

Lifeline

CONNECTICUT AREA 7 NEWSLETTER FOR AL-ANON & ALATEEN

November
2016

Motion & Voting Procedures
Sponsorship Survey

“I guess I could try?”

When I first started Al-Anon I heard certain phrases repeated over and over at assorted meetings from different members. At the time my thought process couldn't get past their surface meanings. *One day at a time* — obviously, you can't have two days at a time! *Think* — isn't that what I am always doing? And so it went. Initially the Slogans and Steps did not apply to my broken universe.

Fortunately at those meetings I also heard *Keep Coming*. It sounded so welcoming and encouraging that I did. *Stick with the winners* — they had something that I craved. *Three or more meetings a week if you want to grow* — I tried it and it worked. I found I was feeling better most of the time.

As the weeks and months passed my perception expanded. The Slogans and Steps became meaningful. I was finally seeing past their basic definitions. I began to realize they may have some actual value for me. Maybe I could apply them to my everyday life?

Don't say no if you want to grow — that was another suggestion I heard often. I spent a great deal of time and energy avoiding being asked. I was ready with prepared responses as to why it was impossible for me to volunteer for anything.

That strategy worked well until a member called and asked me to take on a service position. My mouth opened to say “I wish I could, but...” when I realized I couldn't complete the sentence. I had the background, experience, and the knowhow to do the task. There was no reason not to say yes. So instead I answered, “I guess I could try?”

From that moment on I found myself sticking with the winners and thinking constructively about solutions instead of just surviving. I discovered that I can give back to the program that gave me back my life. I realized I had the tools the meetings and members had given to me.

Today I realize that there are some service positions that I can't do successfully but there are many I can. My Higher Power will guide my growth and show me when and where I should give back to this wonderful program and to all the winners who make it work.

— A grateful member

NOVEMBER

• **Tues. AM Early Birds AFG**

51st Anniversary meeting
Tuesday, November 8, 2016
10 am Speakers
11:30 am Lunch & Raffle
North Haven Congregational Church
28 Church St., North Haven

• **Simsbury AFG**

27th Anniversary meeting
Friday, November 11, 2016
6 pm Food & Fellowship
7 pm Speakers & Raffle
St. Alban's Episcopal Church
197 Bushy Hill Rd., Simsbury

• **Let it Begin With Me AFG**

27th Anniversary meeting
Saturday, November 12, 2016
10 am Food & Fellowship
10:30 am Speakers & Raffle
Church of the Redeemer, UCC
185 Cold Spring St., New Haven

• **Trumbull Thursday Night**

48th Anniversary meeting
Saturday, November 12, 2016
6 pm Food & Fellowship
7:30 pm Speakers & Raffle
Trinity Episcopal Church
1734 Huntington Turnpike, Trumbull

• **Sunday Night Old Lyme AFG**

46th Anniversary meeting
Sunday, November 13, 2016
6:30 pm Potluck
7 pm Speakers & Raffle
St. Anne's Church
Route. 156, Old Lyme

• **Monday Morning Plainville**

46th Anniversary meeting
Monday, November 14, 2016
9:30 am Coffee
10 am Speakers
Lunch & Raffle to follow
Plainville Congregational Church
130 West Main St.,
Plainville

• **Saturday Evening Enfield**

48th Anniversary meeting
Saturday, November 19, 2016
6:30 pm Food & Fellowship
7 pm Speakers & Raffle
Holy Family Church
23 Simon Rd., Enfield

• **Sunday Night Milford**

6th Anniversary meeting
Sunday, November 20, 2016
5:30 pm Food & Fellowship
6 pm Speakers & Raffle
Woodmont United Church of Christ
1000 New Haven Avenue, Milford

• **Sunday Night Waterbury**

45th Anniversary meeting
Sunday, November 27, 2016
(Snow date December 4)
5:30 pm Potluck & Fellowship
6:30 pm Speakers & Raffle
Christ Episcopal Church
2030 East Main St., Waterbury

SPECIAL EVENTS

- **CSCYPAA XXXI** with Al-Anon and Alateen participation
The CT State Conference of Young People in AA

November 25-27, 2016

Radisson Hotel
100 Berlin Rd., Cromwell
Online registration at CT-AA.org

- **CT AFG Convention**

Healing Our Hearts
March 31-April 2, 2017
Radisson Hotel
100 Berlin Rd., Cromwell



CT AFG Sponsorship Survey Findings October 2016

In preparation for the **Y Sponsorship Workshop** the Program Committee sent out a survey on sponsorship. The survey results helped the committee to develop workshop topics that would be relevant to our member's needs.

