



Caterpillar

April 1998

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Phone: 504-924-0029

EDITOR'S NOTES



Never Underestimate the Power of a Sponsor

When I first entered the Al-Anon program, I was reluctant to talk with other members outside of the meetings. I guess I felt like I didn't want to burden others with all my problems. As time went on, I began to realize that a part of working this program was built on relating to others both in the meetings and outside of them as well. Slowly, I got to know some of the people in my group. All of them shared with me and gave me the encouragement and support I needed but there was one person with whom I felt I had a more common bond. I saw a special type of calmness and tranquility in her that I knew came with the years of experience in the program. I very much wanted to have that sense of calm that I saw in her . . . that special . . . SERENITY.

One day I got up the nerve to ask her to be my sponsor. I didn't really know what that meant, but I kept hearing that it was important to have one. She gladly accepted me as her sponsoree and it wasn't long before I realized how special this friendship would become.

My sponsor was there for me in my darkest days when I was making some very difficult choices in my life. All I had to do was pick up the phone. Whenever I found myself in a bad place in life, I would call her and she would say "Let's see what we can do to get you on track again." The key word here is "we". She would listen to me silently, while I cried through my story. After she assessed my situation, she would ask me questions that would lead me to a greater understanding of the situation at hand. She never gave advice, but rather shared her own experiences and taught me how to think differently. Together we would work out the problem. By the end of our conversation, I was in a better place emotionally and had the mental tools I needed for dealing with the situation on my own.

Thanks to my sponsor, I am becoming a person with a healthier way of thinking. She is my mentor when I need to be taught, she is my sounding board when I need to be listened to, but most of all, she is my friend for all time. ●

—Robin J.

'98 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

APRIL 25

HERITAGE DAY

Location: Drusilla Place
 Time: 11:00 a.m.- 3:00 p.m.
 Cost: \$16.50 (lunch and speaker)
 \$5.00 (speaker only)

For more information, see page 6

MAY 1 & 2

AREA ASSEMBLY

Location: Alexandria, LA
 Hampton Inn

JUNE 5, 6 & 7

AL-ANON CONVENTION

Location: New Iberia, LA
 Best Western (318-364-3030)
 Theme: Miracles in Recovery

Flyers are available at the Al-Anon Office

Special hotel rates are available if reservations
 are made before May 21st

JULY 2 - 5

AL-ANON INTERNATIONAL CONV.

Location: Salt Lake City, Utah

Registration packets are available at the Al-Anon Office

JULY 17, 18 & 19

STATE AA CONVENTION

Location: Alexandria, LA
 Hampton Inn

Suggestions of a Sponsor

Why did I wait so long to get a sponsor then to use her as a sponsor? Guess I had to be willing to do ANYTHING she said to get rid of this pain and obsession I'm prone to. The two greatest suggestions she gave me lately are things she heard elsewhere.

1. If your problem brought you to prayer, it served its purpose. (That made me feel better thinking about it, after a while).
2. Keep your mind where your body is. When I asked her to tell me how to do that she said sometimes she'd tell herself, "Now this is enough time thinking about this. It's time to get on to something else." Other times it took more so if she was walking down the hall she'd tell herself, "I'm walking down the hall, step - - step - - step." When I thought about it and said to myself step, step, step, I'd start laughing and miraculously my thoughts were lifted from my obsession.

My sponsor's presence and her warm smile lift my spirits & I feel a stronger bond to her since I've become willing to take her suggestions. After all, I asked her to be my sponsor because I admired the way she was working to change the way she did things. What courage!

Her friendship was one of the many gifts I received over the years from Al-Anon. ●

— Gretchen H.

Do you have a story you would like to share with others? If so, send it to the AIS Office, c/o the Caterpillar and I'll print it in the next newsletter.

Remember, you don't have to be a professional writer. Something you share may be of help to a fellow Al-Anon — WHAT A WONDERFUL GIFT TO GIVE!

TOPIC OF THE QUARTER

What is something important Al-Anon has taught me?



**Night Phone List -
Virginia Mc., Telephone
Coordinator**

This is the list of groups responsible for the night phone beginning April 13 and ending July 26. A letter requesting volunteers will be mailed to each Group Representative (GR) a couple of weeks prior to that group's turn. If your group is not

already participating but would like to, please call the office and leave a message for Virginia to contact you. She would be happy to add your group to the list, no group is too small. Also, we have a sub list, if you would like to be a sub for some of our smaller groups, please call the office and leave your name for her.

