



# Lifelines

The Newsletter of the RI AFG, October 2008

## Step Up Your Program and Step Up to Service

Are you looking to “step up” your program? Service is a great way to enhance your recovery and give something back at the same time.

And the timing couldn't be better: it's time to elect a new panel of service members to our Area World Service Committee (AWSC). December 2008 marks the end of the 3-year term for all Area Officers and Group Representatives (GRs), leaving all Area positions open. **These positions are vital to keeping Al-Anon running in Rhode Island.** New members will be elected at the next Area Assembly on November 15th at St. Joseph's Hospital in Providence at 9:00 AM. All GRs and outgoing Area service members must attend, and anyone interested in stepping up to service is encouraged to attend and familiarize themselves with the Assembly procedures described in the *Service Manual*, pages 136-139.

*“But, Deb,” you ask, “what are the service positions at the Area level?”*

The following are brief descriptions of each service position. We encourage you to read them and think about which service activities interest you, or whether you know someone who may be a good candidate for election to an office.

**The current position holders are available to answer your questions and support you, both now and once you take on a service role...you are never alone!** You can always ask for help and/or form a committee of members to help carry out the tasks of your office. There are also opportunities to serve as alternates to any of these positions or to serve on committees led by these positions.

### Area Chair

The Chairman facilitates all Assemblies and Area World Service Committee meetings during the 3-year term of office. The Area Chair should have leadership and organizational ability; it is essential to be able to plan an agenda and conduct meetings in an orderly manner. Communication and cooperation with others are key elements of good chairmanship.

### Area Delegate

The Delegate is a channel through which information flows. The conscience of Al-Anon can work effectively only if it is informed. Much depends on the Delegate being thoroughly familiar with the *Service Manual* throughout his or her term of service. The Delegate attends the annual Al-Anon/Alateen World Service Conference (our world-wide group conscience) and brings to the Conference our Area's viewpoint on matters affecting the entire fellowship. The Delegate then returns to the Area with a broader perspective of Al-Anon worldwide. He/she is the bridge of understanding that links the groups in the Area with world Al-Anon/Alateen to help us continue to function in unity. The Delegate is the servant of Al-Anon as a whole.

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*Service “steps up” your recovery. Here are some thoughts from members who have served in the last 3 years...*

*One of my many lessons has been to live and learn the difference between service and enabling. Service has limits and boundaries, allows mistakes, trust, and respect to increase, self worth to grow, etc. Best of all, I cannot do it wrong.  
~ Dan F.*

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## Rhode Island Al-Anon, Area 49

### Summary of Area Meeting, September 16, 2008\*

*The 33rd Annual Rhode Island AA Convention with Al-Anon Participation will take place March 20-22, 2009 in beautiful Newport! This event sells out quickly, so I strongly encourage registering as soon as possible!*

*Also, if you want to be recognized as an Al-Anon member, put your name followed by "Al-Anon" or "AFG" on the "What name do you want on your badge?" line on the registration form.*

*I'm going to need all the help that I can get, so keep your eyes open for notices listing service opportunities! I hope to see you all at the convention!!!*

*Love in service,  
Jenny N.*

**Lifelines:** Outlines of all Area positions will be published in the next issue [October] of *Lifelines* to inform all members about the upcoming election and the positions that are open.

**Area Meetings:** A motion was made and seconded that all Area 49 meetings be open to all Al-Anon members. Motion carried.

**Area Announcement List:** A motion was made and seconded to create a new Area position, called E-mail Coordinator, to run for 3 years, and to manage the e-mail hotline with administrative rights to the announcements list. Motion carried.

#### Area Minutes Availability:

- ▲ A member from a District that does not have a District Representative (DR), indicated that she does not know what is happening on at the Area level and has difficulty accessing this information. She would like to see more open lines of communication.
- ▲ A discussion followed concerning methods of getting this information out to the members. The pros and cons of e-mail, *Lifelines*, and the lack of all DR positions being full.
- ▲ A motion was made and seconded that a summary of Area 49 minutes will be published in *Lifelines* each month, and a summary of the Area Assembly will be published in *Lifelines* approximately 60 days after the Assembly. Motion carried.

**AA Convention:** Flyers for the Newport AA conference, March 20-22, 2009 are available. This sells out quickly, so register early.

