



Alateen is 50 years old... Happy Birthday!

It was in 1957 that an Alateen group was started in California by a teenage son of AA/Al-Anon parents. Alateen is part of the Al-Anon fellowship. It is designed for the younger relatives and friends of alcoholics through the teen years. Members conduct their own meetings with the guidance of an Al-Anon member Sponsor. Alateen follows the same Twelve steps, Twelve Traditions, and principles as Al-Anon.

Alateen helps preteens and teens recover from the effects of living with the problem drinking of a relative or friend. Alateen is our recovery program for young people.

Our program of recovery is adapted from Alcoholics Anonymous and is based upon the Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions, and the Twelve Concepts of Service. The only requirement for membership is that there is a problem of alcoholism in a relative or friend.

Support the Alateen groups in your district. Find a way to celebrate with them! Alateens need Al-Anons and Al-Anons need Alateens. We are the hope for the future.



Head to the State Convention this year...
and enjoy the gifts of recovery!

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Soaring *with* Serenity

32nd Annual Virginia Area Al-Anon/Alateen Convention

**June 8, 9, & 10, 2007
Natural Bridge Inn & Conference Center
Natural Bridge, VA 24578**

**Registration Form Auctions & Raffles!
Convention Menu Friday Dinner Options**

Convention Registration Information:

Early Bird Registration (Al-Anon and AA)	\$25.00
Postmarked After May 24, 2007	\$30.00
Alateens free but must register and be accompanied by an adult	Free!
Saturday Night, Speaker Meeting With Coffee Station Only	\$ 5.00
Total Meal Package	
Sat. Breakfast, Lunch & Banquet Buffet; and Sun. Breakfast	\$70.00
Saturday Night Buffet - only	\$35.00

If you have any questions contact Sharon at: Email: Kkrewson1@cox.net
Phone: (757) 427-2414

HOTEL RESERVATION INFORMATION Natural Bridge Inn & Conference Center Natural Bridge , VA 24578

To make your room reservation, call: (540) 458-3751 (800) 533-1410
and tell the Hotel you are with the AFG Convention – Soaring with Serenity

Room Rates 1 – 4 people per room per night

Hotel \$89.95 + 11% tax Patio \$79.95 + 11% tax Cottage \$55.95 + 11% tax
Hotel rooms have a tub/shower combination – Patio and Cottages have shower only.

**Make every effort to register by May 19th as the hotel
will not be saving rooms especially for us after that date.**



How I found Alateen and Why I keep coming back

My grandma asked me if I wanted to come and try a meeting and I was like ok- whatever. I'll just go one time. But I got hooked. I keep coming back because it is a place to get my problems off my chest.

One day my mom was in an AA meeting and I was waiting in the hall playing with something. A lady came up to me and asked if I was in Alateen. When I said "no", she gave me an Alateen packet. When my mom came out she said it was a good idea. I feel comfortable being here. I've had a lot of bad things in my life that I didn't talk about. Now I can. I'm glad that what I say here stays here.

I found Alateen by my aunt. I was really scared to come at first but I tried it and started to like Alateen. I keep coming back because I can be open-minded. Nothing I say will leave the minds of the other people. It is a way to say what I want to and not have anybody tell anyone. And I love to listen to other people's stories because I sometimes learn things. I'm not the only person that has problems. And I feel good to know that.

I found Alateen when my friend came over on a cold December night. She said that she had parents that were alcoholics and she knew that mine were, too. The next day I told my parents about it and they thought it was a good idea. My parents gathered information about it and one night I went with my friend to a meeting. All at once I thought it was right for me. I went the next week and the next, and the next... I found myself going to every Alateen meeting I could! I found myself having more serenity, and understanding that my parents did not choose to drink, but they had a disease. It helped me realize that I can still love my parents, even when they have a beer can in their hands.



Dear Serene,

How does Alateen fit in with Al-Anon? My group just meets and we have two sponsors and we talk about stuff and some of us go to Alateen conferences and a couple of us go to Assemblies, I think. I just don't know how the two groups connect. Can you tell me?

