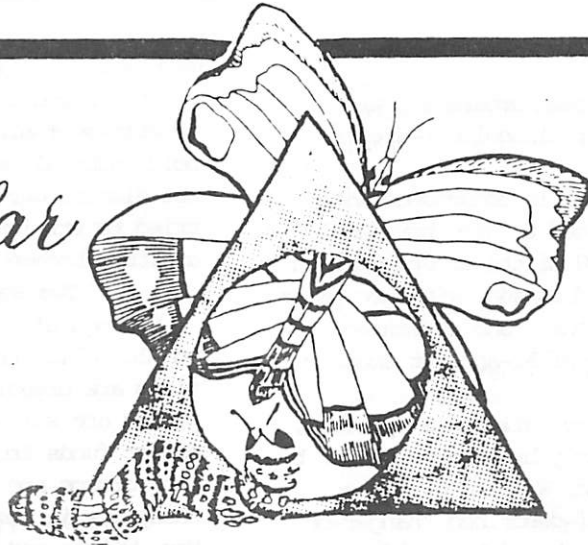


Caterpillar



January 1989

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

924-0029 (24 hours)

The following is the obituary for Lois W. taken from The New York Times. It's very informative and should be of interest to all of us.

Lois Burnham Wilson, a founder of the Al-Anon Family Groups, whose members are relatives and friends of alcoholics, died yesterday at Northern Westchester Hospital in Mount Kisco, N.Y. Mrs. Wilson, widely known as Lois W., was 97 years old and was a long-time resident of Bedford Hills, N.Y.

As Lois W., she was revered as "the first lady of Al-Anon," and as a living reminder of the beginnings five decades ago of the Alcoholics Anonymous self-help movement.

Al-Anon members help one another and themselves to deal with personal problems by speaking about them—"sharing their experience, strength and hope," as they like to say—at group meetings. They also help each other on a one-to-one basis, and they read the movement's many inspirational pamphlets and books.

Thousands of Groups Formed

An executive on the staff of the Al-Anon Family Group headquarters in Manhattan, where Mrs. Wilson's death was announced yesterday, said 30,000 groups—including



Lois W.: 1891 - 1988

several thousand Alateen groups for the teen-aged children of alcoholics—are in operation.

The executive, who in accordance with Al-Anon policy declined to give her name, said more than 20,000 of the groups were in the United States and Canada, with groups in about 100 other nations. She estimated worldwide membership of Al-Anon at about 500,000.

In the 1930's, Mrs. Wilson—a spirited, small woman with lively brown eyes—stuck by her alcoholic husband, William G. Wilson, who had become a self-described "hanger-on in Wall Street." She hoped he would manage to stop drinking for good.

Mr. Wilson did, and in 1935 he became a co-founder of Alcoholics Anonymous. One of its groups flourished in the Wilson's home, then an apartment at 182 Clinton Street in Brooklyn. Since those early days, Alcoholics Anonymous has grown to an international membership of more than 1.5 million. Known within that organization as Bill W., Mr. Wilson died in 1971.

A Time of Discontent

After Alcoholics Anonymous was founded, Mrs. Wilson became discontented. "It seemed I saw nothing of the man I had tried to help," she later recalled.

"He was always with his A.A. cronies" who helped him to resist alcohol, she said, added that "I guess I was jealous and resentful that these strangers had done for him what I could not do."

A turning point came one day when, as she said, "I threw my shoe at him as hard as I could."

"I was so ashamed of myself," she said, "that I went out and walked around the block several times. I soon had to admit that I needed some therapy myself."

Mrs. Wilson, who was not an alcoholic, began applying to herself the same self-help principles that her husband and his Alcoholics Anonymous friends were using.

"I shared my experience with other relatives of alcoholics, and we began to hold informal meetings," she said. "We did not discuss our alcoholic relatives, but tried to straighten out our own lives. This attitude became basic to Al-Anon."

Two Separate Organizations

Though Al-Anon is in many ways patterned on Alcoholics Anonymous, the two organizations are organizationally separate. Both groups are self-supporting; they do not accept funds from non-members. Members of both groups are supposed to maintain anonymity in the news media—which is why Mrs. Wilson and her husband were widely known only by their first names.