If your group is unable to fill up its week with volunteers, please call Virginia at 659-0286 or AIS Office at 924-0029 as soon as possible. ●

GROUP	MEETING TIME	PHONE DUTY DATES
Conscious Contact	Thursday 12:00 noon	April 13 - 19
TGIM (Step Meeting)	Monday 7:30 pm	April 20 - 26
Triangle AFG	Monday 7:30 pm	April 27 - May 3
Came to Believe	Tuesday 12:00 noon	May 4 - 10
Live and Let Live	Thursday 6:00 pm	May 11 - 17
Brownsfield AFG	Thursday 8:00 pm	May 18 - 24
Finally Friday ACOA	Friday 7:30 pm	May 25 - 31
New Beginnings ACOA Step	Sunday 6:30 pm	June 1 - 7
Steps to Serenity	Monday 12 noon	June 8 - 14
Saturday Newcomers	Saturday 2:00 pm	June 15 - 21
Mollysharp Discussion	Wednesday 8:00 pm	June 22 - 28
Just for Today	Saturday 9:00 am	June 29 - July 5
I am Important ACOA	Thursday 8:00 pm	July 6 - 12
Keep It Simple	Sunday 2:00 pm	July 13 - 19
Powerless Step Study	Friday 12 noon	July 20 - 26

Many thanks to the office volunteers who transfer the phone to their house from the office when no one is signed up.

HELP WANTED

Together We Can Make It - Club 12 - Fri. noon needs members willing to support this meeting so it does not close. Remember, you are doing service work by regularly attending a meeting that is struggling with low attendance.

NEWSLETTER CORRECTION

Page 4, October 1997 Issue

Step One should have read: We admitted we were powerless over alcohol—that our lives had become unmanageable.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Wording of steps used in an article must be stated **exactly** as they are written. Thank you!

Friendship Through Sponsorship

Next to an understanding of God that I don't understand, one of the most important things I've gotten from Al-Anon has been friends. Among these people I care for so much are ones who have been my sponsors and those who have asked me to sponsor them. It's been extremely important in my recovery to have these people that I trust to talk to without any concern that my trust will be betrayed.

I believe that asking a person to be my sponsor was one of the first things I had to do to take responsibility for my recovery. I had to find the courage to ask, face the fact that I might be rejected, ask, and be grateful that I was accepted.

I've had three sponsors and I've gotten a deeper understanding of Al-Anon from each one. I learned from my first sponsor how important it is for me not to put people who have been in Al-Anon a long time on a pedestal. That's what I did to her, and then one day I saw her do something that astonished me, and she came tumbling down. She had

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nothing to do with being up there, I did that to her and I was the one who suffered. That was a painful lesson, but I'm glad that I learned it early.

After a couple of years she moved away. I had never become really close to her so my experience with my next sponsor was very different. This person helped me in many ways and we became close friends. She taught me the importance of being an attentive listener. I felt when we talked that she was taking an active part in the conversation by being really involved in the listening. She shared her experiences with me and loved me even when I wasn't being very lovable. She has drifted away

from Al-Anon and I miss her. I'm grateful for the things she taught me.

Today Brenda is my sponsor and has been for many years. She is one of my closest friends and I can't think of anything that has happened to me in these years that I haven't talked to her about. She is always there when I need her. We live close

She shared her experiences with me and loved me even when I wasn't being very lovable.

together so when I have a problem it's easy to call her and say I need to talk and get in the car and zip over there. When these times happen she has never been too busy to let me come over, even if it means coming in out of her beautiful garden where she dearly loves to be.

Brenda is another good listener, and I've learned it always helps to talk to her when I have a problem. I've read in Al-Anon literature that the answer to a problem always lies with the problem. I know this is true because as I talk to her I can usually see the solution, or if that doesn't happen right then, I know that I feel better about the whole thing because I have talked to her. If I see a solution I might not like it or I might think that it's not much of a solution, but with God's help I can accept that it's an answer and it was there all the time. Talking about the problem revealed the answer—WHAT A GIFT!

I've been thinking about all the things I've learned from Brenda and two things stand out in my mind. One is—*one day at a time*. Every time I wander off and begin worrying about the future she reminds me of those wise words and I get back into today. Sometimes she reminds me of the importance of being in this moment no matter

continued on next page

what kind of moment it is. Another thing she does for me is to remind me to let God be God. I've spent lots of time trying to figure God out and getting myself into a mess because I can't find answers to some of my questions. But her gentle reminder helps me stop most of this questioning. Today I'm much more secure in what I believe for me to be true about God so I don't ask as many of these questions as I did in the past. This progress is because of what I have learned from Brenda and Al-Anon.

The people I sponsor are unbelievable to me and I'm so proud of the progress I see them make. I'm always pleased when someone asks me to be a sponsor and I always try to remember to promise to help them as much as I can if they promise to help me. Because they do helps me tremendously.

