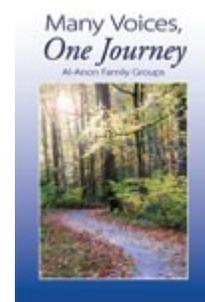
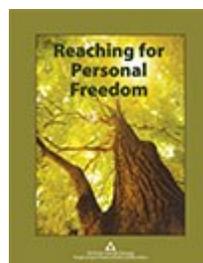
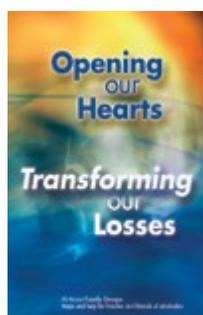
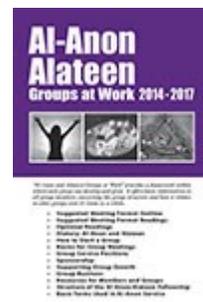
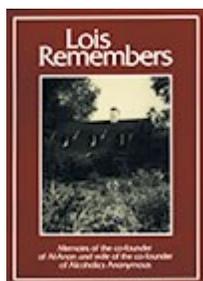
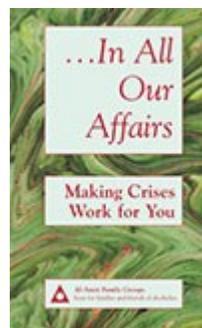
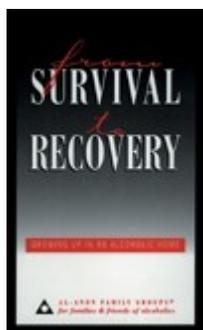
	<h1>AREA OUTLOOK</h1>	<p>Holiday Edition</p>
	<p>IDAHO AREA 13 AL-ANON / ALATEEN NEWSLETTER</p>	<p>Volume 2 <b>Issue 4</b></p>

Oh, the weather outside is frightful, Inside is so delightful....  
Time to curl up with your favorite Al-Anon read!  
Let's see what we've got....



Inside this issue:	
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Remember our Idaho Area Website for information!  
<http://www.al-anon-idaho.org>

I've barely touched the surface. .. Please add 3 daily readers and a Blueprint for Progress, tons of pamphlets, guidelines and even online chats. Whew, get busy to get better. Want to feel better? Read, and talk to someone, attend meetings, and write, and meditate. Walk our Paths to Recovery !

## LEARNING FROM LUANN H.

Growing up, my mom was a prescription drug taker. She had a little pink pill for every ailment or uncomfortable feeling. I always knew my mom as being kooky and detached. When I later learned why, I became angry and resentful because I felt I had been denied a real mom-the kind other kids had. I stayed under her thumb for a long time in hopes I would somehow just miraculously feel satisfied and whole with her. When that didn't happen, I did the detachment game to show my power and control. I still felt empty and sad. It wasn't until Al-Anon, I realized my mom wasn't doing anything against me, she was fighting her own demons. She did the best she could at the time. I've chosen to "Let Go and Let God", and let bygones be bygones. When I accepted that part of my journey, and that my Higher Power was leading me in this life, letting go became joyful and easy. My spirit has lifted and I'm making room for joy to fill the bitterness. I now am working on renewing my relationship with my mom in a way I am excited about. Yes, I said excited! Letting go and acceptance is a far more powerful antidote than hate and despair. I am in a happier place now.



ESSENTIAL FOR MY  
RECOVERY  
FINDING MY  
REAL SELF

When I came to Al-Anon I thought

I knew who I was. I was wrong, because I hadn't truly been looking within.

My focus was outward because of survival tactics learned at young age.

You see I had a rage-aholic in my household. His title was dad, and not only was his anger frequent, but it was inconsistent, and when he blew his top

everyone was forced to take notice. But since it was inconsistent, we all walked

around in a state of hypervigilance. Walking on eggshells, we assumed that expressing opinions or speaking up could elicit the tigers roar. So I learned to focus outward and be a people pleaser, fearing that if I

was who I am, I might die. When I first came, Al-Anon encouraged me to share my story. I was excited!

