowledge the positions of others, and allow venting if necessary (without joining in). I will not assume others know what I know, and I will not make demands. My messages are more palatable if I preface each one with an "I" and never point the finger at the other person.

In finding solutions, we can discuss the many possible ones, but let us choose the easiest one to improve first and build on that over time: one problem at a time. After discussion of each one, ask "Can you live with this?" If you can't get to resolution, try the Serenity Prayer, take a break and stretch or have lunch, call your sponsor, find a better time. You might even want to set the agenda for the next time listing points of disagreement. Acknowledge any successes you may have had so far in reaching points of agreement. Participation is the key to harmony! We can sort out irreconcilable differences as well as differences that are starting to look like compromise can happen. Don't forget to celebrate when you are able to come to agreement after honest, open attempts to communicate and find solutions!

This, in a nutshell, is what Barbara prepared for us. After each point we shared our experience, strength and hope. It was wonderful, and I hope it can be repeated now and then for other members.

Love,

Catherine H.

Barbara M. presented a well-thought-out workshop on an important topic, one that all of us can relate to. It was complete with visuals and feedback from the Al-Anon members who attended. Thank You, Barbara, for a job well-done! **Jane L.** (G.R. Saturday Nite Live - Middletown)

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

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.

Service Shares

Have you read the book "When I Got Busy, I Got Better"? I thought I had enough on my plate when I became a member of the Al-Anon fellowship. I was too busy fighting demons and dragons to actually spend more time figuring out this program. Well, it's been over 4 years and I still don't have this program figured out; and I hope I never will!

What I have figured out is simple. Participation is the key to harmony. Sound familiar? I read it every day while practicing my program; as have you. Funny how we hear the words that Lois W. has sent to us regarding hope, trust, compassion, relationships, love, self-care, etc. and suck them in but seem immune to the absorption of service.

I started my service by accepting a home group position of treasurer. Hey, I'm good with numbers. How hard can this be? And I was told that however I did the job, it was just fine with my group. Of course, being the perfectionist I was (yes, past tense), all my i's were dotted and t's crossed. Not one red cent went unaccounted for during my watch!! Next I tried a secretary position. As I continued doing group service, I felt better and more welcomed. I was a part of a group that wanted me! And accepted me!

My out of home group service journey started in peril and fear. I was asked to speak at another member's home group. Standing up in front of people I didn't know!! I kept hearing this voice: "Pray on it". That's exactly what I did. As I was practicing my program, I kept getting a message that I was to "go out and teach"; "lead by example"; "conquer your fear"; "trust in me". With just a tad bit of trepidation, I agreed to speak. It may not have been great; may not even have been good...but I actually relaxed and sort of enjoyed myself. And why not? These unknown people were all friends of mine; friends of Bill and Lois W. I was accepted because I was a grateful member of Al-Anon.

I kept hearing a little voice inside my head. I'd been attending meetings weekly for about 10 months. The buzz was still in my brain, however. As luck, or fate, would have it, Panel 46 was coming to the end of its term. What I'd understood at that time was that we had a GR (group representative) that was going to be relinquishing that position. I knew nothing of WSO, WSC, DRs, AWSC, RIAFG, Chairs, Workshops, Assemblies, Conventions, Anniversaries, and Delegates! Like you reading this now, it sounded like alphabet soup and a foreign language to me. Well, low and behold, my hand went up when the vacated GR position was announced. HP had more in store for me than just a visit to another group to "tell my story".

I attended my first Assembly in June of that year. I have been to 4 in total, with another coming up in a month. I worked on the Workshop Committee as a GR. I became involved in Alateen, while still a GR. My life was getting not just busier, but better. Over time, I volunteered to become an Alternate DR (district representative). I knew the current DR; had worked with her on different committees; and thought I'd see what the business side of Al-Anon was all about. Plenty of time to get my feet wet. Surprise! That DR became our Delegate, and I've been the District 4 DR since November. So much for getting my feet wet. Would I do it all again? YES!

Service has opened up my life to value people and their thoughts. I do not have to agree. I am not a lemming. I can speak my mind, my truth, as it is; let discussions, even conflicts, happen; realize the importance of every member, especially those with a minority voice. I accept the decision of the group with no resentments. My interests are varied. I could easily get involved in the AWSC as Treasurer, Alateen Coordinator, Public Outreach Coordinator, and Literature Coordinator. I enjoy being part of Thought Forces and Task Forces. Sometimes the names sound silly, confusing or downright scary; but I've learned that I am never alone and it is my desire to serve this great fellowship that allows me the freedom to grow in Al-Anon.

Perhaps your journey needs refreshing. I know that my journey has enhanced my growth. I may not be perfect, but I love this fellowship and those involved. It is truly an effort of love...unconditionally!

Denise G.

