

December 15, 2012

Osseo AA Newsletter

Suburban North Alano Vol. 2 Issue 5

www.OsseoAA.org

“One Day at a Time”



Greetings:

Once again, we are nearing the Holidays. It is a time to enjoy family and loved ones. It is also a time to sit back and reflect on the past year and our sobriety. Hopefully we all have had a time without too much conflict and stress in our lives.

We had a great turnout for the Thanksgiving Dinner. Our thanks to Rudy and Sandra S. for making it a real success!

The X-Mas Party is in the works, and will be posted. As always, volunteers will be needed to help out.

The One Year Honoree Banquet is scheduled again at the Sundance Banquet/Bowl facility in Dayton, to be held in February. The menu will be the same as last year, and the cost per ticket should be the same. Further updates will be in the next newsletter.

We need volunteers to write articles for our newsletter! We need fresh input for our sobriety! Please contact Bob G. to submit your article, or if you would like to write an article every month.

I want to thank all pledging members who have paid their dues. The club's financial picture is much better because of your help.

I wish all a Happy Holiday Season!

Regards,

Bob W.



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Want to Contribute?

- Contact Bob G. or any Board Member with stories or suggestions
- Check the website often as it's constantly changing. It's also a good way to keep up with the news. If you have club news, please send it in.
- Edited by: Julee E.

WEDDING BELLS

DAVE T. & REBECCA M. HAVE ANNOUNCED THAT THEY ARE
EXCHANGING WEDDING VOWS ON

DECEMBER 13, 2012





PLEASE BRING ALL OF YOUR ALUMINUM CANS TO THE CLUB!!!

If we all participate in a can drive, it will fund our annual picnic. If you can, please bring cans (preferably crushed) to the club and throw them in the trailer on the side of the building.

No plastic bottles please



12-Step Visit From St. Nicholas

T'was the night before Christmas When I went on a bender,
Not a creature was stirring, not even a bartender.
The empties were stacked by the chimney just fine,
In hopes that St. Nick would fill them with wine.
With Mama in her kerchief and I with my booze,
We'd just settled down for a long winter's snooze.
When out on the lawn there arose such a clatter,
I put down my drink to see what was the matter.

Away to the window I crawled and then stumbled
To open the shutters where I stood and just mumbled.
Then what to my bloodshot eyes should there appear
But a miniature sleigh and eight tiny reindeer.

I thought it was DT's and needed help quick!
I didn't know it was only St. Nick.
I poured myself another as the reindeer came
While he shouted and called them by name:

"Now Barfly! Now Wino! Now Boozer and Rummy!
On Drunkard! On Alky! On Dipso and Dummy!"
So up to the housetop St. Nicholas flew
While I pulled the pop-top on another brew.

I trembled with fear when I heard a new sound—
Down the chimney came St. Nick with a bound.
His cheeks were like roses, he grinned like a possum,
His eyes, how they twinkled, his nose had rum-blossoms!

I offered him a drink, step up to the bar,
"Not today," he said, "I am now so-ber."
He had a clear face and a little beer belly,
That shook when he laughed like a bowl
full of jelly.

This was too much, it increased my thirst.
"Hold it!" said St. Nick, "First things first.
You don't have to drink, easy does it,
Now that wasn't too hard, was it?"

He reached in his sack and with a great fuss
He gave me the book "Alcoholics Anonymous."
"Read this 'Big Book' for a life sublime,
Follow the principles one day at a time.

"This is the best present I can give,
Twelve steps – a new way to live.
The AA program keeps me sober, it's true."
Then giving a nod, up the chimney he flew.

Then I heard him exclaim as he drove out of sight,
"You now have a choice, starting tonight.
So Merry Christmas to all and to all Season's Greetings,
Don't pick up that first drink, and go to AA meetings!"



Tradition Twelve

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One may say that anonymity is the spiritual base, the sure key to all the rest of our Traditions. It has come to stand for prudence and, most importantly, for self-effacement. True consideration for the newcomer if he desires to be nameless; vital protection against misuse of the name Alcoholics Anonymous at the public level; and to each of us a constant reminder that principles come before personal interest-- such is the wide scope of this all-embracing principle. In it we see the cornerstone of our security as a movement; at a deeper spiritual level it points us to still greater self-renunciation.

