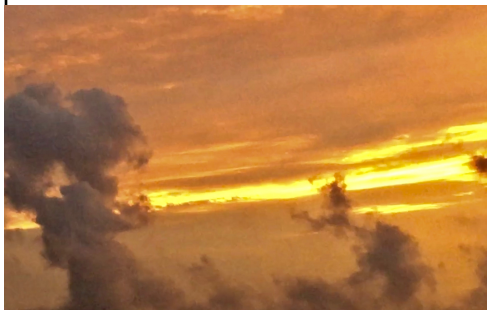


# LIFELINES SEPTEMBER 2019

## Editor's Corner:



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Above photo by EH

### SEPTEMBER IS NATIONAL RECOVERY MONTH IN THE USA.

*Step Nine: Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.*

I think that Step Nine ties in nicely with this being National Recovery Month; and these both tie in nicely with our Fall Workshop on September 21st.

My amends list has me on it. There are a variety of ways to make amends to myself, and a big part of these amends: is continuing to work this program, especially by taking care of myself. How often have I ignored my own feelings and needs? How often do I forget to put my program first? How often do I forget to turn to my Higher Power, or dismiss Its help because the issue does not seem "earth shattering" and I can handle it myself? How often do I struggle rather than surrender to the reality of my situation?

A full day of recovery - speakers and workshops and fellowships - is an excellent way for me to make amends to myself. This gives me the opportunity to set everything aside and focus on what is really important for me to live a serene and sane life. This is a time for me to slow down and listen to what is being shared and to what is going on within me. This all day workshop is a beautiful gift of time for my recovery.

I have received so much. I sometimes forget this. And I owe my recovery the time to make a significant deposit into my "spiritual bank." I can listen, participate, share, give back; i.e. perform *service* by simply attending the workshop. How great is that!

The theme of this year's workshop is "Grow Where You Are Planted." I can live only in my present situation. This is my "garden," so to speak. I cannot relive the past. I cannot predict the future. I have gotten into a lot of spiritual trouble trying to recapture a time when I felt so at peace and in touch with my Higher Power. That time was a gift. And these gifts are part of my history that I can draw from to trust that my Higher Power is present in my life today even if it doesn't feel that way. I cannot predict the future or how someone, including myself, is going to feel, act, react in that future. In my "garden" I have some "weeds" that hamper my growth. These are insidious, and cunning, and baffling. They have deep, long ago established roots. My garden needs tending to.

Today, I have the tools to recognize what is impeding my growth, and I have a Higher Power to help me effectively begin to turn them over and root them out. But in my Higher Power's way and time. I have gathered the seeds of trust from my history. I have the nourishment of the Twelve Steps, Slogans, Meetings, Literature and Fellowship. All of these will help me develop into who I am becoming - in and on solid ground.

A Grateful Member of Al-Anon  
Elaine H., Lifelines Editor

**\*DEADLINE FOR THE OCTOBER ISSUE IS SEPTEMBER 30TH\*\***  
**Would you like to be on the distribution list for Lifelines? Send an email requesting this to [lifelines.riafg@gmail.com](mailto: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](mailto:lifelines.riafg@gmail.com)**

**RIAFG FALL WORKSHOP:**

Rhode Island Area 49  
Al-Anon Family Groups



Hope & Help For Families  
& Friends of Alcoholics

**AL - ANON**

**2019 FALL WORKSHOP  
VOLUNTEERS & DONATIONS NEEDED**



Saturday  
September 21, 2019  
9:00am - 4:00pm

St. Luke's Episcopal Church  
99 Peirce Street  
East Greenwich 02818

**Volunteers Needed:**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Raffle Ticket Sales (2 needed)</li> <li>- Kitchen Crew (to look after food and coffee)</li> <li>- Food Donations (please see below)</li> <li>- Chair Persons for Breakout Meetings (1 needed)<br/><i>*The Breakout Meetings that we still need chairs for are <b>IN BOLD</b> (see right)</i></li> </ul> | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>BREAKOUT MEETING TOPICS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Personal Growth - Where you started and how far you've come</li> <li>- Using Your Al-Anon Tools - Higher Power, Slogans, Traditions, Concepts, CAL etc</li> <li>- Let's Take a Closer Look - How do you work the steps?</li> <li>- Got Boundaries? How's that working for ya?</li> <li>- Shed Your Layers - How do you let go?</li> <li>- <b>NO is a complete sentence - What you don't say</b></li> </ul> |
|--|---|