Mrs. Wilson was said never to have voiced blanket condemnation of the drinking of alcoholic beverages, affirming that she opposed "only the disease of alcoholism and the damage it does to a family."

She was born in Brooklyn, the daughter of a physician. She graduated from the Packer Collegiate Institute in Brooklyn, worked in a Y.W.C.A. and taught school in Short Hills, N.J., before her marriage to Mr. Wilson in 1918. After her marriage she worked for a time as an occupational therapist, wrote magazine articles and worked as a Macy's sales clerk.

After Mrs. Wilson and other alcoholics' relatives began their meetings, similar self-help discussion groups for members of alcoholics' families were founded elsewhere in the United States during the 1940's. In 1951, Mrs. Wilson, along with a friend and Westchester County neighbor, Anne B., set up a central information center for these groups. The center was initially in her Westchester home.

First Alateen Group

Not long afterward, the center moved into offices in Manhattan, and the movement took the name Al-Anon Family Groups. In 1957, the first Alateen self-help group was

set up, in California, for young people with alcoholism in their families.

Mrs. Wilson remained active and prominent in Al-Anon into the 1980's, traveling on its behalf and appearing at and addressing Al-Anon gatherings. At the first international convention of Al-Anon, in 1985 in Montreal, an audience of 45,000—members of Alcoholics Anonymous as well as Al-Anon—gave her a standing ovation.

There are no immediate survivors.

The letter that follows is from Blanche D. of Austin, Texas. Blanche is a long-time member of Al-Anon who expresses some concerns about our Al-Anon program. It behooves all of us to read this letter carefully and think about the concerns that she brings to our attention. If these things are happening in the groups that we attend, then it's our responsibility to see that they are corrected.

Blanche was the speaker at our very successful workshop on "Sponsorship and the Twelve Steps" in October. Several of her tapes are at the A.I.S. office for rent or to be copied.

When I write these letters, I like to stay in the solution, not the problem. I like to share "how it works" for me—which Al-Anon principles I am using and how they are operating in my life. I am, however, having a real problem, one which I think many of us share. At least that's the feeling I get from talking with you all as travel around. We are finding, many of us, that Al-Anon is often being diluted and changed at meetings until sometimes I don't recognize it anymore, and it seems to be getting worse. I cannot think that Austin is that different from Al-Anon elsewhere; I think the problem is universal, although it may manifest itself differently in different areas.

For instance, people pour into meetings

here, fifty or sixty in a room that holds thirty comfortably, sitting on the floor or standing around leaning on the walls. The obvious answer is to start another meeting, and we do, and in a matter of weeks it is the same. We do not get to know each other; we do not build that marvelous feeling of community that comes with mutual sharing and understanding on a regular basis.

Depending on the chairman, many of our meetings do not follow guidelines for meetings. We have a manual that tells us, among many other things, that newcomers are not asked to speak until they have attended "a number" of meetings; we are to urge them to attend newcomers' meetings so that they can ask questions and talk at length, which they need to do. The manual also says that we do not criticize the alcoholic while we are in a meeting, that we stay on the subject being discussed, and that we do not discuss intimate details of problems. (We do that with sponsors or therapists or both.) When a meeting is on, say, Step Four, and the chairman announces the topic and then says, "...or whatever you want to talk about," I cringe. What many people want to talk about has nothing to do with Al-Anon, its teachings, or its principles, but if I mention the manual, I am rigid and picky or censoring.

Most people, as far as I know, do not try to change the steps or the traditions, nor do they suggest that we ignore them and make up our own. But they change and/or ignore other guidelines. They seem to want to pick and choose which parts of our literature to follow. I do not think that I have that option.

