

growing oaks



OAKLAND COUNTY
AL-ANON FAMILY GROUPS
QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER - AUTUMN 2016

Making it Manageable

Madilyn G.~ Warren Michigan~ Grateful member of Al-Anon

Recently I had the great fortune to take an 8 week class in one of the performing arts. The class was great fun. My fellow students were laid back, funny, and supportive. All was good in my world until it came time to put our newly found talents to work in the form of a class show. We were to perform in front of a live, paying audience. Just the thought of it made me sick inside. I didn't want to disappoint the folks who took time from their busy lives and paid their hard earned cash to be there, including my friends and family. And it goes without saying that I didn't want to make a fool of myself and subject myself to harsh judgment and criticism. Just as I was about to go into full panic mode I remembered to apply the principles I learned in Program

- 1) I am powerless over what people in the audience think.
- 2) What other people think of me is none of my business.
- 3) I am **NOT** responsible for the happiness of others.
- 4) Be realistic about the task at hand.

When I stopped playing the negative tape in my head and took the time to actually think about what I was getting into I realized this endeavor was not as frightening as I was making it out to be. *continued on page2*

NEED TO FIND A MEETING?

FOR INFORMATION ON LOCATIONS AND TIMES

AL- ANON MEETINGS

YOU CAN FIND AN UPDATED LIST OF
OAKLAND COUNTY ON OUR WEBSITE.

ALATEEN MEETINGS:

~EMAIL US AT THE NEWSLETTER OR
~CONTACT THE OFFICE THROUGH THE
WEBSITE

(LINKS AT RIGHT.)



Growing Oaks is a quarterly publication of
Oakland County Al-Anon/Alateen Family
Groups Phoenix Square Office Building
3720 Elizabeth Lake
Road Waterford, MI
48328
248-706-1020

oaklandafg.org

*Edited by Go After Your Serenity LGBT
AFG This is **YOUR** newsletter: Your articles
and announcements are welcome! Please
email to:*

BroWCarey@wowway.com

AUTUMN LEAVES!

Trusted Servants

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.

Al-Anon/Alateen Second Tradition

2015 BOARD MEMBERS

Chairperson: vacant

Co-Chairperson: Theresa M. - tjmac1207@gmail.com

Treasurer: Mitch S. - mitch@mitchmaster.com

Secretary: Karen B. - kbartos@twmi.rr.com

Members at Large:

Ruthanne O. - rokun7@yahoo.com

DeeZee - denisez@sbcglobal.net

Milena C. - milenac0217@gmail.com

VITAL TRUSTED SERVANTS

District 12 Rep:

Bill C. – BroWCarey@wowway.com District

Alternate Rep:

Debbie D. - debdrop@wowway.com

District 14 Rep:

Michelle B. - obrillhart@aol.com

Alternate Rep:

Lynda E. - lynda_easterday@yahoo.com

AWSC Liaison:

Heather D. – mason.H321@gmail.com

Alateen Sponsors/Contacts:

Mitch S. - mitch@mitchmaster.com

Alisa B. – alisabell422@gmail.com

Ron V. – rva59@aol.com

Office email: oaklandcountyaafg@aol.com

Literature Coordinator:

Mike A. – mikeandrus49@gmail.com

Public Outreach Contacts:

Josie C. - connolly900@comcast.net

Therese Marie – tm@meettherese.com

Website Contact:

Karl W. – surcuitpac@aol.com

Newsletter Contact:

Bill C. – browcarey@wowway.com

Making it Manageable *continued from page 1*

and discovered that since there was a time limit on our show and there were a number of us on stage, in all actuality I was only going to have to perform for roughly 2 minutes. When I broke it down this way everything seemed less scary. I also realized that I was going to be doing something I loved alongside people in my class that loved and supported me.

By applying the principles of Program I was able to put aside my panic and enjoy my experience for what it was. For that I am very grateful.

