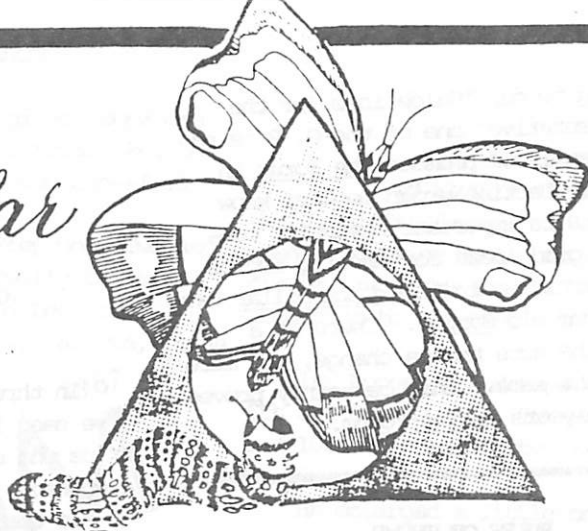


Caterpillar



October 1988

4884 Constitution Suite 1-C Baton Rouge, La. 70808

924-0029 (24 hours)

THIS CATERPILLAR IS DEDICATED TO THE FORUM

"Today's magazine The Forum began with Lois drafting the first Newsletter on a yellow pad at the old Clearing House. The yellow pad had to rest on her knee because there was only one desk and a table. Never one to complain, she simply went ahead each month, writing all groups to tell them what had been accomplished or proposed."

The preceding paragraph was copied from First Steps to help explain the origin and history of The Forum. Lois wrote the Newsletter for two years. As her work increased, with the growth of Al-Anon, help was needed and in June 1954 Margaret D. took over the Newsletter. Margaret continued as editor twenty years.

The name was changed to Al-Anon Family Group Forum in 1954. The different headings the magazine has had are scattered throughout this Caterpillar.

At the end of 1955, the first full year of Forum publication, 12,210 copies had been mailed. Last year in December alone 53,439 copies were distributed.

Each Forum then and now contains an editorial and in 1970 the World Service Conference agreed to print the best of Margaret's editorials in a hardback book published as Al-Anon's Forum Favorites. Presently these editorials are published in two books, Al-Anon Forum Favorites Vol. I and Vol. II. These two books are a real source of growth in this fellowship. The price is \$5.75 for the two and they are available at the A.I.S. office.



FAMILY
GROUP
FORUM
1955

Cont'd.

According to our "Guidelines for the Group Representative" one of the G. R.'s responsibilities is to promote The Forum in their groups. Letting group members know that it exists is important, besides it containing many good ideas for meeting topics.

All the articles in this Caterpillar have been taken from old Forums. There is a saying that the more things change, the more things stay the same. This certainly proves true over the years in The Forum.

RULES OF THUMB FOR GROUP PARTICIPATION

Elly A., a Bridgeton, MD, member sent in the following:

- ✓ **LISTEN** with all your attention to what the other members of the group have to say. This means not thinking about what you are going to say while the other person is talking. It means listening with your heart as well as your mind.
- ✓ **BE HONEST** - really honest. Speak what is in your heart, at least as far as you understand it, not what you think others want to hear, or what will make you "look good," or what will score a point for your side. Discuss items calmly, kindly, and with respect for others.
- ✓ **TRY TO UNDERSTAND** that the other person has as many undisclosed reasons for his beliefs as you have for your own point of view. Don't be too hasty to assume he is talking nonsense.
- ✓ **GOD SPEAKS** to you through other people. Only as you sincerely and prayerfully consider another's point of view can you hear His voice.

June, 1975

Al-Anon
Family
Groups



GOD SPONSORS ENSURE GROUP
GROWTH AND UNITY

In three years of Al-Anon membership I've seen lots of people come and go. Most of us who stayed have one thing in common: a sponsor.

