

**You don't have to drink to suffer from alcoholism. There is help for you in Al-Anon and Alateen.**

To find a meeting or information about Al-anon go to: [ncwsa.org/d23](http://ncwsa.org/d23)

Al-anon Answering Service  
(831) 462-1818



**January/February topic:**  
Al-anon in institutions.

Share your experience, strength and hope or any Al-anon related news to: Petra (Editor) at [district23wayandpace@gmail.com](mailto:district23wayandpace@gmail.com)



Way & Pace is produced by and for the members of the 23rd Al-Anon District, which serves Santa Cruz and San Benito Counties. It is distributed on the third Saturday of every other month to coincide with the District meeting. Your stories and Al-Anon related announcements are gratefully accepted.

**Please submit via email: Petra (Editor) at [district23wayandpace@gmail.com](mailto:district23wayandpace@gmail.com)**

Articles published at discretion of editors. Articles may be edited to fit the space.

NOTE: This is a local newsletter, not Al-Anon conference approved literature. We invite all members to submit material for publication. The opinions within do not necessarily reflect those of Al-Anon or District 23.

## AL-ANON NEWS

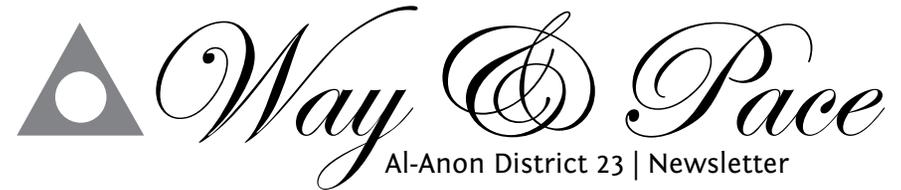
### **Al-Anon from your Desktop:**

World Service Office: [www.al-anon.alateen.org](http://www.al-anon.alateen.org)  
Northern California Area: [www.ncwsa.org](http://www.ncwsa.org)  
District 23's own webpage: [www.ncwsa.org/d23](http://www.ncwsa.org/d23)  
Online Meetings: [www.ola-is.org](http://www.ola-is.org)  
and so many more – if you google Alanon, you'll find lots of us.

### **District 23 Holiday Lunch & Crafts Faire**

Saturday, December 8, 2012 from 10:00am-3:00pm  
Mt. Calvary Lutheran Church, 2402 Cabrillo College Drive Soquel, CA

10:15am-11:30am: Al-Anon meeting;  
12:00-1:15pm: Potluck Lunch;  
1:45pm-3:00pm: Speaker Meeting with AA, Al-Anon, and Alateen Speakers



## Family gatherings bring back my childhood holiday-time anxieties

Having grown up in an alcoholic home, I carry a good deal of baggage. Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year's, and other family gatherings involved drinking and my parents' alcohol-fueled behavior. As a child, I felt frightened and confused.

I continue to experience anxiety during family celebrations, even though my parents are deceased and I am now in my senior years. Much of the old fear that I had about my parents' out-of-control drinking is now transferred onto my adult children.

I have been attending two Al-Anon meetings a week for the past six years. Utilizing the program's principles has become essential to my living a peaceful and serene life. Nonetheless, the old anxiety returned as I planned a lengthy holiday visit to see my adult children.

Prior to my leaving home, I shared my feelings with my home group, as well as stating my plan of action to remain focused on Al-Anon principles. Group members shared their experience, strength, and hope giving me support and encouragement. By going on-line, I printed a list of meetings in the town that I was visiting. My One Day at a Time (B-6) daily readings kept me mindful of my choice to live according to the Steps and Traditions. The Serenity Prayer and slogans helped me daily to mind my own business. I frequently used "Think" and "Let Go and Let God."

Some of my anticipated concerns regarding family drinking did occur; however, I observed that my reactions have changed. I repeated the first three Steps to myself often, recognizing that I am powerless over the choices family members make. The old anxiety is the "unmanageable" part of my life. Moving on to Step Two, I turned my life over to my Higher Power and asked Him to restore me to sanity. Recalling the first three Steps gave me a sense of peace and comfort. In addition, I did attend a meeting, which was like food for my soul.

Overall, I was surprised that I was able to focus on gratitude and the joy of spending time with my grandchildren. Utilizing the tools of the program gave me the ability to emphasize the positives and let go of the situations that I cannot control. What a blessing I receive from working the Al-Anon program.

**By Nathalie D., Georgia  
The Forum, December 2011**

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## Until Al-Anon, I was tangled in my son's life

It is an understatement to say that my life had become unmanageable. My 17-year-old son was abusing drugs and alcohol. I spent night after night wondering what I had done wrong, and what should I be doing differently. It seemed like the more I tried to fix and control him, the worse things became. I would listen in on his phone conversations, spy on him, and raid his room looking for drugs and alcohol; yet continue to clean up his mess and mistakes. I took the fall for his actions.