Cranston/Warwick Daytime Al-Anon



Service Shares

How have I grown through service? I am grateful that I was encouraged to do service early in my recovery. First, I helped set up chairs and helped clean up after meetings. Then, with some encouragement, I accepted the role of treasurer for my group. These service positions helped me feel "part of" the group, like I belonged. It also gave me a reason to show up at meetings, even when I was tired or just wanted to isolate. Most importantly, the doubts and insecurities I had about myself slowly faded. For example, the group trusted me with the treasury, to keep the balance, pay the bills and report back to the group each month. I learned that I could, in fact, be responsible with money - the groups and my own.

The service positions I've held at the Area level have also given me so much more than I could ever give. I meet people at Area service meetings from all over the state and I have witnessed that, while the disease of alcoholism is everywhere, so is recovery from the disease. I am not alone. I have an ever-growing community of friends in recovery, who I can go to for loving support, who have taught me that it's ok to ask for help, and with whom I can reason things out. I have learned how to prioritize, how to follow-through, and how to complete something that I begin (all things I struggled with before recovery). My participation in service has taught me to trust the process and, based on my experience, I firmly believe that HP has a plan.

Today, I strive to do the best I can with what I have. I want this Program to be here for the next newcomer who walks in the door. But most of all, I am involved in service because I found it helps me recover, one day at a time, from the effects of this cunning, baffling and powerful disease.

Love in the program,

Leah D.

RI Area Chair, Panel 49



A few years back, I asked my sponsor if I could do anything for her before a business meeting. She responded by saying our group needed a secretary and would I take notes and be the secretary. Of course I would! What it did was give me a feeling of inclusion with a group of loving people I didn't really know. As time went on, I became GR of this group and have had the opportunity to go to Area meetings, a weekend TEAM workshop and became closer to other GR's from different groups. What this gave me was practice with one of my defects of character, isolation and I was enjoying meeting program people. I had missed seeing Lifelines which gave me a feeling of connection within all of RI's Al-Anon. At the last Area meeting I attended in November, 2010, I volunteered to try to get it up and running again. The last editor has done such an amazing job and my fear of not meeting up to her ability didn't hit me until after I volunteered. I felt a big "AH OH" in the pit of my stomach and my heart started to race. With the last editors' help, Al-Anon and Alateen shares, WSC members reviews, I am breathing a little easier and enjoying all those I am coming in contact with. This is helping me be 'busy' with my program and keeping my nose out of places it doesn't belong.

If you would like to be a part of Lifelines, please contact me; lin2169@cox.net.
Love – in Service,

Linda F.

SAVE THE DATE

Annual Rhode Island Al-Anon Workshop (with AA participation); November 19, 2011; Butler Hospital • Providence
Please help make 2011 the largest RI workshop ever by serving on the workshop committee! There are many opportunities to get busy and get better by becoming involved in workshop service.

Please contact Ashley B. at riatgworkshop@gmail.com for more information on the exciting possibilities.

YIS,

Ashley B.



What has service done for me?

Although I have been in Al-Anon for many years and have served in many positions in my home group, I stepped up to service at the area level when I discovered that Rhode Island AFG was in need of a webmaster... I thought that this would be a good way for me to do area-level service without getting too involved in the business of the AWSC. However, once I started I found that I cared about what happens with Al-Anon not only in my group but also at the area level and in Al-Anon worldwide. As I became more involved in service, I found that I felt better about myself and my recovery. My self confidence in group settings has improved as a result of my participation in AWSC meetings, RIAFG Assembly meetings, and other area-level committees that I have participated on since moving up to area service. 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 good 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.

Phyllis H., Webmaster, District 4 Alternate DR, Forever Hope GR

Alateen Coordinator

These three years as Alateen Coordinator has been truly a gift and a learning experience.

First and foremost I have learned to "play well with others" I have learned to "trust the process" everything will not go my way.

I have been given a gift to serve as an Alateen sponsor and to meet those members who are willing to commit to serving our younger members. My greatest gift is that of Alateen sponsorship.

I have met many educators as I travel to different schoolsI am blessed in being given the opportunity to share about our program.

It has been my pleasure to serve as Alateen coordinator; I have been shown the true meaning of camaraderie and fellowship in the Alateen meetings. I have been privileged to "carry the message."

I have served willingly and although there have been some trying times HP has always been there guiding me....this position has given me hope for the children whose lives have been effected by a loved one's alcoholism.

Many thanks to you all for being part of my journey to recovery. **Marie G., RI Alateen Coordinator, Panel 49**

Alateen Corner

SCRAMBLE:

— — — — — — — —

Word of the month (by **Denise G.**)

Unscramble the words to find the letters; then unscramble the letters, placed where the "wink" is, to find the answer.

