

LIFELINES

**RIAFG NEWSLETTER 106 ROLFE STREET, CRANSTON, RI 02910
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Editor's Corner

The Holiday Season is upon us. As a child I anticipated them full of expectations of decorations, colorful lights, presents, and family gatherings. Having company at our house helped relieve some of the tension between my parents. After all, things had to look good, no matter what.

As I grew older, I realized how stressful this time of year was for my parents. We were of modest means so gift giving adding financial pressures. In high school, my father was upset about being forced to work Christmas Day. He left the house and was gone for a whole day, returning on Christmas Eve obviously drunk. I was terrified that this would be the breaking point in their marriage. My whole life depended upon their staying together no matter what. I looked to them for my own stability and security.

I carried this need to find my stability and security from others into my adult life. I needed the people around me to change so that I could finally be happy and at peace. I thought all of our lives would be so much better if only people would do things my way. I achieved only my own frustration and anger from my loved ones..

Years later, a close friend recommended Al-Anon. I agreed to go as a last ditch effort. I was stuck in an alcoholic cycle of times of shaky happiness leading to walking on egg shells, to outright dread, to terrible arguments that somehow, I thought, cleared the air. A tense happiness started the cycle all over again.

Since I no longer lived with active alcoholism, I initially was not sure if I "qualified." I thought I had somehow come through my childhood unscathed from someone else's drinking problems. However, I kept going to meetings because I just felt better afterwards. I learned how insidious and cunning this disease is. I learned that my own denial was keeping me stuck.

By working this wonderful program, I have learned I have a new source for my stability and security: my Higher Power and our fellowship. I can live in the day, whether or not it is a holiday. My expectations have changed to knowing that my Higher Power provides all that I need for this present day.

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

FORUM ARTICLE

Learning to heal my own pain

When I came into Al-Anon, I felt like a ping-pong ball, being bounced from crisis to crisis, constantly trying to fix my son's life. Since that was impossible, I felt frustrated, resentful, and powerless - a victim.

I needed to stop thinking about what I wanted for everyone else's life and look instead at my own. I learned that living with alcoholism gave me my own disease - trying to rescue, control others, and seek happiness outside of myself. Healing my pain couldn't come from healing my son's disease even if I were able to; it had to come from healing mine.

I know now that in trying to control others, I was really trying to control my fear and grief as I watched their disease unfold. By working my program, I've learned to face, release, and heal those natural feelings, and not avoid them by trying to fix others.

The wonderful paradox is that as I began empowering myself, I also began to empower the alcoholic. By taking the focus off him, I stopped enabling him and removing the consequences of his actions. I have heard that most people make their biggest changes from a place of crisis. By preventing the crisis, I was removing his motivation to change. As Hope for Today (B-27) says, "It is an illusion that depleting myself will help someone else."

Al-Anon has empowered me to enjoy my life. It has liberated me from feeling like a victim of other people's choices. Today, I know that whether the alcoholic seeks recovery or not, I will still be fine because I have healed my own pain and found my own life. My happiness no longer depends upon their choices, and that is true freedom. by L. O'D

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DELEGATE'S CORNER

As my term as Delegate comes to an end, I would like to share with you what being Delegate has done for me. Not only have I had the privilege of representing all of you at the past 3 World Service Conferences, I also had the opportunity and privilege to spend time with and get to know and love Delegates from all over the United States and Canada, Trustees who voluntarily devote enormous amounts of time and energy to the worldwide fellowship of Al-Anon, representatives from Al-Anon around the world, and fantastic staff who work every day to make sure that Al-Anon is always there for all of us and for the newcomer. But even more, I have been given the true gift of growth through service. Recently, the Board of Trustees was in Aurora Colorado for Road Trip 2017 where they spent a day with over 100 members of Al-Anon from multiple states. In addition to the talks and discussions, throughout the day members of the Board shared snapshots of their personal stories. Stephanie S., the Delegate from New Mexico, was inspired to share the following quotes on service from the presenters that day and when I read these quotes, I realized that they also were describing my service experience.

"Your presence here shows the spirit that's alive in the fellowship, to learn more and to be a part of those things from those that went before me".

"I don't have a spiritual part to my program. My program is spiritual. I don't have a service part of the program. My program is service."

"I was learning how to work with others in a positive way; even when we disagreed about things."

"As I did more service, I learned more and more about me."

Thank you for allowing me to learn and grow so much by serving as your Delegate.

Phyllis H., Delegate, Panel 55

CHAIRPERSON’S CORNER: RHODE ISLAND AREA ANNUAL APPEAL

One time each year your Rhode Island Area has an appeal. 100% of any donations received go to support Rhode Island's Area Al-anon services. If you wish to participate, please do so either thru your group, or simply by sending a donation to the Area Office indicating, "annual appeal". A copy of the Annual Appeal letter is included in this newsletter.