Often, when someone calls to talk I hear myself saying things that I need to hear and I might think,

I'm always pleased when someone asks me to be a sponsor . . .

"Where did that come from?" But I know where, because I've asked for God's help at the beginning

Do Not Disturb

*Eldest child of four,
Alone in the dark in bed,
Patiently hoping someone will come.
"Wake me, wake me," she silently cries,
From this dream of demons and dread.
Daddy in bed asleep, comforted by his bourbon.
Eldest child of four,
Unable to call out.
The unspoken message speaks loud and clear,
"Do not disturb sad-faced mother of four."*

—Sandy A.

Dedicated to all the children who cannot cry for help in an alcoholic family.

of the call. That is another conscious contact for which I am grateful.

I love to get calls from them when good things are happening. I try to share good times with Brenda and I love my girls to share them with me. It's seldom we talk that we don't find something to laugh about. When I hear the laughter I feel better and I can tell that the caller does, too.

I try very hard not to give advice. I try to share with them Al-Anon principles and the experiences I've had using these principles in my life. If something comes up that I have not experienced, I suggest someone else they can call. I thank God today that I don't have to have all the answers. I've learned in Al-Anon that I don't know is an acceptable response.

If something comes up that I have not experienced, I suggest someone else they can call.

If you haven't asked someone to be your sponsor, then just go on and do it. You will probably feel better about yourself and feel more a part of this fellowship.

If you haven't been asked to be a sponsor and you are learning and living the principles of this program—just be patient, you will be asked. It will probably come as a surprise to you, but please, consider it a compliment.

I can't tell you all the benefits I've received from having and being a sponsor. I am most grateful for having these people in my life. ●

—Ruth H.

Many thanks to those who contributed to this issue of the *Caterpillar*.

The deadline for submitting sharings for the next issue of the *Caterpillar* is June 15, 1998.

14TH ANNUAL HERITAGE DAY

Sponsored by Districts 4, 9, 13, 14, 16

WHERE: Drusilla Place • 3482 Drusilla Lane
WHEN: Saturday, April 25, 1998 • 11:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
COST: \$16.50 (lunch and speaker) \$5.00 (speaker only)
SPEAKER: Grady H.

Doors open at 12:45 for speaker only

Menu Choices:

Grilled Chicken Salad or Shrimp Crepes

For reservations call the Al-Anon Office at 924-0029

We Need Your Help

Show your support of Al-Anon by purchasing a T-shirt.
There are four designs to choose from. Price: \$10.00 each

Complete the form below, attach payment and send to:
Fund Raiser, AIS Office, 9425 Lindale, Suite B, Baton Rouge, LA 70815. Additional forms are at the Office.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: (Home) _____ (Work) _____

Amount enclosed: _____ (\$10.00 per shirt)
(Add \$1.00 & shirt will be mailed to you.)

SELECT A DESIGN:

- Design #1 - Slogans Design #3 - Caterpillar/Butterfly
 Design #2 - Happy, Joyous, Free Design #4 - Steps, Service, Serenity

CIRCLE SIZE

MED LARGE X 2X

Al-Anon /Alateen Meeting Schedule for Baton Rouge & Surrounding Areas

— APRIL - JULY 1998 —

SUNDAY

Keep It Simple - 2:00 p.m.
St. Paul's Catholic Church (No smoking)
3912 Gus Young

Wooddale Sunday Step Mtg. - 6:00 p.m.
Club 12 (No Smoking) / 1695 Beaumont Drive

New Beginnings - 6:30 p.m.
Al-Anon Adult Children Step Mtg.
University Methodist Church / 3350 Dalrymple Drive

River Road Al-Anon - 7:00 p.m.
St. Joseph's Church / Paulina, LA

Listen & Learn - 7:00 p.m.
The Tau Center, Room #5 / 8080 Margaret Ann Drive

Recovering Parents - 8:00 p.m.
Baton Rouge General Medical Center
3600 Florida Blvd., Conference Room 1 & 2

Recovering Parents South - 8:00 p.m.
Baton Rouge General Health Center
8585 Picardy off Bluebonnet

MONDAY

Monday Al-Anon - 12:00 p.m.
AIS Office (No smoking) / 9425 Lindale, Suite B

Steps to Serenity - 12:00 p.m.
Club 12 (Step Meeting) / 1695 Beaumont Drive

Happiness Is - 12:00 p.m.
First United Methodist Church
23645 Church Street / Plaquemine, LA

How Al-Anon Works Book Study - 6:30 p.m.
AIS Office (No smoking) / 9425 Lindale, Suite B

