



THE RAP

Reaching Al-Anon People

February 2016

The Al-Anon/Alateen Newsletter of the Delaware Valley

Step Two

Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

Tradition Two

For our group purpose there is but one authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants—they do not govern.

Concept Two

The Al-Anon Family Groups have delegated complete administrative and operational authority to their Conference and its service arms.

Al-Anon is not allied with any sect, denomination, political entity, organization, or institution; does not engage in any controversy; neither endorses nor opposes any cause. There are no dues for membership. Al-Anon is self-supporting through its own voluntary contributions.

Al-Anon has but one purpose: to help families of alcoholics. We do this by practicing the Twelve Steps, by welcoming and giving comfort to families of alcoholics, and by giving understanding and encouragement to the alcoholic.

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Getting Off the Merry-Go-Round

I am no longer filled with anger and resentment. When my mother died, I did the grief work and was pleased with myself for how well I was doing under the circumstances. Dad's health began to deteriorate three years later, and familiar feelings of anxiety and abandonment returned. As a perfectionist attempting to be in control, I had boxed my earlier grief in that three year period thinking, "Now I'm *done* with that!" Grieving had been messy and was unwelcome. Without warning, it resurfaced in one great wave of misery.

At the time, I was in a toxic work environment. While commending myself for coping with everything, I happened to notice that my hair had been thinning over a month or so. This advanced to patches of it falling out, and I knew that my coping measures were not working. I had to ask for help. I found a dermatologist and a nurse psychotherapist. When the therapist observed that I was "choking on my anger", I felt furious and resentful. I also came to learn that I had grown up in a family affected by alcoholism. I became angrier and submerged in denial. I **was** choking on my anger and had pushed these feelings down and deep. Anger was not nice. This was a message I absorbed as a child.

Acknowledging and feeling anger, at last, even in small bursts, was frightening. If I really let loose and release it all, will I be able to stop? Will I be out of control? Does it mean I'm going crazy? The first angry sessions were tearful and intense, but once the feelings were released, calmness moved in to replace them. It was my first experience of serenity. The undercurrent of anxiety that I carried for years had vanished. Something had shifted.

Shortly afterwards I was introduced to Al-Anon. As I recognized that I, too, had been on that merry-go-round that is alcoholism, the missing pieces of my personal life puzzle began to make sense. For most of my life, I hadn't felt as though I belonged. In Al-Anon, I have found compassionate sponsors and friends who nurture growth in the program and accept me as I am. I like the person I am becoming and forgive myself for exaggerated self-criticism. My higher power is in control, and I belong in Al-Anon.

-Pam R.

A publication of... AISDV

Al-Anon Information Service of the Delaware Valley

aisdv.org • 4021 Walnut Street Philadelphia PA • rap@aisdv.org • 215-222-5244 (voicemail)

AL-ANON NEWS AND EVENTS

Al-Anon's 65th Anniversary Banquet

Saturday April 16, 2016

WSO Open House & Tours
from 1:00 to 3:00
Banquet Begins at 6:00 PM

*Speaker: Mary R. from
Philadelphia*

Wyndham Virginia Beach,
Oceanfront
5700 Atlantic Avenue Virginia Beach

For more information:
<http://www.al-anon.org/members/pdf/65thAnnivOrderForm.pdf>

New Time for Sunday Serenity Meeting in Lansdowne!

2:00 to 3:00 pm

*Still at The Garden Club
82 N. Lansdowne Avenue
Side Entrance off Stratford Avenue*

Come on out and join us!

Al-Anon's 44th Annual PA Convention

June 3-5, 2016
Susquehanna University
Selinsgrove, PA

*Workshops, Speakers, Fun,
Games, Dancing, Lots of
Fellowship!*

*\$135 includes Registration,
Room and 4 meals!
Deadline to Register: May 7, 2016*

Flyer and Registration Form:
<http://aisdv.org/flyers/44thPAAFGflyerregistration.pdf>

The Annual PA Assembly

State Business Meeting for Group
Representatives

**Harrisburg Hilton
August 19-21, 2016**

Registration Deadline: July 19th

**Make sure your group has
representation at this
important business meeting!**

Subscribe to the RAP!