In the beginning I was very confused. When a woman came to make a Twelfth Step call at our house I thought she was checking up on my housekeeping. She became my sponsor and spent lots of telephone time with me, listening, explaining, guiding, but mostly loving. Nothing I said blew her cool.

She got me to think by using the Slogans over and over. I needed praise and encouragement. She gave it by saying "Keep coming back, You're doing fine." Gently but firmly she handed me one Al-Anon tool after another until I wasn't so afraid.

Even now she's the one I go to when things get hairy. Not everything can be discussed at meetings for my personal benefit but because she understands me and Al-Anon she keeps me from hiding from myself.

Thank God I had the courage to ask someone to be my sponsor and that He gave her the courage to accept me and the fortitude to hang on.

June, 1972

Kay H. Mokena, IL

NOVEMBER, 1975
VOL. XXIII, No. 11

FORUM

MAY, 1977
VOL. XXV., NO. 5

Forum

Al-Anon Family Groups ▲

The FORUM

ALATEEN GRATITUDE

The WSO frequently receives letters of gratitude from members. We would like to share this one with you.

I have been in Alateen for two years. I used to be uptight and practically always crying. Now I can get up in the morning and not worry about what is going to happen. I am happy.

Wherever I go I know there will be someone reaching out to lend me a hand. No matter how lonely I become, all I have to do is think about all you beautiful people out there and how much you really care. Thank you everybody. Adele W., Regina Sask, Can.

Editor's note: Do you care enough to sponsor a group? *Nov., 1975*

BASIC AL-ANON NEEDS NO CHANGE

This misconception of going to Al-Anon to change the alcoholic can be easily corrected by Al-Anons (and AA's who question our motives) if we remember to be guided by our Purpose.

Let's remember that the Purpose, Steps and Traditions aren't just a means to open a meeting. Let's see them for what they really are. Let's use them literally. We don't need to add to nor delete anything from them. They are more than adequate as is.

Let's stop being familiar with them. Instead, let's become intimate with them.

Virginia M., Charlotte, N.C.

ODAT? WHAT'S THAT?

That stands for the title of our newest book, ONE DAY AT A TIME IN AL-ANON. It carries an inspirational message for each day, all based on Al-Anon principles, enlivened with stories, examples, fables, incidents, personal experiences. It is lively reading that goes deep to the heart of problems we seek to solve in Al-Anon.

You can get a First Edition copy if you order now (delivery early in Sept.). Write the World Service Office — just say: Send me my ODAT. Enclose check or money order for \$3.00 for each copy and include your name, address, zip code and name of your group. *August, 1968*

FREEDOM TO DISAGREE

I was one of those who found the concept of a belief in a Higher Power difficult when I came to Al-Anon. Back then I termed myself an atheist. To say I was sceptical is an understatement. The word "God" turned me off completely.

Fortunately, the members of the group I belonged to were not intimidated by me and did not fear or resent my opinions. They did not agree with me, but they granted me the freedom to disagree with them without fear of ridicule, rejection or smug toleration.

When I started looking for help I found it through the group — my first Higher Power. The group's open-mindedness and practice of tolerance eventually led me to open-mindedness and the will to believe.

June, 1977 Colleen L. Rocky Mount, N.C.

3 *Nov., 1970*

BULLETIN BOARD

24 Hour Phone

Listen & Learn	Oct. 3 - 9
Zachary Meeting	Oct. 10 - 16
Tuesday's Children	Oct. 17 - 23
Came to Believe	Oct. 24 - 30
Brownsfield Meeting	Oct. 31 - Nov. 6
Wooddale Tuesday Night	Nov. 7 - Nov. 13
Broadmoor A.F.G.	Nov. 14 - Nov. 20
T.G.I.F.	Nov. 21 - Nov. 27
Thursday Noon	Nov. 28 - Dec. 4
Goodwood A.F.G.	Dec. 5 - Dec. 11



Area Assembly - Nov. 12 & 13
W.S.C. 9 a.m.
Day's Inn Alexandria



Meeting Changes -
Weekend Relief #2 has been cancelled

South Side A.F.G. new meeting time - 5:45 p.m.