Finally, my story, from my point of view. But I found myself looking to others to see their reactions, and what they needed. I wasn't sharing my true self; only a manufactured version of what would make every-

one else happy. Since attending Al-Anon for 4 years now, I have discovered that for recovery to occur, I

must be honest and truly authentic and value myself. Now before I share at meetings I pray, God, help

me be authentic, help me value my genuine thoughts and feelings and realize that this is an essential part of recovery. Recovery is about finding my real self.

Mark

**FROM THE EDITOR:** This issue is a Holiday bonus, filled with our writings, sharing our experience, strength, and hope, "Which is how we help one another in Al-Anon". I was so awed by the out pouring of submissions compiled from our last Assembly that I thought this might be just what we need at this time of year. Happy Holidays, Kathy B

Page 2



## Working the steps with Danielle

After going through my fourth step I struggled with focusing on myself and knew I would have to do it again. I struggled with memory issues and what was real and what was mine. When I got to step 8 and 9 and tried to come up with a list of those I had harmed and needed to make amends to I was stuck. So I finally tried the Traditions to help me through these steps. Tradition one taught me to think about others and what my behaviors were and how they were affecting the people around me. Tradition 7 taught me to be responsible for myself. Tradition 12 taught me to not talk poorly about my family. These Traditions helped me work the steps I was struggling with and how or why and who I needed to make amends to. So first I made amends to myself. I learned how to make amends for my part in my current life and that taught me how to change to become a better person and to live a better life to make amends for things I no longer remember. What an awesome feeling it has been to be responsible to me for my growth and change

### Change Through Service: A Real Gift!

I came into Al-Anon service work thinking of myself as “other”. I felt separate from everyone else, like I didn’t know enough, didn’t have enough experience. So I tried to keep my head down and avoid eye contact. I was scared someone might catch me not doing “GR Work”, or “Assembly work” appropriately. I tried to hide. But the fellowship of Al-Anon found me. My District Rep sought me out, gave me everything I needed, remembered my name even! After a few assemblies I noticed I wasn’t hiding, I was talking to people freely. I was contributing!

What an amazing change for me. Because of my service work, I get to meet people from all over the State. Wonderful people I am privileged to call friends. My service work has been a fun challenge that gets me into an exclusive club with all the best members.



What “gift” does Service  
hold for You????

### 3 TOOLS OF THE PROGRAM IN USE HERE!



#### SERVICE

The father of my children, who no longer lives with us, gave us his old laptop. One of the kids wanted to play with it so I got it started. Since it was so slow, I decided to delete a bunch of files that were still there. I went into the pictures folder and there were a lot of pictures of him “acting reckless”. My mind went crazy with memories of the past. I grew extremely angry, resentful and ultimately I felt completely worthless. That was a Friday night. The next day we had a District meeting, my sponsor volunteered me to help the District Secretary. As I sat in the meeting taking the minutes, I had an awesome realization, my mind was focused on the task at hand! I saw how willing and helpful the rest of the District members were. I became extremely grateful at that moment for the power of service. When serving, yes we are helping a cause, but when done in the right spirit the person serving is the one who gets the most blessings. I experience this every time I help out.

SOL B.

#### SPONSORSHIP

It all started 8 ½ or 9 years ago. I had been in the program about 2 years and was stuck. Reluctantly I sought a sponsor. (I didn’t need one). I faithfully called her every Thursday evening. Most nights we just talked about stuff. From time to time she would ask me where I was at in working the steps. After 2 ½ years, I was through the 12 Steps. An amazing journey! Because of my first sponsor, I caught the “bug”. She was so very patient with me– she let me work at my own pace. I could not believe why someone, who originally didn’t know me would spend so much time listening to and loving me. Through my Higher Power I felt compelled to pay it forward through service especially Sponsorship. I love my sponsees, they fill me up.

Terry A.

#### LITERATURE

Paths to Recovery is the biggest help as I’m always covering the Steps, Traditions, or Concepts to help me in my daily life. This book is a great tool to take sponsees through their first journey in the Al-Anon program, to help build a foundation, change and live life by. I also love the history of program told in One Journey, Many Voices by teaching me how people that have gone before me have shared their Experience, Strength and Hope for me to grow by.



Carol G.