**Donations Requested:**

- GIFT BASKETS & OTHER ITEMS FOR RAFFLE**
- POTLUCK FOOD ITEMS (\*GLUTEN FREE OPTIONS APPRECIATED\*)**
- |  |   |  |   |
|--|---|--|---|
| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Continental Breakfast Ideas</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Fresh Fruit (apples, bananas, oranges, fruit salad)</li> <li>- Bagels &amp; Cream Cheese</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Quiche / Frittata</li> <li>- Muffins / Pastries</li> <li>- Granola Bars</li> </ul> | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Lunch Ideas</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sandwich Platters</li> <li>- Cold Salads</li> <li>- Finger Foods</li> <li>- Desserts</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Party Pizza</li> <li>- Chips and dip</li> <li>- Veggie Platter</li> <li>- Cheese &amp; Crackers</li> </ul> |
|--|---|--|---|

For more information or to volunteer for service, please email: [workshop.riafg@gmail.com](mailto:workshop.riafg@gmail.com)

**AREA FORUM COORDINATOR:**

**Need Your Support**

As your Area Forum Coordinator, I am requesting group donations of previous issues of The Forum that your groups no longer need. I will be using them on a Forum display at the **Fall Workshop**. Please email me at [forum.riafg@gmail.com](mailto:forum.riafg@gmail.com) to let me know what group you are and when I can pick up the issues. I will be collecting these during the months of July and August. It will be nice to visit your group for a meeting too!

Love, Peace, & Recovery,

Ann H.  
Area Forum Coordinator



**AREA OFFICE NEWS:**

**Volunteers Needed** to staff our RIAFG office in Cranston. If you are interested, please call the office at 401-781-0044 and leave a message.

**We currently have 4 Volunteers: Here is the schedule:**

|                    |                  |            |
|--------------------|------------------|------------|
| Monday:            | 12:30 to 2:30 PM | Phyllis H. |
| Wednesday:         | 12:30 to 2:30 PM | Paul B.    |
| Thursday:          | 6:00 to 7:30 PM  | Jane A.    |
| At-Home Volunteer: | Tuesday          | Clara R.   |

**AREA JOB VACANCIES:**

**\*\*\*OUR STATE AWSC NEEDS YOU\*\*\***

The following positions are open and the AWSC needs **YOU** to step up to service:

|                                    |                            |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| <b>Area Alternate Delegate</b>     | Term ends in December 2019 |
| <b>Public Outreach Coordinator</b> | Term ends in December 2019 |
| <b>District 1 DR</b>               | Term ends in December 2021 |

**Everyone** is invited to attend the AWSC meetings. So come to Cranston and see how this works. Two of the above positions expire the end of this year. What a perfect way to get some experience at the State level!

Worried about doing this alone? You are not alone. We all work together. Also, you can pair up with a friend in Al-Anon to co-perform the job duties. The only requirements are that you are a member of Al-Anon and not a member of AA because these are voting positions.

The next meeting is **Saturday, September 7th from 10 AM to Noon** at the state office in Cranston. We are alternating our meetings between Saturdays and Wednesdays. **ALL ARE INVITED TO ATTEND!**

**AREA CHAIR CORNER:**

I have been contacted by the Serenity Center in Woonsocket, asking if we would be interested in having an Al Anon meeting at their center. They are under the umbrella of Community Care Alliance, and are set up similar to Anchor Recovery. Please share this information with your groups. Anyone interested in starting a meeting at the Center can email me at [chair.riafg@gmail.com](mailto:chair.riafg@gmail.com) and I will put you in touch with their contact person.