Starting Over at Bayou Sorrel new meeting time - 12 noon



CONGRATULATIONS, ALATEENS

You did a wonderful job with your presentation at the A.A. Convention. All of us who saw it were very proud of you. The ones who didn't missed a loving, exciting time.

Workshop on
Sponsorship and the Twelve Steps
Conducted by Blanche D.
October 15, 1988
Church of the Way
250 South Foster Drive
Flyer will be mailed to each
group with more information.



STOPPERS thru the years.

Sure is a difference between good, sound reasons and reasons that sound good.
June 1963

A lot of people who say what they think don't do enough thinking.
September 1964

Every minute you're angry costs you 60 seconds of happiness.
September 1969

People cuss when they are not intelligent enough to say anything else.
November 1970

Live now—this is not a rehearsal.
June 1977

These are the first
Reflections...



'I used to lie there like a doormat or come on like King Kong. Through Al-Anon I've learned to keep a better balance.

Jean LaF., Wyckoff, NJ

'Swallowing my pride will never give me indigestion.

Anita P., Flint, MI

'Too often the children are put aside or shelved while we try to find ourselves.

Carol T., Philadelphia, PA

'The Slogan, Easy Does It, changed me from a timid driver, too afraid to drive on the back streets, to someone who drives with confidence day after day, through ground fog on the freeway.

Evelyn W., Vancouver B.C., Can.

'Al-Anon has given me personal freedom, a spiritual outlook on life and the ability to look at myself honestly.

Mary Ann O'B., Milford, CT

May, 1977

We can't be grateful and hateful at the same time.

July 1977



Enthusiasm comes from the Greek meaning "God within."

July 1987

Love is silence when our words would hurt.

August 1988

Today's meeting marks one year that I have been a part of this Al-Anon group. I can't begin to thank you all for your love and your time—but I do have a gift for you! My gift is a ball, a bright red ball. Think of it as your serenity. Carry it with you always. Your well-being and growth are dependent on your complete possession of this ball.

A Bright Red Ball

It's so easy to be careless with it. Sometimes you'll just put it aside. When it's rolled under the sofa and dust-covered it won't be bright and helpful.

Or, if you overreact, you'll give control of your ball to someone else. There's no serenity when you're not the one bouncing it, when you let someone else decide how you feel and act.

Remember, if you relinquish it, only you can reclaim it. You may find it tempting to exchange it for other things that, at the time, may seem important to you. Things like self-pity, resentment, martyrdom and worry. You can't have both resentment and serenity—that would mean you've exchanged your ball.

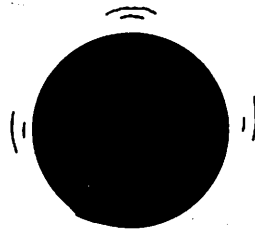
Also, no one on earth can take your serenity away from you. It would be foolish to say that someone made you unhappy, took away your ball. He can't take away your ball, he doesn't have that power. When you're minding someone else's business, you've tossed it to him!

This gift, this small red ball, is a thank you from me to you, my Al-Anon friends for all your time and loving patience. Enjoy it! I hope that it will help you become more aware of your serenity as a cherished possession—one to be guarded jealously.

I wish I could share with you the look on my husband's face when, in the middle of a heated, senseless argument, this dawned on me, and I shouted, "Why am I doing this to myself—give me back my ball!!!"

This beautiful ball—my serenity. **△**

Pam McN., Fresno, CA



December 80/5

AN INSPIRED SLOGAN

Page one of the June Forum gives Steps One and Two in very good capsule form. But one I like better is: I can't—God can—I'll let Him.

