

Ala Gram

SPRING 2001

The Newsletter of the New Jersey Assembly

**Dear Treasurer
Don't forget your
regular contribution
to Assembly. Use the
group contribution
coupon on Page 7.**

**JAL-CON 2001
July 27-July 29
26th ANNUAL
NJ AL-ANON
CONVENTION**

A CIRCLE OF HOPE

Al-Anon, Alateen & AA
Meetings Panels
Speakers Dance
Weekend and daily
packages available.
Held at the Hilton in
Parsippany

*for information see:
www.nj-al-anon.org*

**Our June 9, 2001
Assembly will be
held at the New
Dover Methodist
Church, 687 New
Dover Road, Edison
NJ. It will begin at
10:00 with 'coffee
and' beginning at
9:30 AM**

SERVICE, COMMITMENT & GRATITUDE

When I returned to New Jersey after 9 years in North Carolina, it took me almost no time to find a home group. After attending for a month I realized that my group had no Group Representative. I volunteered to fill the position and was elected. At the first assembly as a new GR, I was surprised to see that there were few familiar faces. I wondered if the people I knew from previous years of service had stopped coming to Al-Anon, moved, stopped doing service outside the group or simply rotated out of service to allow others the privilege of growing through service. I learned the answer was, "All of the above."

When I first came to Al-Anon I didn't get involved in service, I didn't ask my sponsor for help in applying the Al-Anon program to my life; all I did was go to meetings. When my life got busy, I decided I couldn't afford the one hour a week I was spending at a meeting, besides, I was smart, I had the literature and books. I stopped going to meetings for a while. Within a few shorts weeks my life went from bad to horrible. I didn't understand that my dis-ease was progressing. I lived on cigarettes and coffee, developed several stress related conditions and became physically, emotionally and spiritually bankrupt. I thought the problem was my husband, his drinking and other behavior that accompanies alcoholism.

My sponsor died, and I was left without any ties to Al-Anon, or so I thought. A friend carried me kicking and screaming back to "the rooms." At the very first meeting I set up chairs and cleaned ashtrays. (Remember those smoking meetings?) Every meeting after that found me putting literature out, welcoming a newcomer; I became the official hugger for the group.

I got a new sponsor, helped a friend start a new meeting, led beginners' meetings, attended at least 5 meetings a week, became the Group Rep for my new home group and became the District Rep at my first Assembly meeting. That was twenty-two years ago. In doing one of my 4th Step inventories I considered the difference between my first attempt at Al-Anon and my second. During my first year in Al-Anon the focus was on the drinker and getting him to change; I attended meetings to learn

what I could do to fix him. I was sure there was a magic formula that would eventually be revealed. During my second and all subsequent years in Al-Anon, the focus was on myself. I used *all* the tools of the program. I did service to my group, the District, the Area, and served as an Alateen sponsor in 2 states. Eventually I had the privilege of serving on an In-Town Committee. The difference was the commitment I made to myself and to Al-Anon. I *bought in* to the program, signed on, so to speak, and Al-Anon became an integral and vital part of my life.

As the result of participation in service I have met Al-Anons from all over the world. My life has been enriched by giving back, in gratitude, what was so freely given to me. Commitment to service work in Al-Anon has deepened my ties to members of the program and from them I learned how to apply this program to all aspects of living.

With gratitude in my heart I serve as GR, and when needed, lead meetings, set up or clean up for my home group. My sponsor told me to participate in service outside my group, I became Ala-Gram editor. Our program has three legacies, the Steps for personal growth, the Traditions for groups unity and the Concepts of Service that guide our service structure. I use all three legacies in my personal program of recovery. Life is not perfect, but Al-Anon has given me the tools I need to have a happy, serene and grateful life regardless of circumstances.

I urge each of you to make a commitment to yourself by participating in service to Al-Anon.
Pat D.



NEWS FROM THE WSO	3
LITERATURE PROJECT	4
FROM RUSSIA	5
WEB PAGE NEWS	6
ASSEMBLY ADDRESS CHANGE	7



The meeting opened with the Serenity Prayer followed by reading the Traditions and Concepts. Then each DR and GR stood to be counted.

The Assembly has a new mailing address, which is:

518-7 Old Post Road

#355

Edison, NJ 08817-4683

Please announce this at your meetings. The reason is to speed up the processing of group donations by forwarding the mail directly to the treasurer. The old address will be in effect for 1 year.

District 23 will provide the bagels and donuts for the June 9th Assembly.

Pat, our **Alagram** Coordinator thanked everyone for their articles for the last Alagram and looks forward to the next issue. "It was an experience putting this first one together and I look forward to more." For individual subscriptions (one copy of the Alagram three times a year) the cost is \$3.00 or for a group subscription (5 copies of the Alagram three times a year) the cost is \$10.00.