**The next Area meeting will be Tuesday, December 9, 2008 at 7 PM. (See last page.)**

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

## Step Up

*continued from page 1*

### Treasurer

The Treasurer maintains the Area bank account and pays all bills for expenditures approved by the Area World Service Committee. We have a checking account with Sovereign Bank with a debit card so the Treasurer can make deposits at his or her leisure. To date this checking account holds all funds for Al-Anon, which includes Alateen and Public Outreach. The Treasurer maintains the Area Budget (currently on an Excel Spreadsheet) and also maintains a record of donations sent by groups (recording the group name, group number, and check number). The records are kept on a thumb drive, which can pass along to the next Area Treasurer. Donations are sent to the Area office, or, if you are comfortable releasing your full name and address, you can request that they be mailed to your home. The Treasurer makes periodic financial reports to the Area and Assembly. This position only requires a minimum of your time and the current Treasurer will be available to answer questions and help the next Treasurer.

### Secretary

The Secretary attends to all regular secretarial work and takes minutes of all Area meetings and Assemblies. These minutes should be sent to the Area World Service Committee members soon after the meeting and be recorded in a permanent minutes book to be passed along to a successor. Minutes are also kept in a log at the Area office.

### District Representatives (5 slots)

The District Representative is usually any incoming, outgoing, or active past Group Representative who is willing to represent the district at Area World Service Committee meetings and Area Assembly. They should have (or will certainly gain) knowledge of Al-Anon traditions and concepts as well as how they work. The District Representative meets with Group Representatives in their district to provide the GRs with information from the Area World Service Committee, listen to group concerns, and take any questions or concerns to the Area World Service Committee meetings.

Rhode Island (Area 49) has 5 districts: District 1 comprises Providence and East Providence; District 2 covers parts of Pawtucket and North Providence and all of Cumberland, North Smithfield, Smithfield, Woonsocket, Lincoln, and cities north of Lincoln; District 3 includes Bristol, Tiverton, Middletown, Jamestown, Little Compton, Portsmouth, and Newport; District 4 covers the middle of Rhode Island (from Cranston to East Greenwich); and District 5 encompasses Southern Rhode Island.

### Office Manager

The Office Manager ensures that our Area Office on Rolfe Street runs smoothly, making sure it is fully stocked with office supplies and coordinating the volunteers who man office hours, answering the phones, following up on messages, and filling literature orders.

### Public Outreach

Public Outreach informs the general public through the media, professionals, facilities, and organizations about who we are, what we do, and how to get in touch with us. Our goal is to attract to our program those whose lives are or have been affected by someone else's drinking, so that those who need our program can find the help and hope we offer. We also strive for name recognition and credibility as a community resource. The Public Outreach Coordinator serves as a communication link between the WSO and the Area, making presentations or holding workshops at

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*I have learned there are many definitions of service—not just state level or group rep, but talking to newcomers, setting up, opening the door, and by sharing at meetings. I've learned I'm somebody and it has to begin with me.*  
~ Anonymous

*The opportunity for this kind of service has given me far more than I ever could have expected. I learned so much about how Al-Anon works at Group and District levels. I gained confidence in myself and a clearer understanding of how the Traditions and Concepts apply to groups, Al-Anon as a whole, and my personal recovery. These things made it much more possible to make life decisions I could feel good about and to pass information on to the group that could help us create a healthier group conscience. ~ Sharon F.*

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### *Attention Alateens*

This page is for you!

Alateen is a vital part of RI Al-Anon/Alateen Family Groups and, as such, should be represented in its newsletter.

Please consider submitting something for the next issue, either on your own or as a group. Please e-mail your submissions to Deb E. at [destre99@yahoo.com](mailto:destre99@yahoo.com), or drop off or mail them to the Al-Anon office (see last page).

Please provide your first name and/or the town or group to which you belong, unless you wish to remain anonymous.

## Alateen Spoken Here

### *Letter to the Alcoholic*

**Jessie, Florida**

I was so cold and scared, always confused. I made myself sick with worry and fear. I tried to stop you, to cure you, make you listen to reason. I wanted to stop it, hide it, pretend it didn't exist. The more I ignored it the more it ate away at me. Those days of tears and confusion, or worry and anger, they made my heart and mind ache.