MYSELF

A recent reading in Courage to Change resonated with me. The May 4th reading says in part, "Al- Anon has given me back the only thing that was ever really mine to keep: myself."

When my husband and I attended marriage counseling, the counselor told us to tell each other what first attracted us to them. My husband looked deep into my eyes and said those words every woman longs to hear, "You were outgoing." Ha! Once I got over the fact that he didn't say that he was captivated by my beauty, I thought about where I was in life. Years of living with active addiction had left me isolated and lonely. It was something I couldn't discuss around the proverbial water cooler at my office. And the huge weight of the secret I was carrying around made me withdrawn. I didn't look forward to meeting new people because that would mean one more person to hide my secrets from. My outgoing personality was nowhere to be found.

Our marriage counselor insisted that I go to Al-Anon. I explained how I could not go because I travelled for work and volunteered at my church so I was just too busy already. He pulled out a flyer for Oakland County AFG's Fall Workshop which was taking place the next day, a Saturday. I didn't have work or church obligations on Saturday so I was out of excuses! I went. Hoping I would not see anyone I knew, I found an empty seat at a table. The women I sat with were friendly and welcoming. As I looked around the room, I saw people smiling and laughing and happy to see each other. I decided at that moment I wanted what they had. I somehow found the time to attend meetings around my work and volunteer schedule. At first, there were a lot of tears. I was almost afraid to come back because I felt no one would want to sit with someone who cried all the time. They just kept handing me tissues and saying, "Keep coming back." And so I did.

Each week, we read from How Al-Anon Works. Somehow no matter where I sat, when it was my turn to read, I found myself saying aloud, "We may never have the family of our dreams..." (See Step One, page 46) That was a painful reality for me to face. Even though we repeated Step One over and over for several weeks, it seemed that something different stood out to me each week. I had so much to learn!

I got a sponsor and started working the steps. Over time, I began to feel less isolated and I felt a shift in my focus: away from the alcoholic and onto the self-care that I so desperately needed. As others shared their experience, strength and hope, I felt less alone. I learned that I didn't cause this disease of alcoholism; surely could not control it; and most definitely could not cure it. Finally, I got it; I couldn't change him. However, the program offered me hope if I could change. So that is what I did.

Looking back at how far I have come in the last few years, the most important things I have learned are that I can be happy whether or not my alcoholic is drinking and that I need to take care of myself.

When I go to conferences and workshops, I always see people I know from the program and now I am also smiling and laughing and happy to see them. I look forward to meeting new people, welcoming the new comer and sharing my own experience, strength and hope. Thanks, Al-Anon for giving me back the only thing that was ever really mine to keep: myself!

Michelle B.

Hope and Recovery

At a recent meeting it occurred to me that even though I am not able to be at a meeting to make a contribution, the program still has expenses and needs financial support. I have decided that I will make a larger contribution once a month so that whether or not I'm here, I can make a difference, so that the program always *is* here for those who need it. Even when I'm not here the program will continue.

AnnMarie N.



Beyond the Steps
Al-Anon Family Group
invites you to hear



share her experience, strength & hope!

Monday, October 31st, @11:30 am

St. Andrew Lutheran Church
6255 Telegraph Rd, Bloomfield Hills, MI

Sharings from the 2016 Fall Workshop

At each table there was a pad of paper and the request: Please write down a thought or anecdote on "Why there's a place for you in Al-Anon/Alateen." Here are the sharings we received.

"Al-Anon gave me the turn of the kaleidoscope to see all the miracles in my life."

I find surrender like riding a roller coaster: Those that ride it with arms raised have the most fun. Pamalar B.

We are not alone. Sara E.

Everywhere we go we have a ready-made family. Ruth O.

Keep going to meetings even when you feel you don't fit in. Someone will tell your story and you will hear it. Jackie S.