A glance at the Twelve Traditions will instantly assure anyone that "giving up" is the essential idea of them all. In each Tradition, the individual or the group is asked to give up something for our general welfare. Tradition One asks us to place the common good ahead of personal desire. Tradition Two asks us to listen to God as he may speak in the group conscience. Tradition Three requires that we exclude no alcoholic from AA membership. Tradition Four implies that we abandon all idea of centralized human authority or government. But each group is enjoined to consult widely in matters affecting us all. Tradition Five restricts the AA group to a single purpose, carrying our message to other alcoholics.

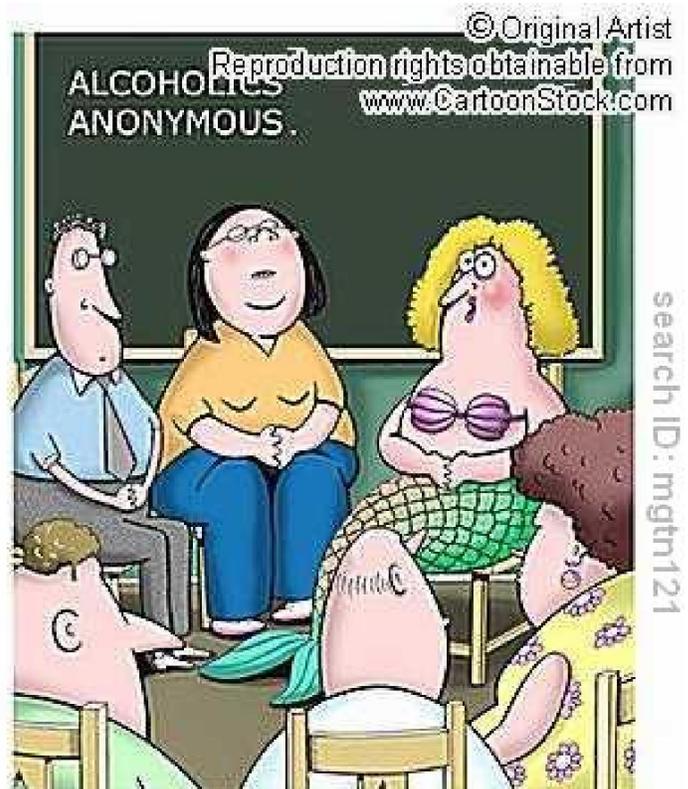
Tradition Six points at the corroding influence of money, property, and personal authority; it begs that we keep these influences at a minimum by separate incorporation and management of our special services. It also warns against the natural temptation to make alliances or give endorsements. Tradition Seven states that we had best pay our own bill; that large contributions or those carrying obligations ought not be received; that public contributions or those carrying obligations ought not be received; that public solicitation using the name Alcoholics Anonymous is positively dangerous. Tradition Eight forswears professionalizing our Twelfth Step work but it does guarantee our few paid service workers an unquestioned amateur status. Tradition Nine asks that we give up all idea of expensive organization; enough is needed to permit effective democracy; our leadership is one of service and it is rotating; our few titles never clothe their holders with arbitrary personal authority; they hold authorization to serve, never to govern. Tradition Ten is an emphatic restraint of serious controversy; it implores each of us to

take care against committing AA to the fires of reform, political or religious dissension. Tradition Eleven asks, in our public relations, that we be alert against sensationalism and it declares there is never need to praise ourselves. Personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, and film is urgently required, thus avoiding the pitfall of vanity, and the temptation through broken anonymity to link AA to other causes.

Tradition Twelve, in its mood of humble anonymity, plainly enough comprehends the preceding eleven. The Twelve Points of Tradition are little else than a specific application of the spirit of the Twelve Steps of recovery to our group life and to our relations with society in general. The recovery steps would make each individual AA whole and one with God; the Twelve Points of Tradition would make us one with each other and whole with the world about us. Unity is our aim.

Our AA Traditions are, we trust, securely anchored in those wise precepts; charity, gratitude, and humility. Nor have we forgotten prudence. May these virtues ever stand clear before us in our meditations; may Alcoholics Anonymous serve God in happy unison for so long as he may need us.

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"I'm here because I drink like a fish."