Text or e-mail your name, group
name and phone number* to
rap@aisdv.org or 267-535-0945.

E-mail subscriptions are free.
Ask about U.S. mail subscriptions.

*Last initial, phone # and group name are optional.

*Want to Learn about More Events
and Opportunities for Service?*

Go to aisdv.org and click on
Calendar

To Sign Up for Regular E-Mails:

Go to aisdv.org and click on
Announcements then click on
Sign Up for AISDV Announcements

Want to Do Some Important Service Work?

*Al-Anon Members Needed to
Chaperone Alateen Events!*

Contact Sue at alateen@aisdv.org
for details!

Tell her you want to become an AMIAS*
*Al-Anon Member Involved in
Alateen Service

**Can you think of three different ways Al-Anon has helped
you this month? ...this week? ...today?**

*Help us get the message out to those still struggling
who don't know that Al-Anon can help!*

Consider making a contribution to AISDV today.
Al-Anon Information Service of the Delaware Valley

*Contributions go towards advertisements, public service
announcements and towards literature used at treatment
facilities, sent to doctors and distributed at
public outreach events.*

Send your check to AISDV 4021 Walnut Street Philadelphia, PA 19104

Upcoming Anniversaries and Special Meetings

Third Annual District One Cookie Swap

Bring a Dozen Cookies divided up into
three bags to swap.

Topic: God As I Understand Him
All Saints Church

1811 Loney Street, Philadelphia, PA
Monday, February 1st 7:30 PM

NEW MONTHLY WRITING MEETING !!!

“Let It Begin With Me”

Saturday, Feb 13th 10 AM to 12 Noon
Meets Once a Month

8419 Germantown Avenue, Philadelphia
3rd Floor (no elevator)

Contact Ruth @ 215-260-1015 or @
relaxwithruth@gmail.com

*Meet with like-minded people
interested in writing their stories or
writing for the RAP, the Forum or the
new daily reader!*

Do You Want to be a Speaker at the Women’s Prison?

Contact Dawn at
district1dawn@verizon.net for more info.
This is a great opportunity for service and
to carry the message to those who most
need it!

District 4 and 5 Workshop Planning Meeting

Lima Methodist Church
209 N. Middletown Road, Media, PA
Saturday, February 13th 1:30 PM &
Saturday, March 12th 1:30 PM

From Ghosts to Angels

When I entered the rooms of Al-Anon two years ago, I thought I was just going to learn how to manage my present life situation, living with an alcoholic. Little did I know that the more I dug through the hardened debris of my life, the more "ghosts" would show up. As these ghosts kindly stepped aside to allow me to clearly see myself, I could then focus on the only person I am capable of analyzing. To fully understand where I am today, I am finally brave enough to look back. Through those doors of my past, I can finally see that little girl, who felt alone, a common story for all souls from dysfunctional families. I can still see and feel the pain within our home from parents who were "rage-aholics," and in the midst of that wake, were four confused little children. By the time the fifth child was born, the separation and confusion were already set. There was no way that child could have thrived, and he ended his life at an early age. By the time the second, third, then fourth victim of self-abuse fell to despair, I had pretty well hardened myself to acceptance of this human condition.

As I look back, I am astounded how strong I really was, and in my numbness, I never thought of calling to God to help. But now, as I can see more clearly, I know where the source of that strength came from. Many times we fail to recognize His power, and His Graces, because it comes in subtle doses. There are many beautiful stories that describe these mystical experiences, such as "Footprints in the Sand", and "The Boat", and I am grateful to recognize that I have had them. I can also say with much gratitude that I have learned to forgive my parents, my siblings, and all those whose pain I took on. This is such a great relief, as it was really too much to bear. I was making good headway in forgiveness, as I had made it my mission these past few years. However, I still needed more tools to finally see myself, and Al-Anon filled in the missing pieces. I never understood the power of the 12 step program, until Al-Anon. This is the gift I have been praying for—the ability to learn how to take care of myself. Those ghosts of my past can finally rest, and in many ways, as my Spirituality deepens, I see them as Angels.

-Rebecca G.

Volunteers Needed for the Following Positions at AISDV!