Of course this is our Step One, Two and Three, but I feel that it really takes all three actually to Let Go and Let God.
October, 1970 Bill R., LaPorte, Texas

ONE-WORD PRINCIPLE

IN EACH OF TWELVE STEPS

Wes J. of California, had the interesting idea of summing up in one word the principles taught by the Twelve Steps. According to him they are:

1st Honesty, 2nd Hope, 3rd Faith, 4th, 5th and 6th Courage, 7th Humility, 8th, 9th and 10th Responsibility, 11th Patience, 12th Charity.

He enlarged a little on Humility. Arrogance, he says, is the hallmark of the immature. His check-test may help show if and how much humility we have:

- a. Am I teachable? Open-minded?
- b. Am I compassionate?
- c. Am I without pretense?
- d. Do I know my own abilities and limitations?

March, 1974

The FORUM

January, 1987

a meeting in my pocket
BOY'S-EYE VIEW OF AA

My newly-sober (three months) husband invited us out to dinner Christmas Eve. We looked for a nice restaurant. When our 14 year-old son saw the bar as we entered, he whispered to me: "Mom, I hope this AA works!" It did.

April, 1974

The FORUM Subscription Order Form 5U81

(Please Print)

Issues will be mailed in a sealed envelope with no Al-Anon identification.

\$6.00 one year - \$11.00 two years - U.S. & Canada
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Contributions

	July & <u>August</u>	Year To <u>Aug. 31</u>		July & <u>August</u>	Year To <u>Aug. 31</u>
Bayou	23.00	23.00	Powerless Step Study	32.10	82.10
Broadmoor Wed. A.F.G.	30.00	30.00	Prairieville/St. John	42.42	96.42
Broadmoor Alateen Thurs.			Recovering Parents		147.50
Broadmoor Jr. Alateen		10.00	River Road A.C.O.A. Al-Anon		
Brownsfield A.F.G.			Sat. A.C.O.A. Silkworth		
Burnside Group			Sat. Newcomers	5.00	35.00
Caring Parents			Serenity Denham Springs		44.84
Came to Believe	15.00	15.00	Serenity Alateen		
Clinton Al-Anon			Serenity Seekers A.C.O.A.		85.00
Comite A.F.G.	36.00	96.00	Singles in Al-Anon		
Cortana			South Side Al-Anon		
Corporate A.F.G.	40.00	70.00	Starting Over		
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Denham Springs Friday			St. Pat's A.C.O.A.		
Discovery		20.00	St. Theresa's Gonzales		
Double Winners			Stepping Stones	20.00	20.00
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Get Started A.F.G.			T.G.I.M. Step	50.00	150.00
Get With It Alateen			T. G. I. F.		36.97
Gonzales Monday		54.25	Thursday Night A.C.O.A.		
Gonzales Tuesday	84.00	109.00	Together We Can Make It	50.00	150.00
Good Shepherd			Tracy Group		
Goodwood A.F.G.			Triangle	40.00	100.00
Hang 12 Alateen			Tuesday A.C.O.A. Noon		
Happiness Is		30.00	Tuesday Al-Anon Tau		
I Am Important A.C.O.A.	60.00	120.00	Tuesday Night A.C.O.A.	32.00	82.00
Iberville			Tuesday's Children		
Innis Monday			Unity A.C.O.A.	20.75	195.75
Innis Wednesday			University A.F.G.		
Just For Today	60.00	148.00	Walker Discussion	12.00	48.05
Lakeland			Wednesday Noon Serenity		
Listen & Learn		300.00	Weekend Relief		
Live & Let Live	4.50	14.24	We're Here Because		
Lollysharp		30.00	We Were Powerless		
New Life	240.00	553.22	Westside Al-Anon		
New Roads			Willing to Change		20.00
Noon Serenity Huggers	50.00	100.00	Willing to Grow A.C.O.A.	60.00	205.00
Open Parents	3.45	3.45	Wooddale Step		30.00
Point Coupee A.C.O.A.			Wooddale Tuesday Night	5.00	35.00
Port Allen Alateen			Zachary		