Step 12 – Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

THE joy of living is the theme of A.A.'s Twelfth Step, and action is its key word. Here we turn outward toward our fellow alcoholics who are still in distress. Here we experience the kind of giving that asks no rewards. Here we begin to practice all Twelve Steps of the program in our daily lives so that we and those about us may find emotional sobriety. When the Twelfth Step is seen in its full implication, it is really talking about the kind of love that has no price tag on it.

Our Twelfth Step also says that as a result of practicing all the Steps, we have each found something called a spiritual awakening. To new A.A.'s, this often seems like a very dubious and improbable state of affairs. "What do you mean when you talk about a 'spiritual awakening'?" they ask.

Maybe there are as many definitions of spiritual awakening as there are people who have had them. But certainly each genuine one has something in common with all the others. And these things which they have in common are not too hard to understand. When a man or a woman has a spiritual awakening, the most important meaning of it is that he has now become able to do, feel, and believe that which he could not do before on his unaided strength and resources alone. He has been granted a gift which amounts to a new state of consciousness and being. He has been set on a path which tells him he is really going somewhere, that life is not a dead end, not something to be endured or mastered. In a very real sense he has been transformed, because he has laid hold of a source of strength which, in one way or another, he had hitherto denied himself. He finds himself in possession of a degree of honesty, tolerance, unselfishness, peace of mind, and love of which he had thought himself quite incapable. What he has received is a free gift, and yet usually, at least in some small part, he has made himself ready to receive it.

A.A.'s manner of making ready to receive this gift

lies in the practice of the Twelve Steps in our program.

So, practicing these Steps, we had a spiritual awakening about which finally there was no question. Looking at those who were only beginning and still doubted themselves, the rest of us were able to see the change setting in. From great numbers of such experiences, we could predict that the doubter who still claimed that he hadn't got the "spiritual angle," and who still considered his well-loved A.A. group the higher power, would presently love God and call Him by name.

Now, what about the rest of the Twelfth Step? The wonderful energy it releases and the eager action by which it carries our message to the next suffering alcoholic and which finally translates the Twelve Steps into action upon all our affairs is the payoff, the magnificent reality, of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Even the newest of newcomers finds undreamed rewards as he tries to help his brother alcoholic, the one who is even blinder than he. This is indeed the kind of giving that actually demands nothing. He does not expect his brother sufferer to pay him, or even to love him. And then he discovers that by the divine paradox of this kind of giving he has found his own reward, whether his brother has yet received anything or not. His own character may still be gravely defective, but he somehow knows that God has enabled him to make a mighty beginning, and he senses that he stands at the edge of new mysteries, joys, and experiences of which he had never even dreamed.

Practically every A.A. member declares that no satisfaction has been deeper and no joy greater than in a Twelfth Step job well done. To watch the eyes of men and women open with wonder as they move from darkness into light, to see their lives quickly filled with new purpose and meaning, to see whole families reassembled, to see the alcoholic outcast received back into his community in full citizenship, and above all to watch these people awaken to the presence of a loving God in their lives—these things are the substance of what we receive as we carry A.A.'s message to the next alcoholic.

Nor is this the only kind of Twelfth Step work. We sit in A.A. meetings and listen, not only to receive something ourselves, but to give the reassurance and support which our presence can bring. If our turn comes to speak at a meeting, we again try to carry A.A.'s message. Whether our audience is one or many, it is still Twelfth Step work. There are many opportunities even for those of us who feel unable to speak at meetings or who are so situated that we cannot do much face-to-face Twelfth Step work. We can be the ones who take on the unspectacular but important tasks that make good Twelfth Step work possible, perhaps arranging for the coffee and cake after the meetings, where so many skeptical, suspicious newcomers have found confidence and comfort in the laughter and talk. This is Twelfth Step work in the very best sense of the word. "Freely ye have received; freely give..." is the core of this part of Step Twelve.

Now comes the biggest question yet. What about the practice of these principles in all our affairs? Can we love the whole pattern of living as eagerly as we do the small segment of it we discover when we try to help other alcoholics achieve sobriety? Can we bring the same spirit of love and tolerance into our sometimes deranged family lives that we bring to our A.A. group? Can we have the same kind of confidence and faith in these people who have been infected and sometimes crippled by our own illness that we have in our sponsors? Can we actually carry the A.A. spirit into our daily work? Can we meet our newly recognized responsibilities to the world at large? And can we bring new purpose and devotion to the religion of our choice? Can we find a new joy of living in trying to do something about all these things?