Many people seem to feel that Al-Anon is group therapy. It is a group and its teachings are certainly therapeutic, but it is not the place to "let it all hang out." Group therapy requires a highly trained, skilled experienced facilitator, and we are



BULLETIN BOARD

Night Phone Schedule

Jan. 2 - Jan. 8 Monday Steps to Serenity
 Jan. 9 - Jan. 15 Triangle A.F.G.
 Jan. 16 - Jan. 22 University A.F.G.
 Jan. 23 - Jan. 29 Denham Springs Friday
 Jan. 30 - Feb. 5 Good Shepherd
 Feb. 6 - Feb. 12 Recovering Parents
 Feb. 13 - Feb. 26 Corporate A.F.G.
 Feb. 27 - Mar. 5 Serenity - Denham Springs
 Mar. 6 - Mar. 12 We're Here Because We
 Were There
 Mar. 13 - Mar. 19 Together We Can Make It
 Mar. 20 - Mar. 26 Discovery
 Mar. 27 - Apr. 2 Just For Today

Group Representatives for the groups listed above please call the A.I.S. office at 924-0029 and give us your correct address so the Telephone Chairman can contact you.

If you have volunteered to take the phone have several Al-Anon names and telephone numbers handy in case you get a call from someone who needs to talk. We do this so the phone will not be tied up for long periods of time.

Since we do not give out each other's telephone numbers, we ask that you take the number of the person who needs to talk and give it to the Al-Anon who will be willing to return the call.

Also, we ask that you have at least six months in Al-Anon before you volunteer for the phone.

IMPORTANT NOTICES:

New Schedule Books are at the A.I.S. Office. Price: 25 cents each.

It was voted at the Jan. 3 Quarterly Meeting (Did your Alternate G.R. or G.R. attend?) to charge 25 cents per book to offset the cost of having them printed.

Area Assembly - February 11 & 12
 Belmont Motor Hotel - Baton Rouge
 Workshop - 1:30 p.m. Feb. 11
 Banquet that night at Belmont
 Joe H. - Al-Anon Speaker
 Business Meeting 9:00 a.m., Feb. 12

Heritage Day Luncheon - April 15
 Holiday Inn South
 Bo T., Hueytown, Ala. - Speaker
 More details later

Deep South Alateen Conference
 April 21, 22, 23 - Registration \$47.00
 Tall Timbers
 More details later



We
 were brought
 together to help
 one another.



MEETING CHANGES

NEW MEETINGS:

Clinton Alateen, Wednesday - 7:30 p.m.
 Assumption Catholic Church
 Liberty Road, Clinton, La.

New Roads Alateen, Thursday - 8:00 p.m.
 Library, New Roads, La.

St. Francisville Alateen, Tuesday, 7:30 p.m.
 Methodist Church, St. Francisville, La.

New Beginnings A.C.O.A., Sunday - 6:30 p.m.
 University Methodist church
 3350 Dalrymple Drive

Life Line Al-Anon, Thursday, 7:00 p.m.
 Point Coupe Library
 New Roads, La.

A.C.O.A., Friday -
 Mental Health Center
 New Roads, La.

CANCELLATIONS:

Weekend Relief #2, Saturday - 6:00 p.m.

Iberville Meeting in Plaquemine

T.G.I.F. meeting format will change. The first Monday of each month is now a discussion meeting. In the future in even numbered months the first Monday will be a speaker's meeting.

I Am Important A.C.O.A. Meeting on Thursday at 8:00 p.m. will have a format change. Their last meeting in the month will be a Round Robin Meeting.

not professionals. (Even those of us who are professionals are not professionals at an Al-Anon meeting.) It is dangerous to let someone fall apart emotionally when no one present is trained to help him put himself back together. We do not "work" at an Al-Anon meeting as I understand people do in group therapy. Our meetings are not bitching sessions nor dumping grounds for emotional garbage. Raving and ranting is somewhat like vomiting; the person who does it feels better, but what about those of us sitting around him? We undergo these kinds of emotional ventilations with sponsors.

And oh, I am so tired of profanity. I am shock-proof by now. I understand the relief of erupting into four-letter words when one is enraged, but the obscene casual conversations offend me. Not only is it harsh and aggressive, but it is imprecise. When someone whines at a meeting that he/she is "All f....d up," he isn't telling me anything. I do not know whether that means a person is (a) depressed, (b) confused, (c) drugged, (d) angry—whatever. The only thing he makes clear is that he has a limited vocabulary and that he is insensitive to the feelings of anyone else.