Love in Service and Fellowship,

Phyllis H  
Area Chair

## Update on Rhode Island 2019 Annual Appeal

*Many thanks to everyone who expressed their gratitude for the priceless gift of serenity by making a contribution to the appeal!*

To date we have received appeal contributions in the amount of \$1,062 from the members of 18 groups, plus 2 members who sent their donations directly to the Area.

In this year's RI Annual Appeal letter, Tami K., our Area Treasurer, shared about attending her first meeting and the importance of keeping the hope alive for the next person who needs it.

If your group hasn't responded to the appeal yet, it isn't too late. Remember, it's not about the size of the donation; it's about each of us being part of the solution. No contribution is too small. And no journey is too difficult...when we all come together to put in our hands.

Love in fellowship and service,  
Phyllis H., Area Chair

## **2019 EVENTS CALENDAR:**

|              |   |
|--------------|---|
| September 7  | AWSC meeting at the Cranston office from 10 AM to Noon. ALL ARE WELCOME!  |
| September 21 | 2019 AI-Anon Alateen Fall Workshop, 9:00AM to 4:00PM, St Luke's Episcopal Church, 99 Pierce St., East Greenwich. Suggested Donation \$10.00 (Alateen - NO charge) |
| November 2   | RIAFG Fall Assembly, 9:00 AM to 3:30 PM, RayConference Center, Butler Hospital, 345 Blackstone Boulevard, Providence.   |
| November 6   | AWSC meeting at the Cranston office from 7 to 9 PM. ALL ARE WELCOME!  |

## **MEETING NOTICES:**

### **Holiday Notices:**

The Wakefield Just for Today AFG will **NOT** be meeting on Labor Day, Monday, September 2nd.

### **New Meeting and Name Change:**

Newport Sunday Night AI-Anon Family Group Discussion Meeting has changed its name to Serenity on Sunday and still meets at the same time and place: Sundays, from 6:00 to 7:00 PM at Emmanuel Church, 42 Dearborn, Newport, RI, in the library, Guild room chapel.

### **Needs Support:**

Hope for the Family Disease at Friday 7:30PM St. Theresa's Catholic Church, 265 Stafford Rd., (Rte. 81 South) (Rectory Basement Hall), Tiverton

Keep It Simple Saturday K.I.S.S. on Saturdays at 1200 PM, Ray Hall, 2nd floor, Room 4, Butler Hospital, 345 Blackstone Blvd, Providence

Higher Powered Lunch Bunch on Tuesdays at 12:10 PM at St. Stephen's Church, 114 George St., 2nd floor, Providence.

Parents for Love Hope & Recovery, Monday, 7:00 PM, Four Corners Community Chapel, 2110 Diamond Hill Rd., Cumberland

South County Step meeting, Thursday from 7:30 PM to 8:30 PM needs your support.

Let it All Go AFG, Tuesday 7:30 PM, N. Kingstown Methodist Church, 450 Boston Neck Rd., (Rte 1A), North Kingstown

### **Location Change:**

Westerly Friday Night AFG is now meeting at Westerly Senior Center, 39 State St., Westerly.

### **Now Wheelchair Accessible:**

The K.I.S.S. has moved to the first floor and is now wheelchair accessible. They meet Saturday 12:00 PM at Butler Hospital, Ray Hall, first floor, room 1.

### **Meetings that have Closed:**

The Ashaway AI-Anon Group meeting Thursdays at the Trinity Lutheran Church, Ashaway, has closed.

The Saturday Night Live AI-Anon Group meeting, Saturdays at 6:30 PM, at Calvary United Methodist Church, 200 Turner Rd., Middletown has closed.

**MEMBERS SHARE:****Service Work & Recovery- An Abundance of Beauty by Leaving Despair Behind**

The Twelfth Step “Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps we tried to carry this message to others, and to practice these principles in all our affairs” offers the gift of receiving what is given. It aligns spiritually with the “Just For Today” bookmark Prayer for Today.

When we carry the message to other Al-Anon members and non-members through our thoughts and behaviors we represent recovery that actually works at bringing the gift of freedom from despair to our lives and the lives of others.