A-teen

Dear A-teen,

Lots of people don't realize that we are Al-Anon Family Groups, a worldwide recovery fellowship of Al-Anon and Alateen. To answer your question, Al-Anon/Alateen is one fellowship. Alateen is the youth portion of the fellowship. So, by design, it is a fellowship in which all members fit.

Many people, even Alateens, have the notion that Alateens are separate. That's probably because there are some things that are more appropriate for younger members than what is shared in adult meetings. Alateens deal with issues that may be complicated by being younger, being in school, and living with hurting parents, intense peer pressure, maturing bodies, and all the challenges of growing up.

Because younger members generally don't benefit from spending exclusive recovery time with rooms full of "blue hair", the fellowship developed Alateen programs so that younger members may have activities that are age appropriate.

This solved some problems for both adult and younger members. It also created some concerns. When we don't meet, socialize, play, or work together we don't have the opportunity to know each other and we can create a sense of separateness in our own minds.

Dear Serene continued on the next page ...



Continued...

Now, since I just live and breathe to help people solve problems, here's what I suggest:

- If you are an Alateen, speak to at least two Al-Anons besides your Alateen sponsors before you leave the building. You will not become diseased, faint, or have any of your hair to fall out if you do this. And smile. It's OK.
- If you are an Al-Anon, speak to any Alateen you see. You, too, will not be stricken with disease or faintness. Many already have hair that is falling out, so that's not a problem. And smile. It's OK.
- Alateens, ask to come to the opening of a concurrent Al-Anon meeting.
- Al-Anons, invite Alateens to share your meeting opening on a regular basis. This may be monthly, or every other week or whatever your group conscience is.
- Invite an Alateen or an Al-Anon to be a speaker at your meeting. This can be a whole meeting or a 5-minute sharing of experience, strength, and hope. Once a month would be good, rather just during Alateen focus month.

Each of us came into the fellowship to recover from the effects of alcoholism in a friend, family member, or loved one. Our lives had become unmanageable. The principles of our program are sound. "Principles above personalities" is part of our foundation. As long as Al-Anon/Alateen focuses on these principles, we will feel the unity and strength of the fellowship, and no one will feel like they don't fit.

Well, A-teen, I hope I get to meet you in person someday. You've got a bona fide Al-Anon/Alateen hug coming from me.

Love,
Serene



Literature News.....

E-CAL IS HERE!

The first sharings from members are now available. Everyone is now able to submit sharings for e-CAL. This is the site: www.al-anon.org/members . It asks for a password- the password is your group name. Add AFG at the end. You are welcome to submit original music and graphics with your recovery messages. Photos, stories, poetry, and multi-media are also welcome! Help spread the word - e-CAL is here!

The CD ROM is here: the version of Courage to Change (B-16) is available for your PC! It has a search feature to look up specific words, but you won't be able to make copies, download it, or use it in a Mac or CD player.

Sample Chapter on the Web. The sample chapter pages of our Web sites now also include additional CAL resources, articles from the Forum about the topic, and opportunity for the reader to share. It's available in the French and Spanish sections of the sites as well.

The New Book Opening our Hearts Transforming our Losses

This latest Al-Anon book will prove useful for thought-provoking individual reading as well as stimulating group discussions. It shares the experiences of hundreds of members as we explore how Al-Anon principles have helped us to acknowledge, understand, and accept the losses we have experienced as a result of someone else's alcoholism. The book covers a wide range of topics including death, financial ruin, abandoned dreams, and vanished self-esteem. With the help of Al-Anon Family Groups we can begin to heal and to live life more fully. This book should be out in May 2007 at a cost of \$14.00.

POSTERS:

Posters are not currently available. When the new poster is available, LDC's will be the first to know! In the meantime, AIS's and Area World Service Committees MAY CREATE THEIR OWN POSTERS (SEE PAGES 922 IN THE 2004-2006 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual). A number of information services have used simple block lettering to create an inexpensive, eye-catching poster for local use.

When describing Al-Anon/Alateen literature in the CAL catalog (S-15), Order Form (S-16) on-line shopping cart, or newsletters, the WSO accompanies this information with the following statement: Remember - when you buy from your local literature distribution center, you support your local services.