Jal-Con brought flyers that will be mailed out to the groups and the registration form will follow soon after. The registration form will also be on the web page: www.nj-al-anon.org. Need topic leaders and volunteers for the convention.

Public Information: The soft cover Courage to Change book is available at your LDC. September is recovery month in the US with the theme of "We Recover Together; Families, Friends and Community". More information will be available in July. A new pamphlet "Alcoholics, Their Families, and Judicial System (S-65) will be available shortly from your LDC. If you want to help with any Public Outreach efforts, please contact Karen at: publicoutreach@nj-al-anon.org.

Broke out into the **workshops** for GRs and DRs, which is the first of many. Each group provided a spokesperson to discuss what was learned. The general opinion was how helpful the workshop was and by others sharing their experience, strength and hope there were things that were forgotten and now remembered. With a show of hands it was passed that this will be a continuous event.

Picnic: Set and confirmed for 5/19. Flyers were available on the table and all were encouraged to take as many as needed and pass them out to all of the meetings you attend. Looking for volunteers. Dogs for the visually impaired are the only dogs allowed at the picnic area, no pets. April 8 will be the final picnic meeting.

There is a new position that has been created for a three-year trial, titled **Public Outreach Officer**. This position includes Public Information and Institutions (will now be three people) and will try to create a need for Al-Anon information instead of waiting for requests. The AWSC nominated and the Assembly elected Karen L. – Congratulations Karen!

Alateen went to Ewing High School and handed out literature, one packet was made for Alateens and the other was made for adults. The turn out was well attended.

The Web Coordinator, Larry reported that a contact page has been created. If you want to contact anyone who is on the Assembly Board or a Coordinator, all you need to do is click on the person's title and e-mail will be forwarded to him or her. If you have any group information, please contact the web coordinator.

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SOFT COVER COURAGE TO CHANGE

Available for Institutions 12 Step Work

Members asked and the world Service Conference responded by approving a motion to create a limited number of the **Courage To Change** daily reader in soft cover for institution outreach. It is specifically designed to meet the security requirements of correctional and psychiatric care centers. Copies may be provided to:

- ◆ Inmates or residents for personal use or at Al-Anon meetings
- ◆ Facility libraries
- ◆ Patient or staff resource centers

Please specify **S 16s** on the order form.
Price is \$10.00

LIVING TODAY IN ALATEEN

Living Today in Alateen is the new collection of personal sharings from Alateen members around the world. Each page shows how young people reach out and help each other. "I thought I was the cause of all my mother's and father's problems," one member revealed. "After hearing I was worthless for so long it took someone believing in me in order for me to believe in myself...." Alateens offer thoughts and feelings that can inspire anyone who has been affected by a loved one's drinking. Words and Drawings from Living Today in Alateen convey what it is like for young people to feel the pain and yet find contentment and even happiness, whether the alcoholic is still drinking or not. Look for announcements in future issues of *The Forum*, Inside Al-Anon Xtra, and your local AIS /LDC newsletter.

BE OUR EYES AND EARS

Keep this coupon handy...on your refrigerator, near your radio or TV, or on your car visor. When you hear or see the PSAs, fill in the coupon and send it to the WSO Public Outreach Service by mail or FAX

Yes, I heard the PSAs:

Check as applicable: _____ Radio _____ TV

_____ Date _____ Time _____ Station Call Letters

_____ English _____ Spanish _____ French

PSA theme: _____

Name _____

City _____ State/Province _____

Thank you for caring!! Please photocopy and distribute to your group.

Mail to: WSO Public Outreach Service, AFG, Inc. 1600 Corporate Landing Parkway
Virginia Beach, VA 23454-5617 or FAX to: 757-563-1655.

**MISSION IMPOSSIBLE?
AL-ANON LITERATURE IN EVERY LIBRARY
IN NJ!**

World Service has asked us to try to place Al-Anon literature in every library so the public can be more informed of our existence. After 50 years, people may forget that we are still around, so we have to gently do our 12th Step and drop gentle reminders wherever people go to read about alcoholism and it's effect on them. If your group has some extra money, try purchasing one of the books below to donate to your local library.

First, go to your local library and ask them where the literature is on alcoholism and look to see if they have any Al-Anon literature. If they don't, ask if they would accept a donation from the local group and if you could place a sticker with a toll free number to call, or a hand written number. Then, someone could contact World Service or the local literature depot, which would provide a number to call for a meeting in their area.