How does one “carry the message”? Certainly not through suffering as a martyr or people pleasing. Al-Anon offers an abundance of opportunities to give and receive the gift of recovery that liberates us from despair by demonstrating acts of love and kindness expressed with respect and concern for all. Some may incorrectly believe, “I cannot do this. I am not spiritual or religious.” However, a change in attitude and behavior does represent a spiritual awakening. When we stop fighting a disease that only takes and leaves us feeling unloved and abandoned, we can then surrender to providing loving support for each other. We live with Spirit.

So how does one offer service work? Sponsorship develops relationships that strengthen the foundation of Al-Anon recovery groups. Committing to a home group and volunteering as a CMA, Group Representative, Treasurer, Secretary, or chairing a meeting builds the group’s harmony and consistency of carrying the message to newcomers. Other service positions at the Area and World Service levels keep us “on the same page” through financial reporting and access to conference approved literature. Participating in Public Outreach and workshops are other great service opportunities.

Hey! Writing this article for Lifelines is service work!

Like any worthy investments, giving time to help others in recovery will yield a wonderful ROI- Resilience to the Affects of Alcoholism, Opportunities to Grow in Recovery and Increasing Love for Oneself and Others. Now that’s an awesome return!

I encourage you to challenge yourself and share your beautiful self through service work with Al-Anon and let Al-Anon reflect that beauty.

Ann H.  
Area Forum Coordinator  
CMA North Providence Step Meeting

**Zip It!**

My late mother was so respected by her daughters-in-law, probably in good part due to her ability to zip it ;– that is, zip her lips to keep opinions and advice giving to herself. She modeled what I learned in Al-Anon – “Just because you think it, doesn’t mean you need to say it.”

Before Al-Anon, I certainly felt that if I thought it, I should say it and say it without a filter and certainly without being asked. I came from a position of often thinking I knew better and that I should enlighten you with what you might not know or at the very least let you know my thoughts on any number of things from education and politics to parenting and alcoholism.

Wrapping my mind around not readily giving my opinion took time, but I have come to value its worth, especially the sense of peace that results. I am no longer responsible to know what is best for others, nor do I have to weigh in on everything. I can enjoy conversations without becoming intrusive or controversial and can instead be more supportive and understanding. I can participate without dominating and listen without having to respond.

That being said, if someone asks for my thoughts, I consider the situation. For instance, a while back one of my adult daughters said to me, “Mom, I am going to tell you something and I want your opinion. Just don’t get all “12 Step” on me. At first, I thought – yeah, she wants my opinion; I get to give my opinion, yippee. But I knew what it really meant -- listen to her, hear her, and respond with love in a non-preaching way.

What she shared with me was about a friend of hers who was dating a guy with a drinking problem. What did I think? Well, before launching into what I thought like I used to do, I asked her what she thought. She, in fact, had a good perspective on it and knew what the reality of the situation was. In the end I was there to validate her, not solve the problem.

I would like to add one more thing. Zipping our lips does not mean we go silent when we need to give voice to something that would cause harm if we kept it quiet. Appropriately speaking up is also part of recovery.

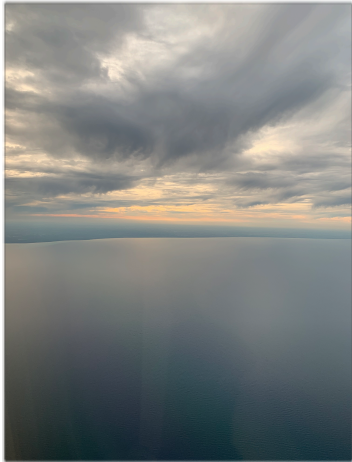
by Leslie A.

**The word *fellowship*** is something I have heard in meetings for many years. The fellowship I experienced early on in my recovery was so beneficial to my growth. The members who came before me welcomed me at meetings and got me involved in my group. I didn't say no, mostly because I didn't know how to. How grateful I am for those members wisdom of getting a newcomer involved in helping to set up the meeting and taking time to talk to me before or after meetings. Sometimes going out for coffee or going to another meeting together. I was asked to tag along to Workshops, district meetings, and area meetings. I met more members and even made some friends. I found my first sponsor by spending time with these members, who slowly were becoming my friends. They shared their wisdom and experiences with me.