**I am a visual artist. My words come in colors and live. Writing has become therapy for me. I am (or have been) uncomfortable with sharing it in the past. Writing does not, or has not, come easy. I have submitted to the Forum two times. The first was not accepted. The second time (the writing) was accepted along with a photograph. I'm not sure when or how it will be used.**

**I know it is not easy to do something that is new or you do not feel confident in. But Al-Anon has taught me to use the tools, along with the Fellowship ; and that I can do things. I just need to be willing and leave the rest to God!**

I like certain things to be done in a certain way. I seldom think of myself as a perfectionist but I found myself writing and re-typing minutes from our secretary. After all, I needed to be sure everyone has absolutely accurate and a visually pleasing document. The last meeting I couldn't get the minutes revised right away. It was four months before I got to them. *Finally* I realized what I was doing. The next meeting I let the secretary do her job and quit trying to do something that was not my job. I feel so relieved to no longer be responsible for that. It was a huge step in my growth....first to even understand what I was doing and secondly to let it go. Thanks Al-Anon!



When I was married I had 2 step-children that fought like cats and dogs. Their father and I would always step in and fix the problem. One day they were fighting over the bathroom— who got to use it (boy in it already) and who needed it (girl needing to go to work). They were both screaming for me to take their side because Dad wasn't home. Well, I had read the story of the lady who took a walk when there was conflict between her son and husband so I grabbed my purse and drove to the library. I picked out a few books ; making sure to take an hour and then went home. Nobody was dead, in fact nobody was home. I checked the bathroom ; some blood on the wall but nothing broken. I was so relieved that I cried. I did not have to referee any more. That night at dinner, the Boy child had a scratch on his face, but no broken bones. The Girl had a broken fingernail. I learned to let them figure out their own relationship and never interfered again!

Laurie B

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## STEPPING RIGHT ALONG! TRADITIONS TOO!

**STEP ONE:** I CANNOT CONTROL IT, I DID NOT CAUSE IT, AND I CANNOT CURE IT. I AM A CONTROL PERSON. THIS I LEARNED FROM BEING AN AL-ANON MEMBER. I USED TO THINK THIS WAS A "POSITIVE" TRAIT, BEING ORGANIZED AND IN CONTROL OF SITUATIONS. WELL, I LEARNED THAT WITH ALCOHOLISM AND DRUG ADDICTION IT DOESN'T WORK. AL-ANON HAS HELPED ME TO LEARN "CONTROL" OF OTHERS DOESN'T WORK WELL IN LIFE! I ONLY CAN CONTROL MY BEHAVIOR, BY CONTROLLING MY OWN BEHAVIOR, IT HAS POSITIVELY IMPACTED OTHERS. I APPRECIATE THE FREEDOM I HAVE GAINED, AND THE RESPECT FOR OTHERS THAT I HAVE

### **STEP THREE**

Of course I'm a fixer and am sure to keep up on all the goings on in my family who all live 800 miles away. Recently my sister called with a story of the disastrous decisions my brother was making that we feared would lead to his death. I stayed up all night wondering and praying about how I could intervene, even though I had "helped" this brother before and almost lost our relationship. So I decided to work step 3 and turn my will and my life over to the program and defer to the wisdom of my sponsor before I took any action. She walked me through possible options, and helped me define my "hula hoop" (space). Not only did I feel relief getting my thoughts out of my head, but my options seemed a little clearer. As I was mulling over what I would do, my sister called back and said my brother was now in counseling and actively working on his problems in a constructive way. My H.P. had slowed the momentum of what I was sure was a catastrophe if I didn't intercede, and solved the situation before I had a chance to "help". **SO GRATEFUL!**

### **SEVENTH TRADITION:**

My 2 oldest children and I got involved in Al-Anon and Alateen about the same time. So, the Al-Anon/ Alateen language was known to us all. My son started bringing home his "things" his friend in the neighborhood was letting him use or borrow. I knew the reputation of this friend and in my mind questioned why he was so generous. Coming to realize or know somehow he had "borrowed" them himself and let his friends hide them as gifts or another set of borrowings. I talked to my son about this in a gentle way not wanting to raise all his defenses for his friend. Then I brought up the 7th Tradition and applied it to this situation. Our family was self-supporting, we were not getting support from their father or welfare, we earned our way. What we couldn't we were not going to borrow-we were going to decline those gifts or contributions from whoever. It worked. He said "you're right" and he gathered up and took back what had been loaned or what ever it was called.