S T T U R _ _ :-)_ _ _ :-)_ _ _ _

S E A C U _ :-)_ _ _ _ _ _ :-)_ _

F I T A H _ _ :-)_ _ _ _ _

R U G P O _ :-)_ _ _ _ :-)_ _ _ _

(answers on last page)

I am the current **Literature Coordinator** and it is my first service position besides group representative. This was a big step for me, since it meant taking on the responsibility of keeping all the RI groups (54) supplied with the books and other materials used in all of the area meetings, collecting revenue and supplying our Area office with much needed funds.

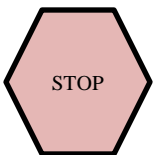
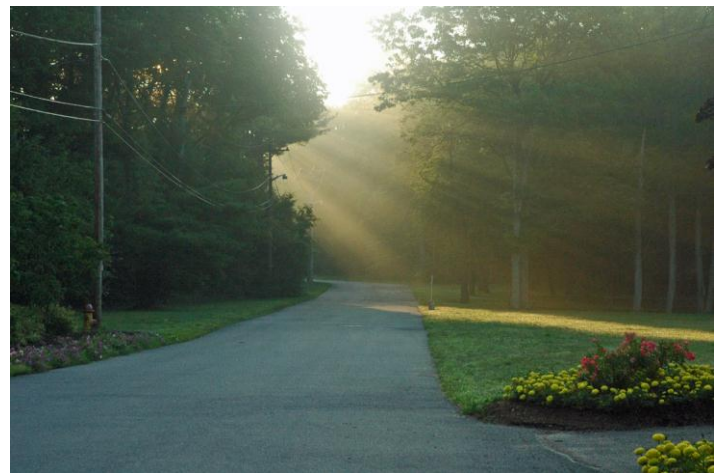
A challenge, but also a very rewarding experience, once I learned how to anticipate what would run out next, to avoid the empty shelves at our Distribution Center. Then it became almost a game with an opportunity to grow, and I learned about the other groups by the particular literature they used. I am still learning, believe me!

I also grew in the program through reading much of the literature, talking about it at assemblies, workshops, and the AA convention, where I especially saw the bottom line of how important Al-Anon literature is to the families of alcoholics from many states, coast to coast other than our own little RI. I truly became proud of my role, my service as Literature Coordinator at the AA Convention. I began to love my "job", as I saw its great worth to others.

I learned about the WSO, through participating in Conference calls and discussions about particular topics and literature. I now feel an amazing fellowship and bond with Literature Coordinators from all over the country and Canada,

I enjoy knowing Annette and Tom, Nathalie and Laurice from the Virginia Beach office who are a phone call or email away for anything related to Literature.

I never feel all alone, although I work alone. By **Carol W.**



AVOID THE TRAIN WRECK

-- Slogans, Tools or Prayers



-- LOOK -Be Aware



-- LISTEN -- Be Willing

This is a motto I made up for me when I approach difficult or trying events. It may prove beneficial to other Al-Anon members.

Lovingly in Service,
Denise G
 Cranston/Warwick Daytime Al-Anon

Alateen Process Person

This position has allowed me to be part of the true international organization of Al-Anon-Alateen. I have had the fortunate opportunity to network with other process persons from all over the world. That has been truly eye opening on a grand stage. It is very rewarding to know that we are all in recovery together - everywhere! I have been fortunate to work closely with the Alateen Coordinator as well as the Alateens themselves, in helping to facilitate a smoother transition to adulthood. The job of Alateen process person is responsible for the registering and re-registering of the AMIAS persons as well as registering new groups with the WSO. It has made me reach out and talk to people that I probably never would have and for that I will be ever grateful. Not to mention that my organizational skills have much improved!!! **Betsy W.**

Al-Anon Upcoming Events

June

AA's Serenity by the Sea--Young People Convention

with Al-Anon Participation-Friday - Sunday, June 17 - 19
Salve Regina University, Newport

Note:

Please forward any questions or interests in volunteering to my attention
Barbara M. at RI_Al_Anon@hotmail.com

What: **Service is Sweet Ice Cream Social**

Who: All RI Al-Anon & Alateen members involved in service

When: Saturday, June 25th, 4:00-7:00pm

Where: Leah D's house (RSVP for directions)

RSVP: enjoybeing@gmail.com

July

Alateen Sponsors Meeting

July 13th, 7PM – Area Office, 106 Rolfe St., Cranston

Save this date: November 19th for the Rhode Island Al-Anon / Alateen
Workshop with AA participation
Butler Hospital, Providence

Game answers

COURAGE - Trust, Cause, Faith, Group

JUNE 2011						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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5	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		

JULY 2011						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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3	4	5	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
31						

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: Email mailto:RI_Al-Anon@hotmail.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 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 or 401-855-6009 (it's safe to leave a message).

A special thank you to all who contribute!