

Our Three Legacies

RECOVERY through the 12 Steps

UNITY through the 12 Traditions

SERVICE through the 12 Concepts

The Agram

5

July-September, 2018

District 5 Al-Anon/Alateen Newsletter

District 5 Website-www.sonapalanon.com

We're Not So Different

I'm a do-gooder. I enjoy nothing more than to pitch-in, fix problems, and help where needed. Much of the day I give freely of what I have, groovin' on the good vibes that come from hearing "Thank you" and being told what a great person I am. When I don't get those accolades, and when too many situations don't work out as I plan, then I can become a rage-filled malcontent: angry, disappointed, and resentful. I'll neglect my own responsibilities in order to do for another, but when praise doesn't come, when crazy confusion arises (as it always does with the alcoholics in my life), or when I end up looking like the bad guy, I smack my head and wonder, "How did I get here again?" I regret ever having gotten involved and swear I'll never do it again. Yet when another call-to-action shows up, I'm likely to jump right back in.

As an Al-Anon member, I've learned that alcoholism is a three-fold disease: mental, physical, and spiritual. From working the 12-steps in Al-Anon, I have come to recognize that my compulsion to "help" is the exact same three-fold phenomenon. Mentally, I plot and plan clever ways to advise, direct, and control the world around me just like the alcoholic or drug addict devises every which way to get their next drink or drug. Physically, I'm awash with adrenalin and endorphins as I pursue whatever self-satisfying conclusion I'm after in the same way a drug/alcohol user seeks their adrenalin and endorphin euphoria. Spiritually, I forget God when I'm chasing a crisis just as the user forgets God when he or she is chasing a high.

So, my reflexive impulses to assert my judgment and will into another's life aren't all that different from the alcoholics and addicts in my life except that the negative

consequences of my actions are less obvious. Still, my unchecked habit of “helping” can create massive amounts of distress, chaos, and disappointment in me and in my loved ones, especially the ones who get sidelined while I’m indulging in uninvited, unwanted, or unappreciated rescuing.

When I feel the urge to take care of someone at the expense of taking care of myself, I have to reach for my Higher Power’s help to stave off that engulfing temptation, to reveal the error in my ways, and to guide me in a healthier direction. The Fifth Tradition reminds us to stop meddling and use that time to work on our own program. We work the 12 steps with the mirror squarely in front of us. We go to meetings and talk to other Al-Anon members about the exact nature of our wrongs—not the other guy’s. If I refuse to look at my own automatic, self-destructive behavior, then I have little right to ask the users in my life to do it. If I won’t ask for my Higher Power’s help to get off my trip, then I can’t expect anyone else to get off theirs.

~Terry H., Sonoma, CA

Remembering Step 1

When downtown, I decided not to put any money in the meter as I was just going to dash into a store. I came out of the store shortly after to find a parking ticket on my windshield for \$35. My non-recovery behavior was to severely berate myself for being so stupid when a quarter would have saved me the \$35 parking ticket. After a while, I remembered Step 1. I am powerless over the past. The ticket was in the past. Now I realized the penalty was right there in my hand—a ticket to pay. I realized that additionally beating me up for being 'stupid' was not part of the actual consequence and was unnecessary, not to mention making my life unmanageable.

The family I was raised in meted out punishments that could be violent and had nothing to do with any behavior or even whatever I had done. I calmed down immediately. Here was a logical, sensible consequence of 'dashing in to a store' without putting any money in the meter.

~Anonymous

District 5 Alagram Is Making a Comeback and Needs Your Service!

We are keeping it simply about your shares. Writing is a valuable tool of the program, and reading your **experience, strength and hope** will encourage others in their recovery. You may contribute a longer share of about 500 words or a shorter share of about 200 words.

Email submissions to: newsletter@sonapalanon.com

Our recovery topics include:

**steps *traditions *concepts *tools *sponsorship *slogans*

**service *higher power *CAL reflections *another of your choice*

Please include your name and phone number (which will remain anonymous), in case we need to contact you. Your share can be signed with either your first name or something like "A grateful member" or "Anonymous."



Participation Is the Key to Harmony

Lake Path

There's something about running on a path that puts things into perspective. The Lake Path is long, and I know it will be a while before I am able to rest. There are cracks in the pavement, lumps where the earth has moved and leaves have fallen. If I am not focused, I can slip, trip or fall. If I run too fast, the downward momentum may push too hard and cause me to lose direction, too slow and I won't make it up the hills. On smooth stretches of the path, I lift my eyes to enjoy the greenery of the trees, the sunlight as it hits the water, the cross someone has lovingly placed up on the hill. These things I savor with gratitude, knowing they will be gone soon. The Lord, my higher power, says, "This too shall pass," and I believe that to be true for both the rough road and the surrounding beauty. As it is with life, the path keeps going and so must I...

~Anonymous

Holiday Bash Appeal

I've been working on the Holiday Bash Committee in some form or another from before it was called the "Holiday Bash." I love putting on a party! I'm like my mom in that sense. She and my dad loved to entertain family and friends and did so while I was a small child. I remember being put to bed early so they could "get the house ready." My bedroom was off our gigantic living-room, and it had glass doors with curtains that I could peek out and watch through. I specifically remember the Christmas parties. My dad would move the furniture to make room for dancing or mingling, and my mom would decorate the room and tables. I loved to watch the preparations and the guests arriving. My mom had cooked and baked for hours. I sometimes got to "help," as I loved to help. I would get some small task to do and would focus on doing it correctly and perfectly. (The start of my perfectionism and procrastination, I'm sure!)

