

Growing Oaks

Oakland County Al-Anon Family Groups Fall, 2023

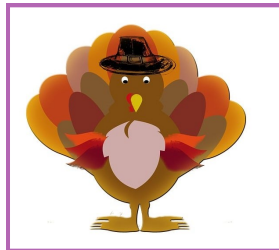
Okay. It's still officially Autumn around where we live in Michigan, returning to standard time, raking leaves, cleaning gutters, covering or storing away outdoor furniture. Scheduling the furnace checkup, and looking at other ways we prepare for another winter.

The retail folks, and neighbors putting up Holiday decorations, making plans to host or attend family and friend gatherings gets us easily into a tailspin.

A good time for looking at the "maintenance steps" which are Steps 10, 11 and 12. Some call these "growth steps," as we continue our recovery journey

Step 10 - "Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong, promptly admitted it." Again, as Autumn is a time of cleaning up, purging and repairing our physical home, we continue the process of clearing away much of the damage of our past and taking care of our own needs, acting on our own behalf. Continued personal inventory means finding my strengths and talents, balancing and using them to change character defects. The second half of this step encourages us to deal with a mistake immediately, with humility and grace. Making amends as quickly as reasonable to ourselves and to others. Avoiding gunny-sacking resentments.

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 and the power to carry that out." My biggest take-away from this Step is to realize we are to use prayer AND meditation. Prayer is asking for God's plan, often with a structure, such as the Serenity Prayer or Lord's Prayer often used at meetings. Prayer means asking for our Higher Power's will and letting go. Meditation is a way to let go. It is a spiritual practice used in many cultures for thousands of years. It can mean finding a quiet place, concentrating on my breathing, emptying my mind of intrusive thoughts, concentrating on the moment. As one member says, prayer is asking, meditation is waiting for the answer.

Step 12 - "Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to others, and to practice these principles in all our affairs. Does "spiritual; awakening" mean reaching peace, perfection and an always rewarding life? Nope. (Go back to Steps 4 and 10). Carrying the message means, paradoxically, to keep it - what ever we have found in Al-Anon - you have to give it away. Reading Conference Approved Literature and sharing our experience, strength, and hope at meetings is our "maintenance". May you find quiet times in these busy weeks. With sunshine or frost.

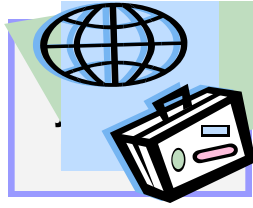


Shirley B

Thoughts taken from Paths to Recovery: Al-Anon's Steps, Traditions, and Concepts B-24.

CARRYING THE MESSAGE

Continuing the newsletter theme of Step 12, how may we share what we have received from the program and groups of Al-Anon? As our national organization encourages use of a large variety of Conference



Approved Literature, one activity we are encouraged to do is identify a favorite piece of literature and say why or how it speaks to you.

The following are a few shares:

- “My favorite is Opening Our Hearts, Transforming Our Losses (B-29). It helped me greatly through lots of grief. It put my feelings into gentle words of healing. It has wonderful, thought-provoking questions at the end of each meaningful chapter. I treasure it.”
- “My favorite is Hope for Today (B-27). It is based on sharings of members who have grown up with the family disease of alcoholism. I’ve heard it referred to as ‘the rubber hits the road’ book. The readings help us to put the program into action.”

Growing Oaks is a publication of:
Oakland County
Al-Anon/Alateen Family Groups
P.O. Box 155
Keego Harbor, MI 48320-0320

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Articles and Announcements
are welcome! Email to:
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AS MEMBERS SHARE...

- “My favorite is How Al-Anon Works for Families & Friends of Alcoholics. (B-32). It is my ‘go to’ resource for clear, concise, compassionate information on every part of the Al-Anon program,. My most used sections are about the Steps, Detachment and Taking Care of Ourselves. The members stories in Part Two often hold messages of hope and courage that I find inspiring.”
- “A favorite for me is the bookmark Just for Tonight. I may read one paragraph that speaks to me to quiet my mind and remind me of what I’m grateful for. These days, a cuddly blanket!”

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. (Tradition 2)

2023 Board Members

Chairperson: Nora A. 313-0024

Co-chair: Paul R. 248-330-3631

Secretary: Ken L. 248-763-5439

Treasurer: Jackie F. 248-321-0749

Members-at Large: Sharelle 248-396-8085

Ruth O. 248-229-2709

Vital Trusted Servants

District 12 Rep. Sue F. 248-585-7917

District 12 alternate Rep. Mike K. 248-464-9415

District 14 Rep. Jeanette H. - 248-2177252

Website editor: Greg B. 202-345-3681 and Debbie D. 248-890-0820

Alateen coordinator: Kelsey K.. 248-461-7054

Literature Coordinator: Doug D. 248-259-7027

How do I find a meeting?