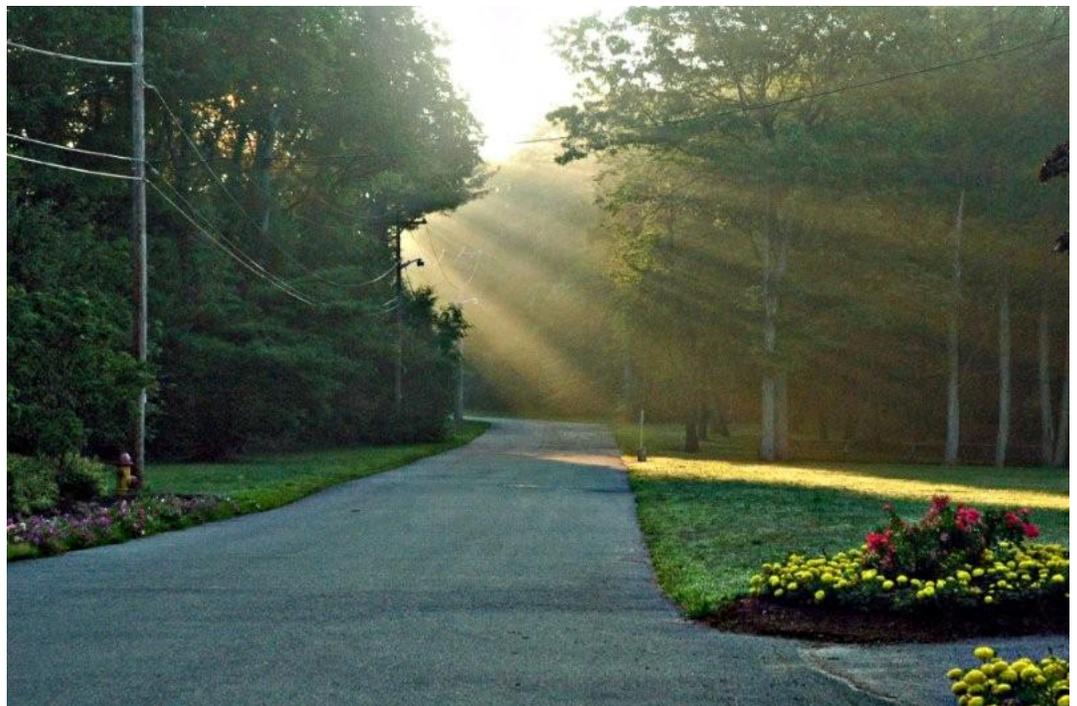
But now, I don't worry constantly, I don't carry the weight of all your problems on my shoulders, I don't tear myself up inside. This concept that I can't cure you was very difficult for me to accept. I spent so much time trying to fix you it almost feels unnatural to stop trying. The fact that I don't cause you to do the things you do, that I can't control you was so foreign to me.

But now, I have friends that understand. They help me to stop focusing all my energy on you. They love me. They help me. They are there for me. I'm happy now, I laugh more. I smile more, I talk more. I'm more myself. My friends taught me to work through the Steps. They taught me that "you are you?" and "I should be me." I don't make myself sick any longer. I don't hurt myself. I love you. I always will, but I need to continue to rebuild myself, to make friends, and to love life.

*Used with permission from Alateen Talk, Volume 46, Number 1.*

Our HP really does give us grace and show's us the way if we only stay still long enough.

*Submitted by Linda F.*



## Treasury Report

The following is a listing of the donations to the Area Office for September. Donations are down this year, but we are still okay.

Please remember to put the group name and *entire* group number on all checks when sending in donations. Your group number is provided on the meeting list.

To speed check processing, you may mail checks directly to me at:

Valerie Bacon  
68 Elmgrove Avenue  
Smithfield, RI 02917

Peace in the Program,  
Valerie, Area Treasurer

Group #	Group	Area	Alateen
3-026686	Hope For Today	\$20.00	
3-030119	Monday Morning Al-Anon	\$20.00	
4-0064957	Freedom Group	\$20.00	
2-503064	Step Up to Serenity	\$50.00	
2-037296	Change What you Can	\$50.00	\$50.00
1-045173	Higher Powered Lunch	\$50.00	\$50.00
3-065654	Paths to Recovery	\$50.00	\$30.00
5-064396	Christ Church Westerly	\$80.00	
	September Totals	\$340.00	\$130.00

