

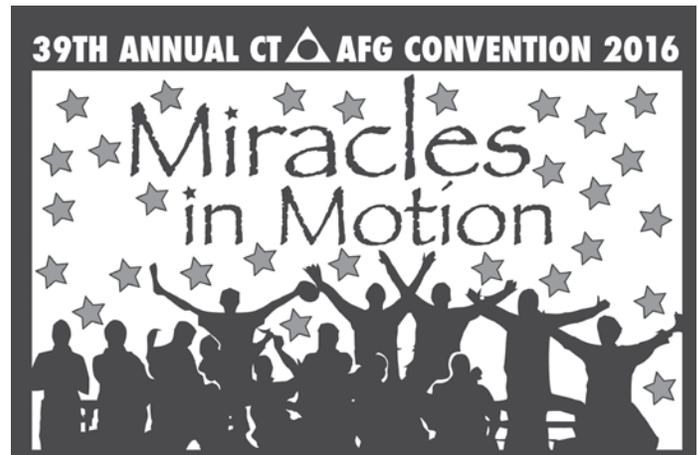
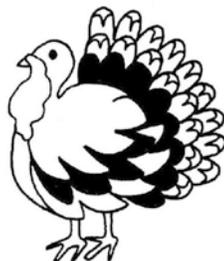
Anniversary Meetings

November 2015

- **Monday Night New Haven Meeting**
Sunday, November 8, 2015
(Please note we moved our celebration to a Sunday and a neighboring site for space)
2 p.m. Food and Fellowship; 3 p.m. Speakers and Raffle
60th Anniversary Meeting
Old Stone Church
251 Main St., East Haven (Easy access from I-95)
- **AFG Public Outreach Service Meeting**
Thursday, November 12, 2015
7:00-9:00 p.m. Speakers, refreshments and fellowship
4th Anniversary Meeting
Martin Center at Silver Hill Hospital
208 Valley Road, New Canaan
- **Let It Begin With Me Meeting**
Saturday, November 14, 2015
10:00 a.m. Food, raffle and fellowship; 10:30 a.m. Speakers
26th Anniversary Meeting
Church of the Redeemer UCC
185 Cold Spring St., New Haven
- **Attitude of Gratitude Meeting**
Saturday, November 14, 2015
6:00 p.m. Food and fellowship; 7:30 p.m. Speakers, raffle
47th Anniversary Meeting
Trinity Episcopal Church
1734 Huntington Turnpike, Trumbull
- **Sunday Night Old Lyme Al-Anon Meeting**
Sunday, November 15, 2015
6:30 p.m. Potluck and fellowship; 7 p.m. Speakers, Raffle
45th Anniversary Meeting
St. Anne's Church
Route 156, Old Lyme
- **Sunday Night Courage to Change Meeting**
Sunday, November 29, 2015
6 p.m. Dinner buffet and fellowship;
7 p.m. Speakers; 8 p.m. Raffle
15th Anniversary Meeting
St. Thomas the Apostle Church in the Fellowship Hall
872 Farmington Ave., West Hartford

I give thanks to my Higher Power for
Lois W. and her "kitchen meetings"
which gave birth to Al-Anon.

Best wishes for a Happy Thanksgiving!
— Margaret G., District 4, Lifeline Coordinator
lifeline@ctalanon.org



Miracles in Motion 39th Annual CT AFG Convention

April 1-3, 2016

CROWNE PLAZA HOTEL

100 Berlin Rd., Cromwell, CT 06413

**WITH AL-ANON, ALATEEN
AND AA PARTICIPATION**

Information and online registration:

www.ctalanon.org

Hotel Reservations:

Call 860-635-2000 or 888-233-9527

Hotel Code "XGQ"

Registration forms will be available sometime in November, 2015.

Announcements

- **Meeting by the Sea**
Wednesdays, 6:00-7:00 p.m.
Oceanside Recovery
30 West Main St., Niantic (Next to Charlie's)
This new Step meeting is in the East Lyme/Niantic area. They focus on one Step for the entire month using conference approved literature.
- **CSCYPAA XXX**
Road of Happy Destiny
November 27-29, 2015 (Friday-Sunday)
Crowne Plaza Hotel
100 Berlin Road, Cromwell
Awesome speakers, meetings with people just like you, lots of dancing, amazing spiritual experiences, and great sober all-night partying. Alcoholics Anonymous event with Al-Anon and Alateen participation. For more info email cscypaa@ct-aa.org.

Editor's Note: November is the 11th month of the year and a time for reflection on Step 11. Please consider contributing your thoughts on Step 12 for the December "Lifeline" and Step 1 for the January issue.

Step 11

Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.

How I work Step 11

During my time in Al-Anon I have worked hard to improve my conscious contact with my Higher Power. But I was never as successful as I wanted to be. I always wanted more.

A couple of years ago I attended an Al-Anon convention and noticed a meditation/journaling workshop. If you are anything like me, the word "journaling" was an instant turnoff. I knew where this workshop was going and I wasn't going there. I didn't have time for journaling, I was too busy, I don't like writing, and it sounded like a huge commitment that might tie me down or tie me up. So where did I end up? At the journaling workshop of course.