The A.A. answer to these questions about living is "Yes, all of these things are possible." We know this because we see monotony, pain, and even calamity turned to good use by those who keep on trying to practice A.A.'s Twelve Steps. And if these are facts of life for the many alcoholics who have recovered in A.A., they can become the facts of life for many more.

With each passing day of our lives, may every one of

us sense more deeply the inner meaning of A.A.'s simple prayer:

**God grant us the serenity to accept
the things we cannot change,
Courage to change the things we can,
And wisdom to know the difference.**



**There is no shortcut to life. To the end of
our days, life is a lesson imperfectly
learned.**

--Harrison E. Salisbury

There are no perfect days. We have struggled hard against this truth. In our demanding ways, we haven't wanted life to be a process; we have wanted to reach a secure point of arrival. We have struggled against the dialogue and learning process of experience. We've looked for a "fix" and for perfection. Even now in recovery we long to "get it right." We continue to learn and to grow, but the lessons we learn are not the things we expected. We grieve the lateness of our learning, and then we go on to learn more.

As we grow in this program, we learn how to learn. We become more accepting of life as a process with no shortcut to the truth. We learn to engage in the process and accept that there usually is no right or wrong answer at the end of our search.

**Good thoughts bear good fruit, bad
thoughts bear bad fruit – and man
is his mown garden.**

--John Leonard

Al-Anon/Alateen

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Al-Anon/Alateen, known as **Al-Anon Family Groups**, is an international "fellowship of relatives and friends of alcoholics who share their experience, strength, and hope in order to solve their common problems." They "help families of alcoholics by practicing the Twelve Steps, by welcoming and giving comfort to families of alcoholics, and by giving understanding and encouragement to the alcoholic."^[1] Alateen is part of Al-Anon and is their Twelve-step program of recovery for young people affected by another's drinking, generally aged 13 to 19 years (varies depending on each group). "Alateen groups are sponsored by Al-Anon members." Al-Anon was formed in 1951 by Anne B. and Lois W., wife of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) co-founder Bill W. They recognized the need for such an organization as family members living with AA members began to identify their own pathologies associated with their family members' alcoholism. In the USA, Al-Anon Family Groups incorporated as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization called *Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc* Alateen took its own name and formation in 1957.

In Lois's Story, she explained why, as the spouse of an alcoholic, she also required treatment.

After a while I began to wonder why I was not as happy as I ought to be, since the one thing I had been yearning for all my married life [Bill's sobriety] had come to pass. Then one Sunday, Bill asked me if I was ready to go to the meeting with him. To my own astonishment as well as his, I burst forth with "Damn your old meetings!" and threw a shoe as hard as I could. This surprising display of temper over nothing pulled me up short and made me start to analyze my own attitudes. ... My life's purpose of sobering up Bill, which had made me feel desperately needed, had vanished. ... I decided to strive for my own spiritual growth. I used the same principles as he did to learn how to change my attitudes. ... We began to learn that ... the partner of the alcoholic also needed to live by a spiritual program. "Lois's Story" in *How Al-Anon Works*

Processes and benefits

Al-Anon adapted the Twelve Steps from Alcoholics

Anonymous replacing 'alcoholics' with 'others' in the last step, Step 12. The Al-Anon and Alateen literature focuses on problems common to family members and friends of alcoholics (e.g., loyalty to those who are abusive, excessive care-taking, inability to differentiate love and pity) rather than the problems of the alcoholic. Meetings are usually small (five to twenty-five in attendance), in larger meetings members often split into smaller groups after the opening readings so that everyone will have a chance to speak.

Meetings may begin with the *Suggested Al-Anon/Alateen Welcome* (depending on each autonomous group) which starts out:

We welcome you to the _____ Al-Anon Family Group and hope you will find in this fellowship the help and friendship we have been privileged to enjoy. We who live, or have lived, with the problem of alcoholism understand as perhaps few others can. We, too, were lonely and frustrated, but in Al-Anon we discover that no situation is really hopeless, and that it is possible for us to find contentment, and even happiness, whether the alcoholic is still drinking or not.