Time has turned into many years of recovery and I now find myself doing what those members did for me. I try to welcome new faces at my home group meeting. I try not to forget what my first meeting felt like. I like to encourage someone without being pushy or overwhelming. I have gone to Al-anon conventions in neighboring states inviting group members to meet us there. One year seven of us were at the same convention and had dinner together. Some of my best memories have been through fellowship.

by Joel

Photo by Heather M.



### HEARD AT AL-ANON MEETINGS

Build bridges, not walls

Boundaries are not just for setting, they are for enforcing, too.

Don't let your past push you around

There are two kinds of business: My business and none of my business.

I have a list of 1500 things you can try to get an alcoholic to stop drinking. None of them work, but you can try them.

Don't pick up the rope.

Don't spend more time on someone else than you would spend on yourself.

by Anonymous in South County

## FORUM ARTICLE:

### I Found Support in That Room

I met the alcoholic in my life through online dating. Though I felt that I was okay with social drinking, I learned that there is no such thing as social drinking to an alcoholic. My partner was in A.A., but was a binge drinker. When he wasn't drinking, he was kind, loving, and respectful - all the traits that I wanted in a partner. I thought he drank to be nasty to me and to sabotage our relationship. I lost sleep worrying if this day would be the start of a binge. I went to A.A. meetings with him for about two years trying to figure out what he was missing so that I could save him, but the other A.A. members would often suggest that I go to Al-Anon, I didn't know what that was or why I needed to go when I felt that he was the problem.

The first program idea that had particular significance for me was that alcoholism is a disease. This actually made sense to me because I could view it like a form of mental illness. I have a dear family member who is mentally ill. I finally realized that my partner was not drinking "at me" or because of anything I did or didn't do. He was self-harming, much like my family member. He didn't know why and didn't know how to stop. What kept me coming back after my first meeting was that I saw that the people there were having fun. They celebrated each other and shared their successes and struggles. No one judged anyone or told anyone what to do. Instead, they laughed, they cried, and I could sense the love and support in that room. I wanted to learn how to do that and just get some sleep and feel happy again.

By Loretta V., Ontario

(Reprinted with permission of *The Forum*, Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc., Virginia Beach, VA. August 2019 p.14)

**ALATEEN CORNER:****No Longer in Anger**

Truth was hard to come by in my family. Growing up with a disabled and moody dad with chronic pain and lots of health problems was not the easiest experience for a young kid. What made it worse was that we never talked about it or admitted that it was frustrating and upsetting to live with those challenges. As a family, we pretended he was okay and did our best to seem as normal as possible to the outside world. I thought as long as no one came inside to see the wheelchair, wooden leg, crutches and medical supplies or notice the ambulances coming late at night, no one would know that my family wasn't quite normal.

After my dad died and I was a teenager living with an alcoholic stepfather, I didn't think much had changed. By then, I was so numb to my feelings about my family that it didn't occur to me to be embarrassed about him passing out every night. As usual, the family's priority was to act as if everything was okay, so we swept his drinking under the same rug we had swept my dad's problems. I was left feeling that no one cared what I felt or thought anyway.

When I came to Al-Anon in my mid-30's, I had a serious need to hear some truth and I found plenty of it. People in meetings talked straight about being neglected and mistreated. They revealed their deepest secrets and talked openly about how poorly they had handled the problems caused by the alcoholics in their lives. People cried, and they laughed. Part of me felt like I had landed in heaven, and another part was terrified at the prospect of getting honest myself. One of the greatest gifts I have received from Al-Anon is learning to speak my truth - not in anger, like I did as a teen, but clearly, without apology, and without shame or guilt. In the loving presence of other members committed to honesty, I can do what my family could not - acknowledge the real story of who I am, what I am coping with, and how I am doing it. It may not be perfect, but it's real. Today, thanks to Al-Anon, I can handle that.

By Dylan M., New York

(Reprinted with permission of *The Forum*, Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc., Virginia Beach, VA. August 2019 p.18)

**DO NOT REFER TASK FORCE UPDATE:**

The Do Not Refer Task Force met on July 17 to incorporate recommended Spring Assembly changes to the report. We have not received new news/updates from WSO. WSO has not approved any area Do Not Refer draft policies to date.

Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns. If we decide to meet in October, before the November 2 Fall Assembly, I will provide the date, time and place of meeting to those interested. You can contact me at my AA Liaison email address: [aa.riafg@gmail.com](mailto:aa.riafg@gmail.com).

Jackie  
RI AFG AA Liaison

**DISTRICT II NEWS:****What's NEWs in District 2 – July 2019 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 July 2019 District 2 Meeting was held at the North Kingstown Free Public Library. After the minutes from June were read and accepted, we revisited the suggested district meeting guidelines, which we've been using as a point of reference to help guide our discussion and service as a district. Two suggested topics for discussion include sponsorship/service sponsors and reviewing a Tradition or Concept of Service. Our District had previously asked its Group Reps (GRs) and meeting attendees to prepare something to share about their experience, strength, and hope as it relates to sponsorship and to speak to how service has helped them individually work the program. We broke this statement down into one question for reflection: "Why are you doing service and how has service helped you as it relates to Step 1?" All present were reminded to prepare a few sentences to share on this at the next District 2 Meeting. [To view the suggested district meeting guidelines - visit [www.alanon.org](http://www.alanon.org) and search "Guidelines". Click on READ MORE and scroll down to "District Meetings (G15)".]

The discussion turned to Task Force Guidelines for task force chairs. Back in May at the Spring Assembly, District 2

had brought this topic of discussion to the Assembly in the hope of addressing things like scheduling meetings and including inputs from avenues other than just in-person communication so that participation would be encouraged and ALL voices could be heard, even potential minority opinions. As a result of this discussion, District 2 stepped up to work on creating these guidelines. In our July district meeting we started by Keeping It Simple with bullet point guidelines and addressing First Things First – COMMUNICATION! We outlined suggested steps for task force chairs to take BEFORE scheduling a face-to-face meeting with a written agenda. We left off with guidelines for DURING a task force meeting.

After that we revisited our Area Alateen volunteer-sponsorship needs. To put it simply, we are in need of Al-Anon Members in Alateen Service (AMIAS). Currently we only have four sponsors running two meetings in Providence. If you are interested in or have questions about becoming a sponsor, please contact [alateen.riafg@gmail.com](mailto:alateen.riafg@gmail.com).

Next a progress report was given on the planning of the RI Al-Anon Family Groups 2019 Fall Workshop. The workshop co-coordinators reviewed their volunteer requests and donation needs and were offered the suggestion to specifically reach out to people with “we have this need” as the workshop got closer should they find ourselves still looking to fill service positions. Also, a request was made for an Alateen breakout meeting. **As of the writing of this report**, it has been brought to our attention that Alateen participation at the Fall Workshop will include speakers, an information table, and two Alateen breakout meetings\*. (\*One will be an OPEN meeting and all are welcome to attend).

Finally, the discussion revisited how to encourage people to step up for service and fill group officer positions in dysfunctional meetings. Because we were nearly out of time, we tabled this discussion for the next District 2 Meeting.

Our next District 2 Meeting will be held at the North Kingstown Free Public Library on **Tuesday September 10<sup>th</sup>**. **Time TBD**. All are welcome to attend. For questions, please contact your GR.

**Final Reminders:** (1) **We are still in need of a new Alternate District Rep.** If you’re interesting in serving as the Alternate DR for District 2, please come! (2) If you are in District 2 and your home group would like to host a future District Meeting, please ask your GR to invite the district. We’re happy to rotate the District meeting location each. (3) We are open to individual meetings bringing their group’s concerns to the District meetings for discussion. That’s what we’re here for!

That wraps up another District 2 Report. Thanks for reading! We look forward to continuing to serve you and Al-Anon as a whole.