The surveys were collected from June through September 2016. Approximately half were collected as paper surveys at the CT AFG Spring Assembly in June. The remainder were submitted online through the CT Al-Anon website (www.ctalanon.org).

A total of 106 Al-Anon members participated. We collected 47 surveys from Sponsors, 69 surveys from Sponsees, and 34 surveys from members who do not currently have a Sponsor. (Most Sponsors filled out both the Sponsor and Sponsee sections of the survey.)

This was a decidedly unscientific survey. We asked for short, unscripted responses. The top answers listed here represent the Program Committee's best efforts to interpret the results. The intent in presenting the survey responses here is to share the spirit of the experience, strength and hope that our membership so generously offered.

Thank you to all the members who contributed their service: the survey participants; committee members; speakers; and facilitators. Service makes recovery possible.

Respectfully submitted,

Bob K., Bruce G., Mary Ellen S., and Ray R., Program Committee

Section I: AFG SPONSORS

A SURVEY OF 47

How long have you been an An-Anon member?

- The average Sponsor has been in Al-Anon for 18.7 years.

How long had you been an Al-Anon member before you became a Sponsor?

- The average Sponsor had been in Al-Anon 4.8 years before becoming a Sponsor.

What is the average time in minutes you spend communicating with your Sponsee?

- The average Sponsor communicates with his/her Sponsee for 67 minutes per week; the time ranged from 30 – 120 minutes for most sponsors.

Did you discuss your mutual expectations with your Sponsee early in the relationship?

- Yes – 83%
- No – 17%

If yes to the question above, share one expectation discussed?

- We need to communicate (call or meet) regularly
- We need to work on the Steps/Traditions
- Principles first: honesty, avoid advice giving, mutual responsibilities established
- Meetings are being attended

What is one aspect of being an Al-Anon Sponsor you enjoy?

- The relationship of friendship, respect and love without enabling

- Furthering my recovery
- Sharing experience, strength and hope

What is one challenging aspect of being an Al-Anon Sponsor?

- Listening without judgement or advice giving. Principles above personalities
- Separation: Sponsee leaving or not staying connected
- Scheduling conflicts or restraints
- Detachment with love, and patience with the Sponsee's journey

As a Sponsor, please share a guiding principle that makes your relationship work.

- I am not a teacher or authority figure. Mutual respect for each other.
- Honesty
- Listening

When asked to be a Sponsor, how did you decide?

- It was automatic, I just said "Yes"
- I considered my own program and believed it would be a good match
- I considered my time commitment
- I considered my Sponsee's needs/commitment
- I discussed it with my Sponsor

Section II: AFG SPONSEES

A SURVEY OF 69

How long have you been an Al-Anon member?

- The average Sponsee has been in Al-Anon for 14.6 years.

How long were you attending meetings before you asked someone to be your Sponsor?

- The average Sponsee attended meetings for 1.3 years before getting a Sponsor; the time ranged from a few weeks to 2 years for most Sponsees.

As a Sponsee, how many times a week do you connect with your Sponsor? (email, text, in-person, phone, etc.)

- The majority of Sponsees communicate 1-2 times per week; 1 in 5 communicate more often; 1 in 5 communicate less often.

As a Sponsee, what was your main motivation in getting a Sponsor?

- Recovery. I wanted to get better and keep growing
- I needed help, guidance and sharing. I didn't want to be alone
- I wanted to work the 12 Steps

As a Sponsee, why did you chose your Sponsor?

- Recovery, I wanted what they had
- I related to their sharing at a meeting
- I felt that he/she had a strong program
- Connection, I had a feeling of trust and understanding

What has been one of the greatest benefits of being a Sponsee?

- Relationship. Relief from isolation. Friendship, love, understanding and trust
- Support from Sponsor. Encouragement, potential, feedback, perspective and guidance
- Growth and recovery
- Step work

As a Sponsee: "I make the Sponsorship relationship work by..."