One day, a dear friend told me I should go to Al-Anon. I was so surprised at my first meeting to hear how many people were telling my story. They, too, had cried night after night, worried that every ambulance or police siren was because of their child. They, too, had worried that their lives were out of control. It hit me that they were using past tense—used to be out of control. I heard how Al-Anon gave them their lives back. I wanted what they had, so I returned to Al-Anon week after week.

The first tool that Al-Anon gave me was the Serenity Prayer. This prayer became my comb to work out the tangles of my life. When I found myself worrying about my son, I said the Serenity Prayer. I was able to separate what I could not change and what I could change. Of course, the only thing I could change was myself. My tangled life was beginning to become untangled. It has been one and a half years since I went to my first meeting, and my life has transformed. I feel like the happiness I now have radiates from every cell of my body, and I can honestly say this is all because of Al-Anon. I am truly grateful.

**By Carol B., British Columbia**

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## How I've changed since my first meeting

I recently celebrated my eighth anniversary in the Al-Anon program, and I'm a very grateful member. I look back at my first meeting and smile, knowing that my Higher Power played a part in getting me there and having me hear just what I needed to hear.

The room was very full of people. I was so sad and afraid. My best friend was with me; we sat in the back row, close to the corner. My head was down and my shoulders were slumped. I was barely able to say my name as everyone went around the room for introductions.

The topic was "Let Go and Let God." My friend and I were amazed. I remember feeling better that day, just being in the room. I kept coming back, wanting to feel even better. I read some Al-Anon literature and found all of my secrets exposed. These people knew everything I had done and loved me anyway.

They knew about my threats to leave the alcoholic, how I poured alcohol down the drain, and how I drank with him so there wouldn't be as much. They knew about my searches in the garage for hidden bottles. I realized that not only was I not alone, but that these strangers understood me and loved me. I kept attending week after week and started feeling much better.

My life has totally changed from that winter eight years ago. I am no longer afraid. I have the strength to take care of myself and my children.

I have faith that things will work out just the way they are supposed to. I will be forever grateful for a room full of strangers at that first meeting and to the Al-Anon program for giving me back my life.

**By Diana B., Oregon**

<http://www.al-anon.alateen.org>

## A changed perspective led me to serenity

Last fall, I decided to visit my family for Thanksgiving. My decision thrilled my mother since I had declined the invitation numerous times in years past. This time, it felt like the right thing to do. I was ready.

I went home with an open, grateful heart—with no expectations and no lingering resentments. My visit was wonderful. I truly had a great time.

To welcome the New Year, I called both my adult siblings. I wanted to express how nice it was to see them and spend time with them and their families. After our conversation, it was hard to believe that we were all under the same roof during that visit. Why was their reaction so different than mine? Then I thought about perspective—my perspective.

I'd set out on that trip intending to enjoy myself, free from the past, determined to keep things in the present. The only thing I can conclude is that something has changed. I've changed. I'm not better than they are. I'm just different. I am no longer seeking out the negative, holding onto past hurts and resentments.

Today, I navigate in a new way. Just for today, I am willing to work from where I am. I feel more comfortable in my own skin; more accepting of people, places, things, events, and family dynamics for who and what we are. I try to keep the focus on myself and my perceptions. I work at asserting reasonable, healthy boundaries, taking with me a deliberate attitude of gratitude during visits home or when making those phone calls. I take what I like and leave the rest.

I'm so grateful to Al-Anon for having shown me a lighter, better way. The best part—I no longer seek to argue my perspective with others. I am better able to accept and appreciate others exactly where they are. I respect their individual points of view. After all, "How Important Is It?"

**By Kimberley M., Michigan**

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## Getting off the emotional roller coaster

Although I grew up in an alcoholic home, I truly believed that alcoholism would not be an issue in my life if there were no active alcoholic drinking. I did not realize how much living with the disease of alcoholism as a child would affect my relationships with my children and husband.

I found Al-Anon when I finally realized I was raising my children on the same insane emotional roller coaster that I had survived. I was desperate for a new way to live.

From the first meeting I attended, I felt at home and safe. I got a Sponsor and worked the Steps. I went to meetings and read the literature.

I came into the program wanting to change the people around me. I realized I was getting healthier when I stopped sitting in meetings and thinking "so and so" should hear this.

The Al-Anon program taught me to focus on me. I learned that changing my behavior was all I could control in my life. The miracle was that the change in my behavior was the catalyst for change in our family.

**By Sheri S., Arizona**

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