## TOUGH DECISIONS!

Sometime ago when my adult alcoholic son got out of rehab., he asked if he could move to another state and live in our condo that we owned and was vacant. After prayer and a lot of discussion what the boundaries would be ; I said yes and off he went. A couple of months later I flew to that state to spend sometime at my Colorado home with him.

Upon arrival, it was evident that he had relapsed. When we sat down to talk, because of the program and what I had learned about detachment I was calm. I simply said you have been drinking. He became very angry and stomped out of the house. I did not get mad, instead I said a prayer for myself and for him. A couple of hours later he returned and said “you are right, this is not working out”. Because I knew about detaching with love and about boundaries; together we made a plan for his disposition. In fact the day he left the condo he called and told me he loved me and he was sorry. I knew I could not control his use of alcohol. I told him how much I loved him and he had the right to live his life the way he wanted to without my interference. He had some rough times for a while, however, when I got out of the way and minded my own business I had peace and joy in my life whether he was using or not.

Today he is sober, employed , engaged to a wonderful woman and I stay out of his business.

**Al-Anon gave me a real relationship with my son!**



## Is Control A Four Letter Word?

Learning that I could not control people I loved and outcomes at family functions has been my greatest Al-Anon accomplishment thus far.

I was so entrenched in the behavior of my family that I forgot to live my own life. I would spend endless hours trying to find solutions to the behavior of my adult children , yet not spend 10 minutes trying to make myself presentable. I wasn't seeking a solution, I was trying to determine “whose fault is this”. And, if I couldn't find a 3rd party to blame, I blamed myself.

My years within the rooms of Al-Anon have allowed me to see what part I played in always trying to “fix things” or further diminish my self esteem by blaming myself for things beyond my control.

Today I have strong parameters on what is my responsibility. It has freed up my life to be my own.

Cheryl G.



## ELSA'S STORY: A Christmas Present for you!

My name is Elsa M. I first heard about Al-Anon from an AA member, but did not go till 7 months later because I did not think there was anything wrong with me! All faults were on the other side.

**March 1963:** In desperation, I went to an AA Open meeting (parked my car 3 blocks away!) and there met an Al-Anon lady who took me under her wing. I felt I could not go to Al-Anon as the problem drinker, my husband, was a consultant doctor (Radiologist) in a small town and a well-known person. But my mentor, Joan McL. Suggested I tell my husband I was taking a Self-Improvement Course! He was pleased to hear that, and told me I sorely needed it.

**Early Attendance:** My very first group was East London, South Africa, Al-Anon Group. It was started in 1962 by Joan McL. Meetings were weekly at the same time and place as the AA meetings in an adjacent room. Meeting studied the Steps. Attendance was about 10-12 mostly women (all wives) and one gentleman. Duration 8 PM to 9 PM. I started right away to apply what I was hearing at the meetings and within 6 weeks I became aware the program was working for me. There is still an Al-Anon group in East London, South Africa, as far as I know. I no longer attend it, as I no longer live there.

The name of my present group is the Wednesday Night group in Twin Falls, ID. I have had two alcoholic husbands, both ended up in AA. No other family members are in Al-Anon or AA. One son who is alcoholic says he does not need AA. Both my grandfathers were alcoholics, I have learned in recent years.

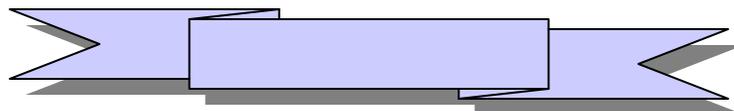
### **Al-Anon's image in early days of my Al-Anon walk:**

1. I loved and appreciated it from the start
2. Cannot remember any special problems. All were smoking meetings but we just accepted that in those days.
3. Basically the format of meetings is the same but many more topics are discussed. There are many more books available (CAL). In my early days there was only "Living With An Alcoholic" plus the help of Al-Anon, and a handful of pamphlets.

Twelve Step Work: There was an Open AA meeting every week and we used to attend, and there we met the wives/ girlfriends of AA's and invited them to come to Al-Anon. also, Al-Anon was always asked to speak at Public Meetings (AA) which were held regularly and always followed by refreshments when we could approach any new "faces" and encourage Al-Anon attendance. In the town, there was SANCA (South African Council for Alcoholism) and they were most supportive. I do not recall Professionals, Pastors or doctors being interested. But in those days talk about alcoholism was "not done" or ever mentioned outside AA and SANCA.