I am alarmed at the variety of literature used at some meetings. Hey—listen—no one reads more than I do! Nobody. I find a great many books helpful and useful and inspiring, and I quote them to you in these letters and talk about them to my friends, but I do not use them at Al-Anon meetings. First if all, where would we draw the line? Once we take our finger out of the dike, there are no limits. If I have a program based on "THE LITTLE PRINCE (a book I love and treasure), I cannot complain if next week someone brings THE CATHOLIC DIGEST or THE BAPTIST STANDARD or THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR. I think the Big Book of AA is divinely inspired and I have read it many times, but it does not address my illness. There is nothing in it about Al-Anon—how

could there be? Al-Anon did not exist when it was written. If I go to an Al-Anon meeting and hear the AA program or the OA program or TA or whatever, where can I go to hear Al-Anon? If I can't get the Al-Anon program shared, taught and discussed at an Al-Anon meeting, where can I get it?

Most of the Al-Anon members I know, including those I sponsor, do not read any or our literature besides ODAT. I have chanted like a mantra, "The program is in the literature. At meetings we share with each other how we have used what we have learned. The program is in the literature." Then when I use a few sentences from FAVORITE FORUM EDITORIALS (as I often do), most of the people have not heard of the FORUM, much less do they know we have a book of its editorials.

I am deeply concerned about the unwillingness of people to sponsor others or—conversely—their willingness but not their ability. I have said until people have started running when they see me coming, "Sponsorship requires contact." There are many ways of doing it right—no one has a monopoly on the process and there are no "shoulds"—but most people just won't do it. Certainly sponsorship is not God's assignment to everyone, but I believe that some people are not listening to Him in this area. Sponsoring others is, after all, for the continuing recovery of the one doing the sponsoring as well as for the good of the one being sponsored. Uninformed, inexperienced sponsors do a great deal of harm. As your sponsor, I need to be able to say, "Our literature teaches..." or "Our program states..." rather than, "I think..."

If I sound angry, it is because I am. Much anger is based on fear, as you doubtless know, and my unhappiness over these issues is very much based on the fear that this program that saved my life and my sanity will be so diluted and jumbled and trivialized that no one will be able to

figure out what it's all about. I know that Al-Anon is in the hands of God, but I also believe that He has made us His stewards. I am responsible. So are you.

Here are some articles from old "Forums" written by Blanche. She has lived this program a long time.



LIFE WITH AND WITHOUT *Sept. '76*

I once heard a member say that to her, serenity is life without: without turmoil, without anger, without dissension. Remembering that I once felt the same way, I didn't leap to my feet to disagree, but I did sit there thinking, 'No, serenity is life WITH!' It's life *with* turmoil and trouble and all the other ills to which flesh is heir, but it is also life *with* a power greater than ourselves, *with* a set of tools with which to tackle problems, *with* a community of people who give us emotional support and remind us of what we believe. Serenity is not freedom from the storm but peace amid the storm; not escape from conflict but inner stability within the conflict.

Blanche D., Odessa, TX

FEELS REJECTED WHEN CRITICIZED

Nov. '75

Early this summer, I was hit by a barrage of criticism. One of my problems is that I tend to see and hear rejection when it really isn't there. Everyone really *is* rejected once in a while, but if our feeling of self-worth is strong and intact, it won't shatter us.

Most of my life I have reacted to criticism by assuming that it was true. Al-Anon friends have convinced me that the healthy thing to do is run it through my reality computer and see what the facts are. The trouble is, I cannot be my own reality computer. I have to have someone else run the information through and find the validity that may be there. I choose Al-Anon friends who know me very well, accept me just the same, and from whom I can take the truth in love. God always seems to send me the right people at the right time.