Then, the next time your group places a literature order, get an extra book to place in the library, or you could take a special collection to purchase some books. This is the group's choice as to how to finance. This can be done at the local public library; middle and high school, or if you have a college in your town, ask there also. The books that World Service suggested are:

Elementary, middle or high school:

- Alateen: Hope for Children of Alcoholics (B-3) \$5.50
- Alateen-A Day At A Time (B-10) \$7.00
- Courage to Be Me-Living with Alcoholism (B-23) \$9.00

Church Library:

- As We Understood (B-11) \$8.50
- Having Had a Spiritual Awakening (B-25) \$10.00

College, University or Medical Library:

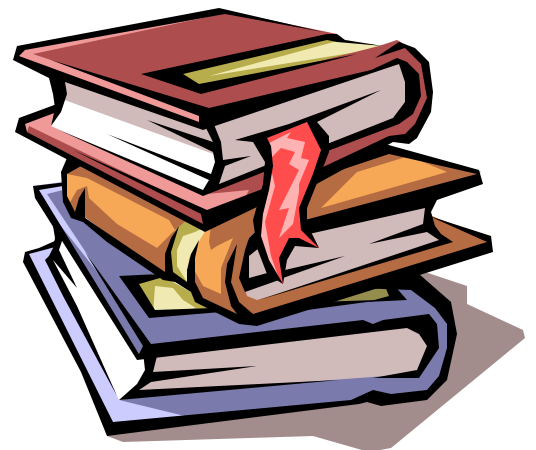
- How Al-Anon Works for Families & Friends of Alcoholics (B-22) \$11.00
- Paths to Recovery-Al-Anon's Steps, Traditions and Concepts (B-24) \$15.00
- From Survival to Recovery: Growing Up in an Alcoholic Home (B-21) \$13.00
- In All Our Affairs: Making Crises Work for You (B-15) \$10.00
- Courage To Be Me- Living with Alcoholism (B-23) \$9.00

Public Library- Any of the books listed above. My suggestion would be at least one book from each category.

So, that is the mission as World Service has asked us to do. Should you feel free to participate in this program, please drop me a line know how you did. (www.nj-al-anon.org) Better yet come to the next assembly meeting (send your GR) and talk to Anne P, the NJ Literature Coordinator.

For literature orders contact:

**South Jersey Information Service at (856) 547-0855
North Jersey Information Service at (973) 744-8686**



Chairman's Corner

Once again spring is upon us, a time for reflection, re-birth, and new beginnings. Its always a special time for me as April is my Al-Anon Anniversary month. This year makes 13 years. A baker's dozen! What a difference a few years makes.

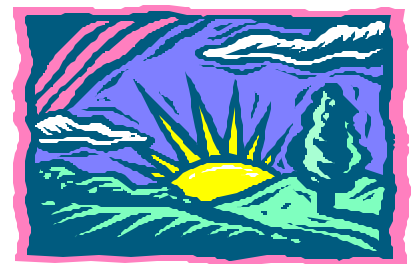
I am fortunate in that I live in a peaceful and serene setting, perfect for reflection. The field in front of my home has a large boulder perfect for this purpose, and I use it often. The other day, my anniversary, I took some time for me and found myself on "the rock" reflecting on where I had been, where I was, and where I was going. My thoughts returned me to the self induced misery I chose to live in those many years ago, including my first few years in Al-Anon. Then to the ensuing years that taught me to consciously, daily, choose an attitude of joy and gratitude as the way I wish to live my life today. My thoughts wandered to the future, what changes do I want and need to choose

to fully develop my potential.

So what did I learn from this? I learned how much I appreciate all of you whose paths have crossed and intertwined with mine over these years. How much I look forward to meeting those whose paths I have yet to cross, but anxiously await because I know you have something very special to share with me. How much I will continue to need your help which supports me as I continue along the path my Higher Power has chosen for me. What a wonderful path it is thanks to all of you!!

Yours In Service,

Tim S.



Russia/Ukraine

All is quiet on the Russian and Ukrainian 'adopted group' fronts. We have adopted three groups - one in Duminichy, Russia; one in Odessa, Ukraine; and one in Berezhovsky, Russia. We received a Christmas card from the Duminichy group, but that was before they would have received the literature pack we sent to each group just before Christmas. With each pack was a note from our Area wishing the group a Merry Christmas and peace and serenity in the New Year.

I will be writing a letter to each group in the near future and would like to enlist your help. In some of the letters we have received, the groups ask about us and how we are doing, and all I have been able to do is speak from my own experience. I think we can strengthen the bonds between our groups if they heard from someone other than me.

Here's a thought for doing some personal long-distance twelfth step work without leaving home. How about taking a mini-meeting to our groups in Russia and Ukraine.