My mom seemed so happy when she was able to share her efforts with friends and family. Every summer she would help us kids put on a "Circus" in our back yard, including a big Army tent, popcorn, movies and stuffed animals! As soon as school was over, all the neighborhood kids would stop by to ask when the "Circus" would be coming. And everyone got to take home goody-bags with them. That's another favorite memory of mine from my childhood. Of course, as my dad's Alcoholism progressed, those events started to drop away.

Hospitality, though, was big in my family. Even though there were 7 of us in a small dining-room, there was always room for another at our table. My dad's favorite invitation was to, "Come and break bread with us." So as you can see, the hospitality bug is in my genes! Hence, my involvement with the Bash!

Ever since the first year I helped with the Bash (in its second year at the time), it has been a fun event for me. I love the fellowship! A time set aside to "break bread" with all my Al-Anon friends and meet new ones, too. The food is one of the big draws for me, and it has never let me down! The entertainment has changed throughout the years; however, my favorites are the skits. (And I've been in a few, too!) When we introduced the Baskets instead of doing a Silent Auction, I was sold on that idea also. It is amazing to see what the groups come up with for their Baskets, well worth more than the money to buy the tickets.

This year I am the Bash Chair and want to make it better than ever! It takes a village to put on this Bash. Our Committee has started the preparations of putting all the arms of this huge endeavor together, and we need help. We meet once a month and make decisions that make the Bash what it is-a Great Event! We are looking for people willing to share their Experience, Strength & Hope with us. If you like to have fun, and you are grateful for what Al-Anon has given you, come join us! It is my favorite Step 12 service!

~Paula, Events Coordinator

Announcements

Al-Anon's International Convention 2018, Friday, July 6-Sunday, July 8, 2018

Save the Date-Tuesday, October 30, 6pm-9pm, D-5 Fall Potluck/Speaker Meeting
Featuring Tom W (aka Fr Tom), Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 1300 St. Francis Road,
Santa Rosa, CA

Save the Date-January 12, 2019, **Lois and Bill's Annual Holiday Bash**-“The Wonderful World of Recovery, Beyond Our Wildest Dreams”

At the D 5 June District meeting the **Alateen Coordinator** announced a great need for **Alateen Sponsors** in our District. If you would like to serve our young people, contact Gary at alateencoordinator@sonapalanon.com

The Ultimate Test

I have a younger son whose addiction quickly accelerated, and by the age of 24 he was homeless. After some counseling and co-dependency group help, my wife and I were told that the Al-Anon fellowship might help us. We joined Al-Anon almost 10 years ago attempting to find recovery for ourselves and to cope with our family's dilemma. Initially, I thought I would find help with fixing my son's addiction problem, but soon I learned that I am in Al-Anon to find recovery, sanity and serenity for myself.

After years in Al-anon, I finally found a sponsor to help me with the 12 Steps and Traditions, but a few months later, my sponsor had family circumstances which made it hard to continue. I kept

looking for the right sponsor, and finally I found a sponsor who is committed to working the 12 Steps and Traditions with me.

Things at home were under control while the addict was not living near us; we'd get a phone call every few months from him or more often when he was taken to jail for one thing or another. A few months back however, we received an urgent call and had to fly to be near our son whom we thought would probably die. Today he is alive by sheer luck and is now living with us. He is not using and is still recovering physically and mentally, but is not in any 12 Step recovery program.

My Al-Anon program is put to the test every day, almost every moment we are interacting. He needed a lot of care after returning home, and he still requires lots of help and time. Although his presence is a blessing for us, it's also very difficult dealing with him. I found myself stumbling over old habits and slipping into the wrong response in dealing with him, trying to control him and his choices. But with my sponsor's guidance, I found that I can use the 1st Step as my guide, "Admitted we were powerless over alcohol (addiction), that our lives had become unmanageable." I realized that acceptance must take place first. Surrender comes next, and letting go and letting God is the right action for me in most situations. My relationship with my son has improved day by day, but I still slip, though often now I catch myself. It is progress not perfection. As the old saying goes, "Life, my friend, is not a bowl of cherries," but sometimes we can make it so with the help of our Al-Anon program.

~A grateful member of the program

Alateen

Alateen is a fellowship of 12-20 year olds whose lives have been affected by someone else's drinking. They come together to share their experience, discuss what's going on in their lives, and learn coping skills. It is a place to encourage one another, learn they are not alone and learn that alcoholism is a disease.

We currently have meetings in Napa, Santa Rosa and Sonoma. Three are held at schools in Santa Rosa during school hours, while the others are held in various sites. There is a Spanish meeting in Sonoma. To find out about much more, check out the Alateen page on our website, Sonoma & Napa County Al-Anon/Alateen.



Lois & Bill's 15th Annual Holiday Bash
"The Wonderful World of Recovery"
**"Beyond Our Wildest
Dreams"**

Save the Date:

Jan 12, 2019

**Veterans Memorial Building
1351 Maple Street Santa Rosa, Ca**

**Join Us for an Evening Where Understanding, Love & Peace of the
Program Grows!**



Help Wanted:

Immediate Openings – Seasonal Work

Must be willing to work all shifts,

Weekends & Overtime –

Experience helpful but not required –

Only Requirements are:

Enthusiasm, Energy, & Willingness to Serve

Pay + Benefits – Priceless

All interested Applicants contact – Paula

@holidaybash@sonapalanon.com

CONTACT LIST FOR DISTRICT 5 al-ANON FAMILY GROUPS, INC., SONOMA AND NAPA COUNTY AL-ANON

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