### Links of Service

Member + Member = **Group**  
**Group** + **Group** = **District**  
**District** + **District** = **Assembly**  
**Assembly** + **Assembly** = Conference

## NEWS FROM THE WSO:

### The Forum’s Unsung Heroes: The FEAC

Readers of *The Forum* often ask how the decision to publish an article is made and by whom. And, while there are a number of people who work to produce the magazine every month, one of the most important elements is something most people have never heard of—the *Forum* Editorial Advisory Committee (or FEAC). The people on this Committee volunteer to review 50 sharings for *The Forum* each month. As one member put it, “Many Al-Anon members acknowledge not feeling like they had a voice before coming to the program, but with this project, they can share their journeys in a most meaningful way.”

First, the FEAC volunteers look to see whether the sharing is topical— whether it reflects some aspect of the Al-Anon program. They score each one and comment on their reason for scoring it as they did. Out of three possible scores, a score of 1 means the sharing is excellent and is suitable for publication. A 2 is still positive, but not as strong as a 1. A 4, on the other hand, means that the sharing is not appropriate for publication. There are several reasons why an article may not be publishable. For example, a sharing that focuses only on other types of addiction, such as drugs, rather than alcohol, is probably not acceptable. Or, it may be too directive, or in the words of one of the Committee members, too “teachy/preachy.” In other words, the author writes with a tone of directing the readers as to what they should do, think, or feel. Further, sharings that focus heavily on the alcoholic loved one and those that focus only on the problems associated with the disease are not likely to receive positive scores. If a reading gets more than one 4 score, it is deemed ineligible for publication. What’s comforting to know, though, is that even one of these sharings may contain a small excerpt that is publishable in the “One ‘Quote’ at a Time” department or for the back-flap quote.

Moreover, though, sharings that reflect *hope* are the most likely to receive high marks. After all, isn’t that why so many people “Keep Coming Back” to meetings? Then, the editing team uses the Committee’s input to determine what goes in the magazine. Finally, the Committee members meet via phone conference four times a year to discuss the magazine and how effectively they feel it is working. I am extremely grateful for this band of behind-the-scenes warriors. Further, the fact that they do this service work on a voluntary basis shows the commitment of each of the five members. Without them, this monthly instrument of hope and help for the friends and families of alcoholics would not be possible.

By Mark S., Magazine Editor *The Forum*, August 2019



## Quarterly Appeal Letter To Individual Members in Your Group August 2019

Dear Al-Anon and Alateen members,

The gift of desperation drove me to Al-Anon. I was searching for a way to fix my marriage, which had been severely affected by the family disease of alcoholism. As so many of you can attest, a fix for my marriage was not what I found. My survival skills were no longer working, and I needed new life skills. I found those skills in the rooms of the fellowship. Those new skills did not come cheap! I worked hard to build a better way of life for me and my family using Al-Anon's spiritual principle of abundant thinking. That work included contributing time, energy, and money to our program. I was so sick I did not even know where that money went. But I learned.

I learned about how my contributions to Al-Anon provide services to the fellowship. Our sources of revenue include contributions, *The Forum* subscriptions, investment income, and literature sales. But when I purchase a book, only a portion winds up in Al-Anon's available funds due to the cost of producing literature. *The Forum* has the same cost of production to consider. I also learned that investment income is affected by market swings.

But, *contributions!?* They are available, in full, to provide programs and services while funding our home and Staff.. I invite you to visualize the money you are adding to this envelope as it makes its way through the different departments to become a piece of Conference Approved Literature (CAL), or a social media post, or a meeting guide for a newcomer. Picture it reaching an adult or teen who is in desperate need of our message of hope.

### Questions we each can ask ourselves:

Do I think abundantly when I put money in the appeal envelope?

Can I write a check to the WSO today? (By the way, yes, you can!)

Am I ready to go online now and contribute via PayPal, credit card, or bank draft?

In gratitude for all you are doing as we journey together from Cindy K., Treasurer Al-Anon Member

Contributions to Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. or Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters (Canada) Inc. may qualify as a charitable deduction, but the WSO makes no judgment as to the specific deductibility of a contribution by any member.

### New Way to Designate “Closed” and “Open” Meetings

The Al-Anon Meeting Type designation, which previously referred to whether the meeting was open to visitors or closed to attendance by members only, often confused members and newcomers. It has been replaced by the term Meeting Attendees, and the options have been changed to “Families and Friends Only” and “Families, Friends, and Observers Welcome” on the WSO [Group Records Forms](#).