The workshop leader was welcoming and the room was peaceful. Each participant was given a journal and a pen. The workshop leader shared what she called a "Meditation Ritual" in which she writes down what is going on with her today, waits for a response, and writes it down. She added that she sometimes relies on one of Al-Anon's daily readers to help to elicit a reply.

We were invited to write what we were

thinking about, wait for a response, and then write that down. The environment was very quiet. I wrote down what I wanted my Higher Power to know and was very moved when I got a response. We were invited to share what we'd written with the group if we wanted to, and I surprised myself by sharing.

I have been journaling every day since that AFG convention workshop and I always get a response. My conscious contact with my Higher Power has improved exponentially as has my understanding of my Higher Power.

— *Jill*

Step 11 — My favorite Step

Ientered the doors of Al-Anon in a lot of pain looking for a spiritual connection that I had lost a long time ago. I got a sponsor and started on my recovery by working Steps 1, 2 and 3.

While pondering Step 3 at a meeting, I made a mental connection between Step 3 and Step 11. Once I made the decision to turn my will and my life over to my Higher Power (Step 3), I saw Step 11 as the way to establish a conscious contact with God.

I committed to regularly praying and

meditating (talking to the God of my understanding) and to consistently seeking, listening, and expecting God's guidance.

My prayers are brief. "God, thank you for all that is my life." "What is your will for me today?" Initially it took time to hear from my Higher Power. It especially took time to learn to wait, to be patient, and attentive.

More than once I have wondered, "Am I really doing God's will or my own?" Regular prayer and meditation has revealed His will for my life. Following this spiritual guidance gives me the power to change and to live a better life.

Today I am convinced beyond a doubt that since coming to Al-Anon the major life decisions I have made have been guided by the grace and love of my Higher Power.

Step 11 is part of the sequential process of the 12 Steps but it is also a standalone method for spiritual guidance. Today Step 11 is central to my recovery and to the renewal of my spirituality.

"The will of God will never take me where the grace of God will not protect me" (How Al-Anon Works, B-22, pg. 158)

— *Thank you, Ron S., Milford*

Saved by a bookmark

I'm so grateful for Al-Anon and my ensuing recovery. My first meeting was in the Spring of 2007. I remember kissing the top of my husband's head and saying I was going to an Al-Anon meeting and quickly leaving before he could get up.

Our marriage counselor kept saying something about the "Three great American institutions: the US Post Office; AA; and Al-Anon." I had no idea what she was talking about but she repeated it enough that I eventually must have heard something because I decided to give Al-Anon a try. I was afraid to walk into the meeting room. I didn't think I belonged there.

My husband never called out sick and was a hard worker but he drank differently. He was drinking more and his drinks were getting stronger and stronger. His dad was an active, violent alcoholic and I remember thinking, at least I had that connection to alcoholism.

I felt like there was something wrong with me from a young age. I didn't know why I was different or why I didn't feel at home with my family. I felt like an outsider wherever I went. But that's a whole other story for another time. They don't call it a generational disease for nothing!

At my first Al-Anon meeting I sat in the corner and cried. The bitchy, tough-as-nails, judgmental, critical, workaholic me didn't know what to do. I had tried everything. I was broken and finally after decades of trying to fix everyone around me, I hit bottom—my bottom. For months I cried and they let me. They told me to "Keep coming!"

At one meeting I was tapped on the shoulder and told that our group needed a Treasurer. I don't remember saying yes or no, but I brought home the book and the money. It's funny now to think about it, I couldn't share without crying but I could give a Treasurer's Report!

I had such a hard time sharing at first. I could only say my name and a few words. I felt unworthy to take up meeting time with my words. The gerbil wheel in my head played repetitive negative messages—and it still does if I let it. When I did speak I wasn't sure I made any sense. I did a lot of listening.

I used trashy novels for escape. I replaced them with *Courage to Change; From Survival to Recovery; ...In All of Our Affairs Making Crises Work for You; Opening Our Hearts, Transforming our Losses.*

The *Just for Today* bookmark was on me at all times. When I didn't know what to say in a situation I came up with my own strategy. I would excuse myself to the bathroom and find something appropriate to say on the bookmark, compose myself, and go back out there prepared to speak. That little bookmark was my lifeline until I had the courage to make a phone call or use the other Al-Anon tools I was learning about.

Phone calls... Oh boy, funny now! My first few calls sounded like this: "Hello, this is Carol from the Tuesday group, I'm just practicing making a call."

CLICK. I would hang up!

Eleven months into Program I asked a long-time member to be my sponsor. Mind you I was already talking to her every day, but I was fearful she would turn me down. She didn't. She laughed saying, "Honey of course, what do you think we've been doing every day? Have you started your Gratitude List yet?"