*The When I Got Busy I Got Better Al-Anon Group will hold an open Al-Anon Meeting on January 9th at 7:30 PM at Bradley Hospital in honor of our 2nd anniversary: "Al-Anon—A Community Resource for Family Recovery from Alcoholism." This meeting will be open to professionals in the community who would like to learn more about how Al-Anon can be used as a resource for their patients and clients. The meeting is also open to anyone curious to learn more about how Al-Anon could benefit them personally.*

*Any groups who would like to assist or contribute or for more information, please contact Leah at [enjoybeing@gmail.com](mailto:enjoybeing@gmail.com) or 401-374-0236.*

## What Gifts Have You Received Serving as a Group Representative?

I, before becoming a GR, was computer illiterate. To become effective as a GR, I realized that I needed to learn how a computer works, and learn about e-mail. This opened up a whole new world to me, as everyone knows, and has benefited me in other ways as well. It was only that I became a GR that made this happen. Giving back, I began volunteering in the Rolfe Street office on a regular basis. It has made me a more confident, knowledgeable member of our group.

~ Anonymous

*It's almost time to rotate service positions!*

*Are you interested in representing your home group? Ask your GR for more information about this important and recovery-strengthening service position, and consider stepping up to service in November.*

## Step Up

*continued from page 3*

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*By taking the job of treasurer, it encouraged me to be responsible for my recovery. Service made me aware I was not alone, and we all need each other. ~ Hank*

*I have learned so much about myself by doing this type of service. I used to be so shy and I was so afraid of making a mistake that I wouldn't even try anything new. Now I know that I have the love and support of so many from my Al-Anon meeting that, even if I do make a mistake, I'm okay and I can try again. The boost to my self-confidence is incredible! I used to be afraid to set up chairs at a meeting. Now I'm the master of ceremonies at a workshop! My life is completely different!  
~ Jenny N.*

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events in the Area and the general community; distributing service projects and information from the WSO to Area Assemblies, Districts, and Groups; encouraging the Area, Districts, and GRs to carry project ideas and information to the groups; and continually educating the fellowship about the need to attract those who are still suffering to our program.

### **Literature Coordinator**

The Area Literature Coordinator carries the message of recovery and unity through Al-Anon Conference Approved Literature (CAL) to the Districts, Groups, and members in the Area. This person manages the Literature Distribution Center at the Area Office, maintaining inventory, updating the order sheet, ordering new literature, and making donations from the proceeds to the Area treasury. This coordinator reads and becomes familiar with each piece of Al-Anon literature, encourages its use in meetings and program events, works with volunteers to display CAL at workshops, develops literature donation projects, and encourages members to write sharings for ongoing and new CAL projects.

### **Forum Coordinator**

The *Forum* Coordinator encourages groups and members to submit sharings to the *Forum* magazine and to subscribe (it's currently \$11.00 per year). The Coordinator carries Al-Anon's message of recovery as it is printed in the *Forum* to the GRs, who are the *Forum* Representatives at the group level. This coordinator's duties include, but are not limited to, being available to GRs and DRs for assistance in conducting workshops or outreach activities. Coordinators can ask Area World Service Committee members to assist by subscribing to and sharing the value of the *Forum* as they conduct their service activities. Coordinators can keep records of their efforts to pass on to the next coordinator. They may also bring sharing sheets, blank order forms, and copies of the *Forum* to workshops, assemblies, etc. Display boards may also be made to use at these events.

### **Lifelines Coordinator**

The purpose of an Area newsletter is to provide a vital link among individual members, groups, and the Area; encourage attendance at service events; communicate local, area, and Al-Anon Information Service news; and attract Al-Anon members into service. The *Lifelines* Coordinator determines the type of submissions that will be accepted and establish a due date for submissions; copy edit submissions for spelling, grammar, and punctuation and make sure we use consistent terminology; encourage members to make it *their* newsletter by submitting information, reports, and service sharings. The *Lifelines* Coordinator (along with the E-mail Coordinator, described below) also helps maintain a list of *Lifelines* e-mail subscribers through our secure announcements list (using Yahoo), adding and updating members' e-mail addresses. Members' anonymity is protected at all times. All of this can take anywhere from 4 to 8 hours a month, if the coordinator works alone. It may be helpful to form a committee, or find a group of volunteers who are willing to donate a half-hour or hour of their time to do certain tasks each month.