These new descriptions match the wording approved by the Board of Trustees at their April 2019 meeting. The language is consistent with the Al-Anon spiritual principles of confidentiality and anonymity. The new terms were designed to be clearer to new members and more welcoming to both new and potential new members and professionals seeking to understand our program.

### Pass Along Understanding to Professionals

Al-Anon's revised *Fact Sheet for Professionals* (S-37ES and S-37EF) pamphlet is clear and concise. It is ideal for providing professionals with essential information about our program. Members can help increase referrals to Al-Anon by letting professionals know:

- ~ There are no dues or fees for membership
- ~ How to make referrals
- ~ Where to obtain local meeting information

To order print bilingual pamphlets S-37ES and S-37EF visit the Al-Anon online store at [al-anon.org/onlinestore](http://al-anon.org/onlinestore); free, monolingual downloads of *Fact Sheet for Professionals* (S-37E, SS-37S, FS-37E) are available at [al-anon.org/resources-for-professionals](http://al-anon.org/resources-for-professionals).

Sharing information about Al-Anon is easy with the *Fact Sheet for Professionals*.

- ~ Its lightweight pamphlet format makes it easy to carry to offices of professionals or include in postal mailings.
- ~ It is easy to attach the PDF file to email messages.

### References to Drug Addiction in Public Outreach Materials

We are all messengers of Al-Anon's purpose and have the responsibility to accurately communicate it to avoid confusion, misperception, or dilution of our program.

The 2018 Membership Survey states that 35% of members came to our program specifically because of someone's use of drugs. The survey also showed that 78% of these members eventually came to realize that someone else's drinking had also affected their lives.

When developing and implementing public outreach activities, members are urged to keep Al-Anon's Twelve Traditions in mind. This includes reviewing the words of the Traditions in their entirety. The following summary of applicable Traditions may assist your communication efforts with members, newcomers, professionals, and the media:

- Tradition Three states that "the only requirement for [Al-Anon] membership is that there be a problem of alcoholism in a relative or friend."
- Tradition Four tells us that "each group should be autonomous, except in matters affecting another group or Al-Anon or AA as a whole."
- Tradition Five clarifies that we have "but one purpose: to help families of alcoholics."
- Tradition Ten tells us that "the Al-Anon Family Groups have no opinion on outside issues."

According to a statement on page 131 in Al-Anon's Conference-approved "Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies," "Our responsibility is to ensure Al-Anon's survival as a resource for families and friends of alcoholics. By focusing on these drug-related problems, we risk being diverted from Al-Anon's primary aim."

Therefore, conveying that Al-Anon is for families and friends of alcoholics and drug addicts in local or Area-produced public outreach materials is an expansion and misrepresentation of Al-Anon's purpose (see Tradition Five). This includes but is not limited to posters, flyers, websites, etc.

We appreciate your efforts to support the families and friends of alcoholics and maintain our Traditions and primary purpose.

With gratitude, Vali F., Executive Director

Al-Anon materials for further reference:

- *2018-2021 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27), page 131, "Families with Related Problems"
- *Al-Anon/Alateen Is & Is Not* Bookmark (M-44)
- 2018 Membership Survey
- *2019 World Service Conference Summary* (P-46), page 62

### Sharings on the Traditions Needed

*The Forum* can always use more sharings on the Traditions and Concepts. Please send your personal recovery experience involving one of the Traditions or Concepts to *The Forum*, 1600 Corporate Landing Parkway, Virginia Beach, VA 23454-5617, Attention "The Forum"; to [wso@al-anon.org](mailto:wso@al-anon.org); or at [al-anon.org/forumshare](http://al-anon.org/forumshare).

#### **STEP NINE:**

Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

#### **TRADITION NINE:**

Our groups, as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.

#### **CONCEPT NINE:**

Good personal leadership at all service levels is a necessity. In the field of world service, the Board of Trustees assumes the primary leadership.

*WEB Sites, Addresses and phone numbers:*

**RI AFG:** [www.riafg.org](http://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](http://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 E. H.