David G., chair of RIAFG



November 2017

2017 ANNUAL RHODE ISLAND APPEAL LETTER

Dear Rhode Island Al-Anon Family Groups and Members:

Once a year your Area has an Annual Appeal to raise funds to assist with expenses incurred in carrying the message of hope that Al-Anon offers to Rhode Island families and friends who have been impacted by someone's problem drinking.

Would you please help us, and thereby also express your own gratitude for what the program has done for you by donating \$5, \$10, \$20 or whatever amount you or your group can afford.

We ask that you circulate this appeal letter within your group during the month of November, and forward any donations by December 1, 2017. For any donation your group is able to send, please indicate "annual appeal" and your group number on any check or money order and mail it to the Area office.

Thank you.

Yours in Service,

David G.
RI Area Chairperson

NEWS FROM WSO

Member Survey:: The WSO will be conducting a survey in 2018 of the Al-Anon membership. The findings help the WSO's communication with professionals by providing data about Al-Anon that show improvements in our health and well-being. Information about the 2018 Membership Survey is time sensitive. The 2018 Al-Anon Membership Survey will be available online at al-anon.org/18membersurvey from January 10, 2018 to February 27, 2018. The WSO's Al-Anon Membership Survey is Conference Approved and has been conducted every three years since 1984. This is our twelfth study. Members' participation in the survey is anonymous and confidential.

AL-ANON MEETING UPDATES

HOLIDAY & TEMPORARY CHANGES

Please note: The Al-Anon at Noon Westerly meeting at Christ Episcopal Church does **NOT** meet on Monday Holidays. Christmas and New Years Day are both on Mondays this year.

Monday Morning Al-Anon at St. Mary's Episcopal Church, Portsmouth, WILL MEET on Christmas and New Years day (December 25, 2017 and January 1, 2018)

Check the RIAFG website regarding meeting changes for December 25, 2017 and January 1, 2018.

NEW MEETING

First Things First, Monday Nights 7:00 PM VA Medical Ctr, 830 Chalkstone Ave., 5th floor, Classroom 2, Providence

MEETING CHANGE

Step up to Serenity group, Thursday mornings 10:00 AM meeting has changed its format to a discussion meeting as of November 2, 2017.

Serenity by the Bay group, Wednesday nights at First Methodist Church, 25 Church St., Warren has changed the time of its meeting to 7:00 PM as of November 8, 2017

NEEDS SUPPORT

A New Beginning Women's only group, Thursday 7:00 PM at St. Paul's Episcopal Church Hall, 2679 East Main Rd., Portsmouth.

Hope for the Family Disease, Friday 7:30 PM at St. Theresa's Catholic Church, 265 Stafford Rd., Tiverton.

Cranston-Warwick Daytime meeting, Tuesday 10:00 AM at the Edgewood Congregational Church, 1788 Broad St., Cranston.

MEMBERS SHARE An Invitation

The Cranston-Warwick Daytime meeting has been around for well over 30 years. For many years, this was one of the largest meetings in the state, and we were able to support paid babysitting as well as contributing to the state and World Service. For the last several years, however, the meeting seems to be anchored by three or four people who contribute service and attendance as members of their home group. We have sporadic visits from members of other groups, but these are typically people who have always visited on occasion, with few unfamiliar people from other meetings or even newcomers. The meeting is a discussion meeting where the month's step and possibly its tradition is the topic on the first Tuesday of the month. The business meeting is held after the meeting closes 10 minutes early on the last Tuesday of the month. We meet at 10am every Tuesday at Edgewood Congregational Church in Cranston in a comfortable living room setting. The meeting lasts an hour and a half. We also offer the newcomer the option of going to another room for a newcomers' meeting. Please come to visit, and perhaps you'll decide to make this meeting a regular part of your recovery!

Home Group members of the Cranston-Warwick Daytime Meeting

PUBLIC OUTREACH

Our groups have the opportunity to join the AFG fellowship in carrying Al-Anon's message of help and hope to offices of professionals and other public places so that people can learn about the availability of Al-Anon.