Al-Anon acknowledges that members begin with low self-esteem, but teaches that this is largely a side-effect of unrealistically overestimating their personal agency and control. Specifically this is in relation to member's attempts to control another person's drinking behavior and, when they fail, blaming themselves for the other person's behavior. As family members of alcoholics learn to recognize the pathologies in their families, assign the responsibility of those pathologies to a disease, forgive themselves, accept that they were adversely affected by the pathologies, and ultimately learn to accept their family member's shortcomings, they begin to improve.

When an alcoholic's spouse is active in Al-Anon and the alcoholic is active in AA, not only is the alcoholic more likely to be abstinent but marital happiness improves and both the alcoholic and their spouse become better parents. Participation in Al-Anon has also been associated with less personal blame among females who, as a whole, engage in more initial personal blame for the drinking than males.\

Encouraging alcoholics to participate in treatment

Although Al-Anon emphasizes alcoholism cannot be arrested by its members' intervention, analysis of methods used by Concerned Significant Others (CSOs) to encourage alcoholics to seek treatment has shown participation in Al-Anon to be effective towards this goal. The Community Reinforcement and Family Training approach (CRAFT), however, has been shown to be significantly more effective than Al-Anon participation for this purpose. Spouses of alcoholics wait, on average, seven years before making an intervention.

Demographics

Al-Anon is open to all family members and friends of alcoholics, but is primarily composed of female partners/spouses of alcoholics. Groups focusing on adult children of alcoholics are becoming more common. Nearly all of the Al-Anon members in the United States are white (95%), 60-80% are women, half are married, and a third have a college degree.

In 2007, Al-Anon Family Groups published their *2006 Member Survey Results* of demographic and other information from Al-Anon members in Canada and The United States. Of those who responded (645), 88% indicated they were caucasian, 85% were female, and 58% were married. (One key finding was that "82% reported their mental health and well-being was much improved due to Al-Anon."¹)

139 *Alateen* members responded to Al-Anon Family Group's *2006 Alateen Member Survey*, which was conducted in The United States alone. 65% of the respondents were female, 35% male, 72% caucasian, 20% spoke Spanish fluently, and their average age was 14-years old.

"A third of Al-Anon members have children at home under the age of 21."¹

Al-Anon Conference Approved Literature

During meetings, it is highly suggested that members refrain from referencing any non Al-Anon conference approved literature (CAL) during meeting times. In the early years books by Norman Vincent Peale and Dale Carnegie as well as A.A.'s "Big

Book" were used. But some literature had religious or political biases, so in 1963 a Conference Approval process was adopted to consistently reflect Al-Anon principles.

The literature that has been approved includes: *Alateen - Hope for Children of Alcoholics*; *The Dilemma of the Alcoholic Marriage* ; *The Al-Anon Family Groups - Classic Edition*; *One Day at a Time in Al-Anon* ; *Lois Remembers* ; *Al-Anon's Twelve Steps & Twelve Traditions*; *Alateen - a day at a time* ; *As we Understood...* ; *...In All Our Affairs: Making Crises Work for You*; *Courage to Change: One Day at a Time in Al-Anon II* ; *From Survival to Recovery: Growing Up in an Alcoholic Home*; *How Al-Anon Works for Families & Friends of Alcoholics* ; *Courage to Be Me - Living with Alcoholism* ; *Paths to Recovery - Al-Anon's Steps, Traditions, and Concepts*; *Living Today in Alateen* ; *Hope for Today* ; *Opening Our Hearts, Transforming Our Losses* ; *Discovering Choices*

The goal isn't to do a successful inventory. The goal is to dig to the deepest levels of self-honesty.

--Anonymous

The Fourth Step is the hardest one for many newcomers in the Program. It is so difficult, in fact, that some of us still waiting to do it are no longer newcomers.

It's so hard to be honest with ourselves, that some of us never accomplish it. The consequence of this is low self-esteem, which draws us toward failure.

Help is available, though. God, who knows all about us, is willing to help us get honest with ourselves. We only need to ask. Until we become honest with ourselves, we can't grow spiritually.

Today I pledge to be honest.