**Service Work:** I do not recall service work being mentioned at all in those early days. In the group, I learned to take the meeting and served as Sec'y/Treasurer, and chaired an assembly. In other cities where I've lived I also did group duties, and was always ready to talk if asked by AA. I also started new groups. And in the 80's I served on the General Service Committee in South Africa as the Convener for Al-Anon in Institutions, and I often spoke at conventions.

Since being here in Idaho I have served as Group Rep, District Rep, Chairman of the Assembly, and now Public Outreach coordinator for both my district and Idaho Area. I have also sponsored Alateen for the last 10 years, and correspond with Loners in the Lone Member Service.



## ELSA CONTINUES!

**Sponsorship:** My first and only sponsor, Joan McL, chose me! We have been in touch and loving friendship all the years from 1963 till her death recently in Cape Town, South Africa. I am still a sponsor of several dear folks, in many parts of the US and the world, and I keep in touch regularly, and send them the Al-Anon speaker's tape from each assembly. Each time I sponsor another I have a refresher course in basic Al-Anon, which is refreshing and enriching for me. We become and remain friends in the true sense.

**Alateen:** There was no Alateen in South Africa when my children were in their teens, and I know that they would have greatly benefited from the Alateen program. I know I took my frustration and distress in the alcoholic situation out on my children before Al-Anon, which needs a lifetime of amends.

**AA:** AA in south Africa was right there and very cooperative with, and accepting of, Al-Anon, far more so than in Idaho.

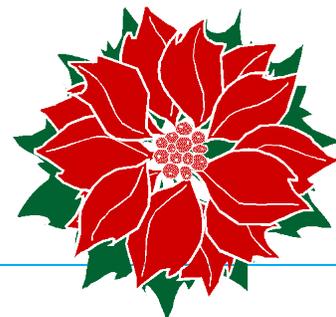
Reflections:

1. My whole life changed after coming to Al-Anon, my husband told me he considered I was the "biggest bitch and shrew" in the country before Al-Anon!
2. Little has remained the same.
3. The Twelve Traditions have helped me solve group problems, by my applying their wisdom. And I have learned to use them and apply them to my affairs in general, and to my marriages in particular.
4. What I share with every newcomer I meet up with are the 3 things I was told my very first meeting when I said to Joan McL, "This is what I've been looking for, for years, how do I start? There seems so much: Steps, Traditions, Slogans, etc.?" And she replied, "Keep it simple, Elsa. Start with your tone of voice, and THINK before you open your big trap (mouth) and try to take your Hands Off". (March 1963).

Also I suggest a slogan or two: One Day at a Time, Easy Does It, Let Go and Let God. These will lead a newcomer into the program. And of course the Serenity Prayer-reading it, thinking about it and realizing what it is actually saying to us and suggesting we do. And using it at every critical moment.

Written October 24, 2002

Sent in by Ladora with permission of Elsa M.



Please help spread the word that beginning Monday, December 7, *Courage to Change*(eB-16) will be available electronically in English, Spanish, and French from the following electronic media providers: Apple iBooks, Amazon, Barnes and Noble, and Kobo.



Members can now purchase the daily reader through these companies for their own iPad, Kindle, Nook, or other electronic reading device, or as a gift for someone else. On Apple iBooks, the electronic book is priced at \$13.99 (U.S.), and on Amazon, Barnes and Noble, and Kobo, it is available in two parts, each for \$6.99 (U.S.). If members should ask, the reason why the e-book is being offered in two parts by these three companies is to ensure most of the purchase price goes to Al-Anon, instead of to outside entities.

Information about this opportunity is posted in the December mailing of *Group e-News*, and will also be available in upcoming mailings, as well as in *The Forum*.

More information will follow on the *Courage to Change* audiobook, coming soon in early 2016.

*This announcement is informational only, and not an endorsement of any electronic media provider, e-reader, or other products sold by electronic media providers*



HAPPY HOLIDAYS EVERYONE  
AND TO  
ALL A GOODNIGHT!  
KATHY B.  
YOUR NEWSLETTER EDITOR