In our time of connection with caution, what is available for me?

- Zoom meetings (ID and password provided)
- Hybrid meetings (both virtual on Zoom as well as in person)
- In person meetings (social distancing and masks may be required)



Much will depend on technology at sites, meeting room availability and Zoom account information. **For most updated list, please check: oaklandafg.org/meetings**

Mark Your Calendar



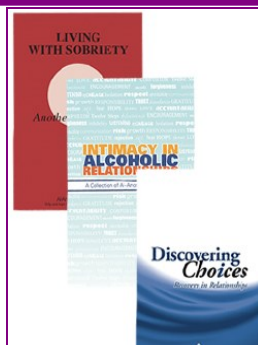
Saturday, Dec.2 - 11a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

“Surviving the Holidays” Panel speakers followed by small group discussion. Bring a treat to share!

Pilgrim Congregational Church, N. Adams, just north of Big Beaver, Bloomfield Hills.

Al-Anon Relationship Bundle-now available! (K-73)

Give yourself or a member you care about the gift of Al-Anon literature on relationships. This \$25 special set includes free shipping. Available through January 2, 2024.



What is KOMIAC, anyway??

KOMIAC stands for Kentucky, Ohio, Michigan, Indiana Alateen Convention.

“But to us teens, it means a whole lot more than just one word. For the teens that have experienced KOMIAC, they know it gives all of us hope for the future.” - past attendee.



Each state hosts a convention. The big news is in 2024, Michigan is the host state!! A teen-led Board organizes, makes decisions on everything from location, theme, T-shirt design, activities, workshops, souvenirs. Each Board member has an adult sponsor.

Theme this year is “Bringing Colors to Recovery”. Tentative location (to be voted on by the Board after a November site visit) is Southwestern Michigan College, in western Michigan. The event is scheduled for 4 p.m. Friday, July 26 through 10 a.m. Sunday, July 28.

AMIAS (Al-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service) are involved. Groups have been giving donations to raise money for event costs.

Contact Sheryl S. at miafgalateen@gmail.com. For further information.

Our new Districts 12 and 14 home for storage, meetings

We now have storage space at Pilgrim Congregational Church, 3061 N. Adams, Bloomfield Hills (just north of Big Beaver, west of Coolidge)

Doug will communicate with group reps and individuals who want to get CAL books, pamphlets, and free materials. We also have stored there larger items, such as a tent and display boards that may be used for a presentation. Our monthly group rep meetings are held there, too!

AL-ANON SHARE: THRIVING THE HOLIDAYS

Many of us effected by the family disease of alcoholism are unprepared to deal with the stresses brought on during the holidays. For some, it means interacting with emotionally unhealthy family, friends, coworkers and acquaintances. For others, it is a time of loneliness, deliberately isolating from triggers to further emotional trauma. The key to Thriving (not simply surviving) these weeks is to BE PROACTIVE.



Consider the following checklist. For those of us beginning our recovery journey consider these ideas as an experiment to test our ability to assert ourselves and get the well-deserved serenity. For others, it's a reminder that we don't plan to fail, we fail to plan.

1. Stay connected to your higher power. Start the day with a prayer of gratitude, keeping the focus on yourself and turning over what you can't control to God.
2. Stay connected to your Al-Anon family. Keep meetings on your calendar as a priority. Try a new meeting. A newcomers welcome may be just what you need. Keep your favorite CAL handy.
3. Limit, as you can, interactions with unhealthy people. Have realistic expectations, set boundaries, have a plan to exit if desired.
4. Take care of yourself first: eat well, sleep well, treat yourself with kindness and understanding. Plan a trip to



enjoy alone or with special people dear to you. Build in moments of downtime for meditation, relaxation and remembering the fun times. Laugh alone, or with others!

5. This is a time when we consider others, assisting with basic needs, companionship and sharing even the little things we might be grateful for.

- Phil B.

“... it was going to be different.”

“Sometimes our enthusiasm for change depends on our willingness to take a chance on tomorrow by risking what we have today. ...Our incentive to try again may have to warm up to the promise of a better life to come, having suffered from the chilling effects of broken promises and misplaced trust....

For many of us, sobriety is a welcome alternative to active alcoholism; the atmosphere is more quiet, there is less fighting, meals may be eaten together and on time, bills are being paid, there is hopeful talk and plans being made.

For others, living with sobriety is a bit more complicated. Some of us may have lost more than the problem drinker.... A loss of self-esteem...lonely as our loved goes to meetings....We no longer know what to expect in the way of behavior.”

What about the “pink cloud?” The focus may still be on the alcoholic as others celebrate the changes. “Al-Anon was where my recovery was going to take place.”

From [Living with Sobriety: Another Beginning \(P-49\) pp. 9-10.](#)