- Calling or meeting regularly
- Sharing my honesty, feelings, trust and love
- Listening and accepting guidance
- Working the program with Step work, CAL

As a Sponsee, how many Sponsors have you had?

- On average: half had 1 Sponsor; the other half had 3 Sponsors

As a Sponsee, if you have had more than one Sponsor why did you change?

- Sponsee ended the relationship because it was no longer working
- Either party moved
- Either party became ill or died
- Scheduling conflicts

Section III: AFG UNSPONSORED Members

A SURVEY OF 34

How long have you been an Al-Anon member?

- The average unsponsored member has been in Al-Anon for 13.6 years; just under half have been in the fellowship 5 years or less.

For members without a Sponsor presently, have you had one in the past?

- Yes – 56%
- No – 44%

If you do not have a Sponsor presently, are you actively looking for one?

- Yes – 47%
- No – 53%

If you ARE actively looking for a Sponsor, what is one way you hope to benefit?

- To work the Steps and the Al-Anon program
- To get support, perspective and a close relationship
- To get accountability

If you are NOT actively looking for a Sponsor is there a reason why?

- Not interested
- Still looking, haven't found the right person yet
- Concerned about a Sponsor being controlling
- I rely on Al-Anon friends instead of a Sponsor

Do you have any concerns about choosing a Sponsor?

- Fit: Finding someone I am comfortable with
- I have no concerns about choosing a Sponsor at this time
- Fear: I am afraid of rejection or that it won't work out
- Time: Finding a Sponsor who has the time to work with me

Overall, what is one way Al-Anon has helped you?

- Fellowship: Breaking isolation and creating friendships
- Serenity and a more joyful life
- Detachment: I can let go
- Confidence and courage
- Learning to focus on myself and love myself

Pearls of wisdom from the Y Sponsorship Workshop

Self Care is not Selfish!

One of the highlights that I took back from the fabulous Y Sponsorship Workshop was the concept *Self care is not selfish!* In order to sponsor others effectively and lovingly, we need to first and foremost take care of ourselves. This can mean: not answering the phone when we are not fit to listen well; enter into a pre-agreed contract with the Sponsee about your style of sponsorship; and terminating the contract if one side is unable to keep up their end. The Sponsors spoke with real backbone and determination. Their commitment to the principles of the program was outstanding. They will not enable, pity, manipulate, control, manage or advise their Sponsees. The workshop had an atmosphere of care and love that was felt in the excellent programs, speakers, raffle items, members, set up and refreshments. Thanks to you all!

— June C.

THANK YOU to all the groups and individuals who contributed CAL for the raffle at the Y Sponsorship Workshop.

— Gratefully, Donna C., Workshop Raffle Chair

Reflections from a DR

Little did I realize three years ago how rewarding being District Representative for District 4 would be. It is truly bittersweet to see my term end, but I know it is time to move on to another service position. I am not sure what that is going to be yet, but it will be doing something because I know how critical service is to my recovery.

Here are a few highlights of my journey as DR...

- **Progress not perfection:** The first few District meetings were challenging but I learned I don't have to be perfect. What a huge relief! I had spent a good portion of my life trying to be perfect so this revelation was an important breakthrough for me.
- **Learning Together:** As a District we were all new in our positions so we all had to learn to work together and learn together.
- **Ask for Help:** The first thing I did when I was elected DR was to ask someone I trusted and who had lots of experience to be my Service Sponsor! This has blessed me immensely with a very dear friend — a benefit I hope to keep for a lifetime!
- **Attend Different Meetings:** As DR I attended as many meetings and anniversaries in my District as I could. Initially I would be in a room full of people I didn't know. Thanks to service I have gotten to know lots of people and it's a great feeling!

Signing up for a 3-year service commitment was testing at first. Someone predicted that my first year would be the toughest because I'd be learning. The second year everything would fall into place. By the third year everything would be running like clockwork. That was so true for me! Now I'm surprised by how quickly it has all gone by.

I am so grateful to my District 4 for putting their trust in me!

— Love-in-Service, Kim G., DR, District 4

motion PROCEDURES

WHAT IS A MOTION

A motion is a written proposal, accepted by the Chair and decided upon by the Group.