The slogans—those funny little three or four word sayings—how could they possibly help my situation? The first one I tried was "Live and let live." It was easier to let him live, then it was for me to let me live my life.

The second slogan I clearly remember was "Let it begin with me." I was willing to let it begin with me but I asked myself, "Begin with what?"

So that's how Al-Anon started for me eight years ago. My life has never been better. I am happy. I feel worthy to speak now—I can articulate a full sentence. I still carry tissues but I don't need them as often.

The qualifiers in my life haven't changed but I have. Each day I have serenity. There are still troubles but I am able to navigate through them with the resources I have.

Best of all I can honestly say now that I belong on this earth. I feel right-sized and I've found a home that accepts me. Every day I'm grateful for many things. I'll keep coming to Al-Anon. It's the right place for me to be.

— Carol E, Deep River CT



Hey get your own!

You can purchase Al-Anon literature through a local meeting, or order it directly from Connecticut's Literature Distribution Center (LDC). CT AFG, Inc., 277 Main Street, Hartford, CT 06106. Contact LDC@ctalanon.org or phone the LDC/Office (860) 244-0022. The "Just For Today" bookmark is item # M-12.

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What does Abundance mean to you?

The past TEAM event was my first, and I was very, very impressed by it. I was deeply moved by the strong atmosphere of unconditional love in the room, and by the high standards of the event. The speakers from WSO and the Trustees started the day with sharing their experience, strength and hope in an open, candid manner. Then they proceeded to do a workshop on Abundance, which introduced the subject in a totally new way to me.

Abundance is not only about money! I learned that Abundance is about sharing your time, talents and love. It's about being grateful and enjoying what I have, and wanting to share it with others. The desire to do service in Al-Anon comes from feeling abundant and wanting to give our time, attention and skills back to the Program.

The workshop facilitators asked us very poignant questions: "How do you feel about scarcity?" "What keeps you from volunteering for service in Al-Anon?" Fear came up as a stopper. Our Higher Power can help us overcome our fears, love ourselves through them, and lead abundant lives, doing service and feeling good about it.

Thank you for the TEAM event!
Respectfully submitted — June C., District 3

Why do you still go to Al-Anon?

"I don't understand," my family and friends say. "Why do you still go to Al-Anon?" It's a challenge to help them understand why I "Keep Coming" and why my weekly meeting remains one of the highlights of my week.

I know they ask for a couple of reasons. First of all they know my husband/qualifier and I separated years ago. Second, they are not in Program!

No one was more surprised than I that the gifts of the Program would have nothing to do with my husband's drinking. This in spite of the fact that I was sure that if I went to Al-Anon they would tell me how to get my husband to stop drinking.

Wow did I get that wrong! After a month of newcomer meetings, the three A's finally sunk in (Awareness, Acceptance, Action). I finally realized that I was there for me, that the only behavior I could change was my own. I learned that if I worked on myself I could change, and that the way to do that was using everything Al-Anon had to offer—the Steps, principals, tools, slogans and service. And it worked!

I keep coming back because I'm worth it. It's how I gained and now maintain my serenity—something I am unwilling to surrender. It's the fellowship that lifts me up. It's where I find unconditional and non-judgemental love and understanding. It's where I can share my experience, strength and hope as others have before me. It's Program that helps me continue to learn and grow into the person I want to be—grateful, compassionate and loving.

And so in gratitude I ask, "Why wouldn't I still go to Al-Anon?"

— *Best, Kathi M.*

Just for tonight I will not be afraid

I went to the Shelton Tuesday Anniversary meeting—by myself. Note that I do not know Shelton at all, it was dark, and the GPS on my phone took me way out of the way. When I finally found it I was thrown off because there were police directing traffic in the parking lot. I thought, "Oh I must be in the wrong place!" So I left, drove down the street, pulled over and tried calling a couple of folks. I got no answer so

I pulled out and tried again. I drove back around the block to the same parking lot. There were a lot less people, so I parked. I was brave and as I approached the door there was my friend Ann—what a relief to see a familiar face! Yahoo! Note to self: Why go alone when it is so much better to go with someone else? Yes I will keep on going to Al-Anon! LOL

— *LIS, Kim, DR District 4, Milford*



ACT AS IF... I can not always THINK my way into a new way of acting, but I can ACT my way into a new way of thinking.

— *Betsy N. DR District 12*

Lifeline needs Al-Anon and Alateen submissions! (Under 800 words please)

Let us know how the Al-Anon program works for you • Send a story that would attract members into service • What's new with your group? Email lifeline@ctalanon.org. Please submit Anniversary Meeting notices two months in advance.

WANTED: Your heart-felt sharing on Step 12 for the December/Holiday issue. Do you have an Al-Anon/Alateen wish for Santa that we could add to our first annual holiday AFG wish list?

Thanks to everyone who has sent in Alateen sharings. They will be published in our special upcoming Alateen double issue. We are half way to filling eight pages. Please Alateens and Sponsors send in your sharings even if they are very brief!

Don't forget to have your event publicized on the website! Email webmaster@ctalanon.org.