Assistant Secretary: Takes notes and during AISDV meetings in the secretary's absence and documents the minutes of the meeting. Assumes the position of secretary after two years of service. Assists with making copies of minutes and other documents. Notifies groups of the place and time of the next mtg. Keeps an up-to-date list of all groups in AISDV.

Assistant Treasurer: Assists the treasurer with creating the annual budget proposal. Assumes the position

of treasurer after 2 years of service. Assumes the duties of treasurer in the treasurer's absence, including recording transactions, making deposits and writing checks for approved expenses. Prepares and sends out the annual appeal letter to all groups in AISDV.

Archives Coordinator: Responsible for the operation, maintenance and modification of the AISDV Archives. Transports and displays archives at special events. Reports on the status of the archives at the AISDV meetings.

Contact Sherida for details at chair@aisdv.org

Group/Individual Donations

World Service Office

Payable to/Mail to: AFG Inc.
1600 Corporate Landing Parkway
Virginia Beach, VA 23454-5617

PA/State

Payable to: PA A Assembly
Mail to: Stephanie M.
5594 Fairway Dr W
Fayetteville, PA 17222

**Al-Anon Information Service of
the Delaware Valley**

Payable to/Mail to: AISDV
4021 Walnut Street
Philadelphia, PA 19104

Alateens/NOMAAC

Payable to: NOMAAC
Mail to: Scott L.
5320 Little Gap Road
Kunkletown, PA 18058

**Please write your Group Name
and WSO ID# on all checks
and include a return address
on the envelope.**

*Many thanks to Ruth, Pam
and Rebecca and "Let It
Begin With Me," the new Al-
Anon Writing Group, for
making this issue possible!*

*Giving Voice to Our Experience,
Strength and Hope*

"It's a no brainer," I thought putting together two favorite things I love to do—writing and Al-Anon. Needing a new direction in my life, I took the idea into meditation and waited for the familiar nudge from higher power, the go-ahead signal that says, "put the idea into action." I made up a flyer, asked my sponsor and Al-Anon members what steps I needed to take to make the group happen. I was following the familiar inner prompting a way that higher power often gets my attention. Excited, I sent the flyer to AISDV, Al-Anon Information Service of the Delaware Valley. Almost instantly, the excitement was replaced by familiar childhood feelings, anxiety and fear; I was reliving memories, waiting for people to come to my birthday party. Would anyone come? Childhood memories were transferred to the unformed Al-Anon writing group. The anxiety and fear prevailed. I decided I had made a mistake and needed to cancel the forming of an Al-Anon writing group in Philadelphia, overriding the go-ahead nudge from higher power and the encouragement from other Al-Anon members. I opened my computer to email AISDV to ask them to cancel the announcement that said, "Come together with like-minded people and write your story," but I was too late. To my dismay, the flyer had already been sent to Al-Anon members and posted on the AISDV website. There was nothing to do but trust I was going in the right direction and that people would come to the group. I didn't have to wait long. Within hours, I received my first email from an Al-Anon member. "I am interested in coming to the group," then another email and another, all supporting the idea of an Al-Anon writing group.

Three months later, I am sitting in the first writing group with seven other people writing a draft of this article. We opened the writing group this morning with the Serenity Prayer and read the Al-Anon Traditions. Keeping the Al-Anon philosophy strong and present, we are sharing our creativity and giving voice to our experience, strength and hope in Philadelphia's 2016 Al-Anon writing group.

Contact: relaxwithruth@gmail.com for further information on the Philadelphia Al-Anon writing group or check it out on the AISDV website!

-Ruth H. Philadelphia, PA

Need Directories???

Contact Joe T. at
610-522-1359
or e-mail him at
directory@aisdv.org
for more information

Write for The Rap!

It's your newsletter!
Send your contributions,
concerns, comments and
event notifications to:

rap@aisdv.org
or The RAP c/o AISDV
4021 Walnut Street
Philadelphia, PA 19104
(or to get a free copy of the
Rap sent to your group)

Get Involved!!!

The next AISDV
Meeting is
Thurs, Mar 17th @
7:30
The Reformed Church
of the Ascension
1700 W. Main Street
Norristown, PA

**Need to find a
meeting???**

Go to aisdv.org and
click on Meetings