How about reaching out a few thousand miles and sharing some of YOUR experiences, strengths, and hopes with our extended Al-Anon family members. Write to me via the Alagram or e-mail me [russian@nj-al-anon.org] a brief note and I will have it translated and forward it to them. All replies will be translated and forwarded to you by way of the Alagram.

You never know how much you might help someone who is suffering and hears what they need in what you write. You might want to consider suggesting a few topics that have been most helpful to you. Every two or three months we could pick one, a few of you could send me your brief comments on that topic, and I would forward them as part of a letter to each of the groups. Who knows? This could develop into something really good, for them and for you. Without your help, however, this will 'never fly', and we'll never know what we missed because we didn't try.

George K. . Russian Group Coordinator

WEB SITE NEWS

There's a new page to help people get in touch with their Assembly members. The '**Contacts**' page lists the positions in the Assembly and anyone can send an Assembly-person an e-mail by clicking on the position title. The Assembly members' anonymity is protected as the e-mail messages are re-routed behind the scenes to the real addresses. To see this page visit:

Http://nj-al-anon.org/contacts.htm

In the future, I'd like to see this concept extended to include the District Representatives. I will be suggesting this to the AWSC for inclusion on the agenda for the next Assembly meeting. Ultimately, I would like to see the Group Representatives on this page also. It will make communications between groups and between groups and their district reps so much easier. If you ever tried to get in touch with someone you've met in the program, you know what I mean.

Under '**EVENTS**' section, there are two new pages. One is for the South Jersey Information Service's Workshop and another for a Talent Show. For details see **http://nj-al-anon.org/index.htm**

If your group is planning an anniversary meeting and would like to have it posted on the web, just send a message to **WebMaster@nj-al-anon.org**

NJ Assembly, Information Service Offices and World Service Office are all funded by donations from Al-Anon Groups and members. Literature Distribution Centers and WSO also make a small profit from the sale of Literature and books. You can help by supporting these program service arms with your time, talent, purchases and personal donations.

We're More than Meeting Books

Information Services

Information Services is a very important service arm in Al-Anon. When you first call seeking help, your call is directed to the Information Service answering bureau. For most of us, that's the first friendly voice that we hear in Al-Anon.

In New Jersey, we have two information services and renting the office space, paying for the phone service and keeping staff on hand is a very expensive operation. Like the Assembly, information service is funded by donations from the groups, but unlike the Assembly, they also have another source of funding; the literature depots maintained by each information service. **So, remember, when you order literature, make sure that you place your order with your local LDC.** It's the same price as ordering from World Service, but it will go a long way to keeping your service arms in this state afloat.

Send your Literature order to one of the two following addresses:

NORTH JERSEY

NJIS Literature Depot
73 S. Fullerton Ave, 2nd. Flr.
Montclair, NJ 07042
(973) 744-8686

SOUTH JERSEY

SJIS Literature Depot
116 White Horse Pike, Suite 1B
Haddon Heights, NJ 08035
(856) 547-0855

We owe our Delegate, **Karen P.** a great big hug and a bigger "Thank You" for representing us at the annual Conference. Karen our Trusted Servant takes a week out of her life to travel to Virginia Beach, where Al-Anon's World Service Office is located. In the next Ala-Gram, Karen will report to us about some of the decisions that were made, and perhaps give us a glimpse of what it is like to meet and work with Al-Anon delegates from around the country. So, Karen, here it is:

**THANK YOU
KAREN**



FROM THE TREASURER

ATTENTION: NEW MAILING ADDRESS FOR ASSEMBLY

N.J. AREA ASSEMBLY
518-7 OLD POST ROAD #355
EDISON, NJ 08817-4683

This new address will assure that your donation will be deposited within a 30 to 45 day window. The mail will be forwarded to myself (the Treasurer) once a month, and I will make the deposit as soon as I possibly can. Hope this helps somewhat with the checks being cleared sooner. Any questions, contact me through the WEB SITE at www.nj-al-anon.org/contacts.htm

In service,
Nancy

*Please send all
correspondance
and articles to:*

*through our
WEB page:
www.
nj-al-anon.org*



GROUP CONTRIBUTION COUPON

Please send all contributions to: New Jersey Area Assembly
518-7 Old Post Road #355
Edison, NJ 08817-4683

Group Name: _____

Town: _____

Meeting Day: _____

WSO-ID (if known) _____

Contribution: \$ _____

Individual Subscriptions to the Alagram are now available as follows:

Individual: one copy, 3 time a year for one year, \$3.00_____

5 copies of each issue to one address 3 times a year for one year \$10.00_____

Name_____

Address_____ Amount enclosed \$_____

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