### **Webmaster**

The Webmaster keeps the RI AFG Web site updated by uploading the monthly *Lifelines* newsletter and revised meeting schedules, and adding Area news, service opportunities, and events from *Lifelines*. Responsibilities also include renewing the Web site each year and getting reimbursed by the Area Treasurer. Software like Dreamweaver is recommended to update and upload materials.

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## Step Up

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### *E-mail Coordinator*

This is a newly formed position for our Area! The E-mail Coordinator maintains the Area Hotmail e-mail account, responding to messages requesting more information about Al-Anon. This person also helps (along with the *Lifelines* Coordinator, described above) maintain our secure announcements list (using Yahoo), adding and updating members' e-mail addresses. Members' anonymity is protected at all times.

### *Alateen Coordinator*

The Area Alateen Coordinator is the vital link of communication between the WSO and the Area on matters relating to Alateen. This coordinator is a resource for Alateen at all levels of service. The Alateen Coordinator is encouraged to work closely with the Area Alateen Process Person (AAPP) (described below), the Area's designated contact with the WSO regarding Alateen forms. Some Areas designate additional responsibilities to the AAPP. For example, the Alateen Coordinator may be responsible for the training and certification of Al-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service and the AAPP for submitting Alateen forms, recertification of Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service (AMIAS), or verifying certification of members serving Alateen for Al-Anon conventions and other events with Alateen participation.

### *Alateen Process Person*

The Area Alateen Process Person (AAPP) serves as the Area's designated Alateen contact with the WSO Group Records Department regarding Alateen forms. Since 2004, every Area has Alateen requirements and has a process to certify Al-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service (AMIAS), register Alateen groups, and implement the Alateen Behavioral and Safety Requirements at all events in the Area that have Alateen participation. The Alateen Process Person works closely with the Alateen Coordinator; for example, the Alateen Coordinator may be responsible for the training and certification of AMIAS, and the AAPP for submitting Alateen forms, recertifying AMIAS, or verifying certification of members serving Alateen for Al-Anon conventions and other events with Alateen participation.

### *Group Records*

The Group Records Coordinator is the link between the Area and the WSO. They must have computer and Internet availability and be familiar with Microsoft Office Programs, such as Access, Word, and Excel. This person compiles and maintains a complete list of all GRs, DRs, Area Officers, and Area Coordinators. (Personal information is considered confidential and treated as such.) He or she updates the list of all RI meetings and their respective GRs and contact persons, and they keep the WSO updated. This coordinator also updates the RI Meeting List and sends updated lists to the Webmaster for the Web site.

### *Area Archives*

Enjoy scrap booking? We need an Area Archives Coordinator to preserve the experience, history, and memorabilia of the RI AFG. The Coordinator may head up an Archives Committee, which would be responsible for researching the history of Al-Anon in RI. Our archive materials are currently at the Area office. They need to be organized, dated, catalogued, and preserved using archival methods (eg, acid free paper, boxes). Anonymity is stressed when displaying photographs that might identify individual members. The materials collected can be displayed at workshops, assemblies, group anniversaries, or public information displays.

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*...service is about doing the things that come easy (like the E-mail thing for me), to keep the hand of Al-Anon there. And it's about doing things that aren't easy, that feel uncomfortable (like leading a meeting in uncertain circumstances, or risking traveling with teenagers)—not to help others but to push me to grow. Thanks for the push, I sure have grown!*  
~ Anonymous

*I have received many gifts from Al-Anon Service. One of which has been the gift of knowing that I can give of myself without losing myself. Another gift was learning that there is a difference between Al-Anon Service and "helping" when I haven't been asked (aka butting in)... I can help others without forcing my own solutions on them. By volunteering for service positions, I've learned how to give of my time and talents in appropriate and healthy ways. ~ Leah*

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## Step Up

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### *AA Liaison*

The AA Liaison is a link between Al-Anon and AA in the spirit of cooperation between the two programs. The AA Liaison invites AA to Al-Anon events and encourages participation in those events. The liaison works with AA at their conventions, making sure Al-Anon's presence will be there in the form of speakers, meetings, literature, and schedules. The Liaison should have knowledge of the traditions as well as the ability to work with others. The Liaison attends the AA convention planning committee meetings and goes to Area World Service Committee meetings to make periodic reports. The Liaison also writes letters of thanks when the convention is over to the AA convention planning committee chairperson and to the speakers who took part in the Al-Anon sessions.