Lastly -Writing about Relationships:

We could still use more members' stories for OUR RECOVERY IN RELATIONSHIPS (working title). How have you used Step Eleven in your relationships? How have the Traditions and Concepts of Service helped your personal and work relationships? Submit your personal recovery stories on-line or e-mail, fax, or mail sharings to the WSO.

Thanks to all who contributed to this issue!

To send in information or a sharing for the next issue (Summer 2007),

email-nettles1@hotmail.com

Calendar of Events

May 19-20 Area Assembly Massanetta Springs

June 8,9,10 Virginia State Convention Natural Bridge, VA

July 20-22 MEAC Front Royal, VA

.....Thoughts from Lois.....

Humility means seeing myself in true relation to my fellow men and to God.

To raise flowers we must get rid of the weeds.



Bargaining with God is not real prayer.

If you are facing a situation where there seems to be no way out, look up.

An optimist says, "Good Morning, God!"

A pessimist says, "Good God! Morning!"



Will Power: You give God your Will; He gives you His power

It was always my intention growing up to get closer to God. I just couldn't seem to give up my strong will. Family and friends saw it and would shake their heads at me. I seemed to always butt heads with life. It was my will not Gods. This had a profound effect on me...I never grew close to God as a child or young adult. It made me feel uneasy for a long time.

Marrying an alcoholic didn't seem to solve the problem. I was absolutely sure during our pre-recovery years, that it was my will that kept us going, sane and above water. He was too busy drinking to notice what a superb job I was doing! Yet I still didn't have a place in my heart or head for God. I believed at the time that I was in the same league as God- in charge of everything around me. I was in control and I thought I knew how everything was meant to be. I had the plan.

As my husband's drinking progressed, I began to panic. I was sure that we were heading for doom. How could we stay together? He was drinking our lives away. I knew that if I could just convince him he was making a mistake, he could quit at any time. Didn't he have the strong will power I had?

He found Alcoholics Anonymous. This action saved us, saved him, and saved me from my fears and faithlessness in God. Watching him battle with alcohol, turn to God and find serenity seemed too miraculous to be true. But it was true. I saw God's grace working in my husband's life. He began to experience profound periods of joy and serenity. I wanted what he had! But it was frightening. I had held onto the belief that I was holding myself, my husband, and many others together by sheer will power. How could I let go of that and believe in something greater? I had spent more than three decades being all powerful.

My life began to change when I decided to "act as if". It was the only way I could come to terms with a Higher Power. My will was so strong and unbending that I had to practice, practice, and practice giving it away. It seemed like forever until I could feel moments that I didn't "yank it back". Slowly, I began to feel His presence in my life.

Today I am filled with wonder. I can't imagine wanting the kind of power and control I thought I had. I know today that by giving up my will, I gained so much of God's grace and love. I know a God of my understanding today, and he is real.

-Anonymous

District Survey

The meeting you attend is part of the _____ District in Virginia. Your district's trusted servants would like you to answer the following questions so we will be better able to serve you. Please take a few minutes to do this and return it to your Group Representative or contact person by _____.

What is the name of your group? _____

Does your meeting receive information from:

- The monthly District meeting _____
- The Spring Assembly _____
- The Fall Assembly _____
- The Quarterly Service Center Meeting _____

Does your group receive information about upcoming speaker meetings? _____

How is this information given? _____

Does your group see flyers about upcoming workshops and other events?

_____ How _____

Are announcements made at your meeting? _____

Can you name the last 2 events sponsored by the District?

1. _____

2. _____

Did you hear about these events in a timely manner? _____

How did you hear about these events? _____

Were you able to assist in making these events happen?_____ How?

What, in your opinion, is the District's job?_____

Do you think the District is doing its job?_____ Explain_____

Did you know the District has donated Al-Anon and Alateen books to all public libraries
for people to check out?_____ Have you ever used this service?_____

Did you know we have tapes of past speakers available for you to borrow?_____

Have you ever used this service?_____

What more, if anything, do you think the District should be doing?

**Thank you for your time in answering this survey.
We hope to better serve our members through this survey.**