A Thought Force may be used to gather information, and a Task Force can create the process.

FRAMING

Framing is done in the spirit of the Knowledge-Based Decision Making (KBDM) process and allows for open communication between leadership and membership; dialogue before deliberation; access to full information; existence in a culture of trust; increase confidence in the competency of our partners.

It should be framed and phrased in a simple and clear way to allow for open communication and dialogue, and to facilitate the ability of the meeting to make a decision.

The motion comes out of a committee such as the AWSC, and the person doing the framing can present the motion.

HOW IT WORKS

The KBDM process is used before the motion is presented to the Assembly.

The Chair decides on the amount of time to be devoted to the discussion, and asks for consensus to proceed with the motion.

DISCUSSION

- 2 minutes at the mic and a one-time discussion/motion.
- If your opinion has been stated do not come to the mic again.
- No applause during the discussion.
- Chair gives an appropriate amount of time for discussion.
- Members with Voice may go to the mic.
- One motion discussed at a time.

ADDITIONAL PROCEDURES

- **Proceed** with motion.
- **Continue Discussion** now, or after we get more information. Voted on by a show of hands.
- **Discontinue Action**
- **Amendment** – with KBDM discussion takes place before the motion comes to the floor. Sometimes a word change, addition or subtraction is needed for clarity.
- **Tabling** – Needs motion and second. Not debatable. Needs substantial unanimity to pass. If passed – rescheduled at the discretion of the Chair
- **Calling the Question** – made in order at mic. Needs second. Not debatable. Needs 2/3 vote, show of hands. If passed – no more discussion, proceed directly to the vote.
- **Consensus** – Chair asks for a show of hands – Yes or No.
- **Withdraw Motion** – Originator and second agree to withdraw. No vote required.

WHO HAS VOICE ONLY

- **AWSC Meeting:** Alternate DR – when DR is present, Past Delegates, *invited* Guests
- **Assembly:** Delegate and Alternate, Area Officers, DRs and Alternates, 3-year Coordinators, Al-Anon Convention Chair, Past Delegates, Guests invited to address a specific issue.

WHO HAS VOICE AND VOTE

- **AWSC Meeting:** Delegate, Area Officers, DRs or Alternate if DR is not present, 3-year Coordinators, Al-Anon Convention Chair
- **Assembly:** GR or Alternate GR or another member of the group if GR and Alternate GR are not present – who will bring a Proxy to be presented to the Area Secretary upon arrival at the Assembly.

voting PROCEDURES

VOTING PROCEDURES FOR ALL SUBSTANTIVE MATTERS

- Decided at beginning of AWSC and Assembly if requiring 2/3 vote for substantial unanimity.
- Motion read or projected on the screen.
- Chair reads motion.
- Asks for second.
- Asks if there is any discussion on motion as presented. If so, the motions procedures for discussion are followed.
- Copy of motion goes to Secretary, who reads the motion and the origin.
- Voting procedure reviewed.
- Chair calls for the vote.
- Members vote.

ASSEMBLY ELECTION VOTING PROCEDURES

WHEN: Every 3 years.

WHY: Elect Delegate, Alternate Delegate, Area Chair, Secretary, Treasurer.

WHO VOTES: Current GRs.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO STAND FOR POSITION: DRs who will have completed a 3-year term and past DRs who have completed a 3-year term and who are currently active at the Area level.

METHOD OF VOTE

- Delegate and Alternate Delegate: Elected by 2/3 vote.
- Assembly Officers: Chair, Secretary, Treasurer: Elected by majority vote.
- Paper and pencils provided.
- Districts polled to count number of GRs voting in each district.
- Duties of the Delegate are read.
- Chair asks each qualified person present if they are willing to serve for the 3-year term.
- Candidate's names are placed on an electronic spreadsheet.
- Each candidate gives brief 3-minute service resume of themselves.
- DRs will collect, verify number of votes, count ballots.
- Area Secretary will call each district DR for numbers.
- Votes placed on spreadsheets.
- First to receive 2/3 vote for Delegate is elected.
- If no election occurs—after the third ballot, name is drawn from the hat.
- Alternate Delegate: Elected using same procedure.
- Voting procedure repeated for the Area Officers: the Chair, Secretary, Treasurer: Elected by majority vote.