The deadline for ordering the second printing of the Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism 2018 magazine is February 7, 2018, 5 PM EST. Magazines are printed in March and delivered before April 1, 2018. The order forms are available on the WSO website: www.al-anon.org. 25 copies costs \$18.00. Be sure you specify English, French or Spanish.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- Dec 2, 2017** AWSC (Area Wide Service Committee) Meeting
10:15 AM to 12:00 PM (Brief Al-Anon meeting at 9:45 AM)
RI Area office, 106 Rolfe St., 2nd floor, Cranston, RI
- Feb 16-19, 2018** 29th Southeastern Mass Roundup (with Al-Anon Participation)
Holiday Inn, 31 Hampshire St., Mansfield, MA.
- Mar 23-25, 2018** 42nd RI AA Convention with Al-Anon participation
“Let Your Light Shine” The Gurney’s Newport Resort and Marina
Goat Island, Newport, RI
- Mar 23-25, 2018** CT AL-ANON Convention Raddison Hotel, Cromwell, CT
see ctalanon.org for information
- Apr 13 -15, 2018** 2nd Native American Al-Anon Conference
The Lodge at Sante Fe, 750 N. St. Francis Dr., Sante Fe, NM
see the Events Calendar on riafg.org for more details
- Apr 20-22, 2018** 42nd Massachusetts Al-Anon/Alateen Convention
Sturbridge Host Hotel, 336 Main St., Sturbridge, MA
see the Events Calendar on riafg.org for more details
- July 6-8, 2018** International Al-Anon/Alateen Convention, Baltimore, MD
“Celebrating One Day at a Time” Baltimore Convention Center, Baltimore, MD
see the Events Calendar on riafg.org for more details

RI AFG STATE OFFICE NEWS

Below is the grid of our office volunteers' hours for the remainder of the year. Of course, we can always use more help! Calling the office at 401-781-0044 **prior** to coming is required. I change the message on the answering machine every week, listing the open office hours for that week.

Volunteering at the office is rewarding service. Training is a breeze. You always have 'backup' mentors to support you. Duties include answering the phone, picking up messages, opening and distributing orders for literature, and greeting anyone who comes to the office, usually to purchase literature. Having the office open is an important way to carry the Al-Anon message to those in need. We also need help returning phone messages left on the answering machine. You can do this **from your own home**. The calls are usually requests for meeting schedules, but some are seeking general information on what Al-Anon is all about. You can either fill out the application on page 6 of this newsletter or call the office at: 401-781-0044 or email the office at office.riafg@gmail.com. If calling or emailing, please leave your name, phone number and/or email address stating that you are interested in volunteering.

Jane A., RI AFG Office Manager.

OFFICE SHIFT						
Monday	12-2	11/27 Clara	12/4 Phyllis	12/11 Phyllis	12/18 Clara	12/25 CLOSED
Wednesday	12:30-2:30	11/29 Paul	12/6 Paul	12/13 Paul	12/20 Paul	12/27 Paul
Thursday	6-7:30	11/30 Dennis	12/7 Jane	12/14 Jane	12/21 Jane	12/28 Jane
Saturday	12-2	12/2 Linda	12/9 Linda	12/16 Linda	12/23 ()	12/30 Linda

RHODE ISLAND AL-ANON FAMILY GROUP

Office & At-Home VOLUNTEERS

Step 12: Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to others...

H O W ?

Office volunteers are needed to work in the area office (located at 106 Rolfe Street Cranston.) A simple training opens the door to service! Office volunteers:

- greet anyone who calls the office
- greet visitors to the office. Visitors are usually coming in to purchase literature.
- retrieve recorded messages, return calls and record them in our log
- open and distribute the mail
- fill literature orders for in-person purchasers

Having the office open as much as possible is an important way to carry the Al-Anon message to those in need. It is rewarding to be there for others.

At-Home volunteers access the Al-Anon voicemail account from their home phone, retrieving messages.

- When a caller leaves a message and a number, the hotline volunteer calls them back.
- Mailing a meeting list or referring the caller to riafg.org are the action steps
- At-Home volunteers keep a brief written log of calls returned and communicate with the Office Coordinator accordingly.

Being an At-home volunteer is an excellent opportunity for Al-Anon members to share their experience, strength, and hope.

Interested in giving an hour or two of your time each week? Please fill out the information below

YES, I WOULD LIKE TO VOLUNTEER!

Select which type of volunteer work you would like to do:

Office Volunteer At-Home Volunteer

Name _____

Phone Number _____ Email address _____

Day(s) I am available to volunteer _____

Hours I am able to volunteer: _____

Please return this form to: Office Coordinator Rhode Island Al-Anon/Alateen Office
106 Rolfe Street Cranston, RI 02910
or to: office.riafg@gmail.com

Questions? Call 401-781-0044 and leave a message for the Office Coordinator

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Many service positions are open at the state level. A description of these positions and their responsibilities are available on riafg.org. Please consider volunteering to serve our wonderful state Al-Anon members. “When I got busy I got better,” to quote the title of one of our CAI’s.

WEB Sites, Addresses and phone numbers

RI AFG: www.riafg.org Office:,106 Rolfe St., Cranston, RI 02910
Telephone:401-781-0044. Office hours available by calling this number.

WSO: al-anon.org. Office: 1600 Corporate Landing Parkway,
Virginia Beach, VA 23454. Telephone: 757-563-1600

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



Photo by E.H.