1st meeting I was told "Take what you need and leave the rest." That gave me the reason to come back when I was not sure. Steve R. Stepping into Recovery

I was told that I was not responsible for the actions of the alcoholic. Jackie F. Maple West

I was crying so hard my first meeting I really don't remember much. All I was told: attend 6 meetings and I did and I am so thankful!! Mary Ellen H. Rochester AFG

I knew there was a place for me in Al-Anon when I heard Step One. My life was completely unmanageable. Michelle B. Rochester Sunday Night

I was told that one room was for my loved one and the other was for me. I felt so lucky to have a place where people understood.

At my first meeting someone told my story. Were they looking in my window? How did they know?

I walk in frazzled, and exhale in peace as soon as I sit down at my meeting.

Sobriety does not make the problems go away. I learned to put God in my pocket.

Watching our people grow and change – showing that miracles are really possible! Kristin L.

I don't have to be on guard at meetings. I feel SAFE TO BE MYSELF. Nancy

I realized my problems had a NEW perspective. Diane P.

Connection w/ our Higher Power. Tina L.

Unconditional Love at Meetings has allowed me to be myself. Stacey B.

Our Rules & My Boundaries are respected at meetings. Jaema B.

I feel safe to take risks to grow emotionally at meetings. I have learned to exhale at meetings! Janet N

Why there's a place for me in Al-Anon:
It brings peace and serenity
It helps me cope with going crazy
It helps me cope with guilt
I learn a new way of living – Al-Anon saved my life
It helps me focus on myself
It gives me a place to receive unconditional love
It's a place to share and protect identity

The Anonymity of this program has given me a place to feel safe to be open & honest with myself and others.

I found a place where nobody judged me for the secrets I carried all my life.

I don't feel different, isolated & alone in Al-Anon.

Al-Anon has been a safe place to discover who I am, to be open & honest with myself. I can BREATHE again!

Our thinking becomes distorted and my thinking was distorted and I was in denial. My qualifier said she would do anything for a drink or a drug. That terrified me. FEAR!

Family situation is bound to improve. My qualifier was going to meetings. Al-Anon was a doorway that led me to discover my own addiction which led me to AA.

I got my sense of humor back!

FEAR was my higher power before I came to Al-Anon. Now I recognize my fear & have a motivation to reach out to my H.P.

Al-Anon gave me the turn of the kaleidoscope to see all the miracles in my life.

I learned to be okay with me, to have self-respect.

I'm no longer a P. O.S. I let go of my shame & blame. I was able to let go of my perfectionism.

Anger became my motivation. I was able to let it out, finally, and am now able to set boundaries without the fear of my life falling apart.

My thinking is validated as the longer I live with an addict the more I am convinced that my thinking is crazy – but it isn't.

When I developed a relationship with the G-D of my understanding as a result of working this program, I started to see all the little miracles, "G-D shots," around me. Sue L.

Al-Anon is the only place where I felt that I really fit in. The members were non-judgmental, and showed me unconditional love and acceptance despite my shortcomings. It is there where I learned to trust, be trustworthy, to love and be loving, to accept and be accepting. I have learned patience and what it means to not be perfect. And ultimately to love myself. I am finally happy, joyous and free to be me .

Colleen D.

Meetings are a safe place, the anonymity helped me to feel safe. In my family if I said something, it would be used against me

I learned a new slogan: W A I T
 Why Am I Talking

I am one of eight kids, and my role was the lost child. In Al-Anon I found I am not lost, but a grateful member. Alisa B.

A place for us: A place of safety, acceptance, great hugs, unconditional love, welcome as you are, understanding, learning how to socialize, loving me until I could love myself, being in healthy relationships, not taking hostages

Al-Anon folks understand in a compassionate, non-judgmental way what I am going through. I feel safe, and always welcome. Kathi B

I always find the words of the preamble, welcome, closing and declaration to be soothing, and to give me a feeling of release. I am home no matter which meeting or state I happen to be in. Karen B

*Thank You Everyone For
Your Sharing!!!*