Blanche D., Odessa, TX

GREAT QUOTES FROM GREAT TALKS

Feb. '74

Where Blanche D., W. Tex. WSD gets her time-stretcher and her jet-propulsion energy is beyond me. She packs enough into each day to lay three people flat. Just recently she sent some quotes which she had labeled "Great Quotes From Great Talks." They are too good not to reach all Al-Anons:

"People get off the program first spiritually, then mentally, then physically — just the opposite from how they got on it." *Katherine P., Camden, Ark.*

"My prayer on a Twelfth Step call is: 'God, you take care of this person and if I can help you, let me know.' "

Ralph J., Ozona, Tex.

"Loving for free means no strings; it does not mean no responsibility."

John DeF., Abilene, Tex.

"Some women ask their husbands a question, answer it themselves and go away mad!" *Gert B.*

"I am accident-prone. I keep bumping into reality!" *Paul F., Indianapolis, Ind.*

Thank you, Blanche. They are gems.
M.M.D.

May '76

SOME THOUGHTS ON ACCEPTANCE

Acceptance does not necessarily mean approval. It is not grim endurance, clenched-teeth resignation. Acceptance is a calm appraisal of reality: this is the way it is; now what shall I do about it?

Accepting reality means finding out what my choices are. Best not to choose something that isn't one of my available options at the time! Once I accept a situation or a person, my Higher Power works one of two miracles: He either changes the situation or the person, or He gives me the grace to live with it as it is. Either miracle will do.

Real acceptance enables me to thank my Higher Power for the problem, knowing that He will bring good out of it for all concerned.

Blanche D., Odessa, TX

Contributions

	Total for 1988		Total for 1988
Bayou	\$ 35.00	River Road A.C.O.A. Al-Anon	25.00
Broadmoor Wed. A.F.G.	75.00	St. Anthony/Donaldsonville	70.00
Broadmoor Alateen		St. Francisville Al-Anon	
Broadmoor Jr. Alateen	10.00	St. Francisville Alateen	
Brownsfield A.F.G.		St. Pat's A.C.O.A.	
Burnside Group		St. Pat's Alateen	
Came to Believe	70.00	St. Theresa's Gonzales	
Caring Parents	55.00	Sat. A.C.O.A. Silkworth	
Clinton Al-Anon	25.00	Sat. Newcomers	50.00
Clinton Alateen		Serenity Denham Springs	44.84
Comite A.F.G.	146.00	Singles in Al-Anon	
Corporate A.F.G.	180.00	South Side Al-Anon	
Cortana A.F.G.	25.00	Starting Over	10.00
Denham Springs A.C.O.A.		Stepping Stones	40.00
Denham Springs Alateen	15.00	Steps to Serenity	166.58
Denham Springs Friday	88.50	Talk 12 Alateen	
Discovery	22.75	T.G.I.M. Step	225.00
Double Winners		T.G.I.F.	124.26
Easy Does It Pre-teens		Thursday Night A.C.O.A.	
Faith and Hope A.C.O.A.	141.00	Together We Can Make It	150.00
Get Started		Tracy Group	
Get With It Alateen		Triangle	183.00
Gonzales Tuesday	163.32	Tuesday A.C.O.A. Noon	
Gonzales Thursday	31.00	Tuesday Al-Anon Tau	231.21
Good Shepherd	217.42	Tuesday's Children	50.00
Goodwood A.F.G.	100.00	Unity A.C.O.A.	195.75
Hang 12 Alateen		University A.F.G.	
Happiness Is	45.00	Walker Discussion	48.05
I Am Important A.C.O.A.	180.00	Wednesday Noon Serenity	
Innis' Monday		Weekend Relief	
Just For Today	268.00	We're Here Because	10.00
Lakeland Al-Anon		Westside Al-Anon	
Listen and Learn	386.00	Willing to Grow A.C.O.A.	305.00
Live and Let Live	115.66	Wooddale Sunday Step	30.00
Mollysharp A.F.G.	80.00	Wooddale Tuesday Night	50.00
New Beginnings A.C.O.A.	10.00	Zachary	
New Life	553.22		
New Roads	50.00		
New Roads Alateen			
Noon Serenity Huggers	100.00		
Pointe Coupee A.C.O.A.			
Port Allen Alateen			
Port Allen Jr. Alateen			
Powerless Step Study	172.10		
Prairieville/St. John	96.42		
Recovering Parents	222.15		