### *Workshop Coordinator*

The Workshop Coordinator heads the Workshop Committee, which plans our annual Fall Workshop. The purpose of the workshop is to allow members to participate in giving back to the program (Participation Is the Key to Harmony) while enjoying a day of recovery. All proceeds help the Area as a whole, which allows us to be self-supporting. The Workshop Coordinator chairs periodic committee meetings and secures volunteers who take on responsibilities for registration, decorating, hospitality, master of ceremonies, speakers, treasury, meetings, food, craft table, Alateen participation, AA participation, Literature table, and Public Outreach table. This person also troubleshoots and supports these tasks as necessary.

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*Serving as group rep has helped me understand the links of service and Al-Anon as a worldwide fellowship. It was an important position to fill for the health of our group and to have the support and guidance of the district and area. For me, I take care of my gift of recovery by giving it away and doing service. Participation is the key to harmony. ~ Anonymous*

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### *Want to Learn More?*

More information about most of these positions can be found in your *Service Manual* (every group should have one). There are also guidelines for most of these positions available at the Area Office (see last page) or on the Al-Anon Alateen Members Web site. Just log on to: [www.al-anon.alateen.org/members](http://www.al-anon.alateen.org/members). The password is the name of your group plus the letters "afg". And don't hesitate to ask your GR or any current Area Officer or Coordinator for more information.

### *More Opportunities to Serve*

We are also forming **committees** covering many of these areas, so you're never left to do any of this alone. If you are hesitant to take on a leadership position, consider joining a committee and doing service that way.

Or, you can **serve at the group level**. Consider stepping up to serve as your group's Group Representative, Treasurer, Secretary, or Literature Person.

Please note that **dual members** (persons who are members of Al-Anon and AA) are not eligible to hold office beyond the group level (Group Representative, Area Coordinators or Officers), as this would form a conflict of interest between the two fellowships (see the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*, p 79). But we still need you! Dual members are encouraged to serve within their groups (as Group Treasurer, Group Secretary, Group Literature Coordinator), in Alateen as Sponsors and in other service capacities, and on our Area committees.

When you help set up chairs, you're doing service. When you greet a newcomer, you're doing service. When you lead a meeting or claim your seat by sharing your experience, strength, and hope, you're doing service. ***Every little bit helps keep Al-Anon strong in Rhode Island—and strengthens YOUR recovery as well!***

## Upcoming Events

### October

#### Loving Hearts AI-Anon Recovery-Themed Halloween Party

Sat., Oct. 25, 11:00 AM–12:30 PM

St. James Lutheran Church, 49 Middle Highway, Barrington  
(rear main entrance; first door on right)

Pot luck. Come in costume (or not). Got some creative ideas to add to our fun? Please bring them!

### November

#### Tiverton 'There Is Hope' AI-Anon 18th Anniversary

Mon., Nov. 10, 7:00–9:00 PM

Amicable Congregational Church, 3736 Main Rd., Tiverton

Join us for our "Attitude of Gratitude" Dinner of Thanks. Come join us as we begin the Holiday season by giving thanks for the blessings of recovery through the 12 Steps. We'll have speakers, food, fellowship, and literature.

#### Area Assembly

Sat, Nov. 15th, 9:00 AM–3:00 PM

St. Joseph's Hospital, 21 Peace Street, Providence

Are you ready to take your program to the next level? All current and upcoming GRs and Area Coordinators and Officers are expected to attend. We will discuss issues that affect the health of our groups and vote in the next group of Area service members. Your voice is important. **Make sure your group is represented!**

### December

#### Area Meeting

Tues., Dec. 9, 7:00 PM

Area Office, 106 Rolfe Street, Cranston

If you are interested in participating in service, please attend!

#### Alateen Informational Sponsors Meeting

Sat., Dec. 13, 1:00 PM

Area Office, 106 Rolfe Street, Cranston

All AI-Anon members who are currently involved with Alateen or are interested in volunteering are welcome!

OCTOBER 2008						
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NOVEMBER 2008						
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### RI AI-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\_AI-Anon@hotmail.com

Lifelines e-subscription: destre99@yahoo.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 AI-Anon Information Service news; and attract AI-Anon members into service.

*Lifelines* submissions may be sent to destre99@yahoo.com or mailed to the office at the address above. The deadline for the next issue is **December 3rd**.

If you wish to receive *Lifelines* and other Area news via e-mail, please e-mail destre99@yahoo.com and type "Mailing List" in the Subject line.