New Roads - 7:15 p.m.
Library, 201 Claiborne / New Roads, LA

Triangle Al-Anon - 7:30 p.m.
Broadmoor Methodist Church
10250 Mollylea (Corner Mollylea & Sharp)

Comite AFG - 7:30 p.m.
Blackwater Methodist Church / 1000 Blackwater Rd.
(Step meeting first Monday each month)

St. Anthony AFG - 5:30 - 7:00 p.m.
St. Vincent DePaul Building
Corner-St. Vincent & Williams St. / Donaldsonville, LA

T.G.I.M. Step Meeting - 7:30 p.m.
St. George Activity Bldg. New Library
7880 Siegen Lane

Keep it Simple - 8:00 p.m.
224 N. Range Ave. / Denham Springs

University AFG - 8:00 p.m.
University Methodist Church (No smoking)
3350 Dalrymple Drive

Easy Does It - Al-Anon Adult Children - 8:00 p.m.
University Methodist Church / 3350 Dalrymple Drive

TUESDAY

Keep it Simple - 9:00 a.m.
224 N. Range Ave. / Denham Springs

Came To Believe - 12:00 p.m.
University Presbyterian Church (No smoking)
3240 Dalrymple Drive

TUESDAY (continued)

Straight Talk - 12:00 p.m.
South Baton Rouge Church of Christ
8725 Jefferson Hwy., Room 101

Strength & Courage - 12:00 p.m.
Al-Anon Adult Children Step Meeting / AIS Office
9425 Lindale, Suite B

St. Anthony Al-Anon - 5:30 - 7:00 p.m.
St. Vincent DePaul Building
Corner-St. Vincent & Williams St. / Donaldsonville, LA

Gonzales Tuesday Night - 6:30 p.m.
AMI Riverview Hospital / 1125 Hwy. 30 / Gonzales, LA

S.T.P. AFG - 7:00 p.m.
AIS Office (No smoking) / 9425 Lindale, Suite B
(Speaker meeting last Tuesday each month)

Courage to Change - 8:00 p.m.
Lutheran Church of Our Savior
3555 Jones Creek Road

Tuesday's Children - 7:00 p.m.
Al-Anon Adult Children
Unity Church of Christianity / 15525 Old Jefferson Hwy.

WEDNESDAY

Wednesday Noon AFG - 12:00 p.m.
AIS Office (No smoking) / 9425 Lindale, Suite B

Keep it Simple - 7:30 p.m.
224 N. Range Ave. / Denham Springs

Mollysharp Discussion - 8:00 p.m.
Broadmoor Methodist Church (No smoking)
10250 Mollylea / Mollylea at Sharp Road

Stepping Stones (Step Meeting) - 8:00 p.m.
Magnolia Methodist Church (No smoking)
16116 Greenwell Springs Road
(Speaker meeting third Wednesday each month)

Starting Over - 8:00 p.m.
St. Catherine's Catholic Church / Bayou Sorrel, LA

THURSDAY

Keep It Simple - 9:00 a.m.
224 N. Range Ave. / Denham Springs, LA

Step Ahead (Step Meeting) - 12:00 p.m.
Donaldsonville Library / Mississippi & Lessard
Donaldsonville, LA

Faith & Hope Al-Anon Adult Children - 12:00 p.m.
AIS Office (No smoking) / 9425 Lindale, Suite B

Conscious Contact - 12:00 p.m.
First Methodist Church (America St. entrance)
950 North Blvd., Room 108

Live and Let Live - 6:00 p.m.
AIS Office (No smoking) / 9425 Lindale, Suite B

Goodwood AFG - 8:00 p.m.
Broadmoor Baptist Church Scout Hut
9755 Goodwood Blvd.

Bayou Al-Anon - 7:00 p.m.
First United Methodist Church
25645 Church St. / Plaquemine, LA

I Am Important Al-Anon Adult Children - 8:00 p.m.
AIS Office (No smoking) / 9425 Lindale, Suite B

THURSDAY (continued)

Brownsfield AFG - 8:00 p.m.
St. Isidore Catholic Church Bishop Center
(enter around side of old church - non new church)
Pink & Thomas Roads

FRIDAY

Powerless Step Study - 12:00 p.m.
AIS Office (No smoking) / 9425 Lindale, Suite B

Together We Can Make It - 12:00 p.m.
Club 12 / 1695 Beaumont Drive

Keep It Simple - 7:30 p.m.
224 N. Range Ave. / Denham Springs, LA
(AA meets at 8:00 p.m.)

Finally Friday Al-Anon Adult Children - 7:30
St. Patrick's Catholic Church
Parkmeadow & Parkforest

T.G.I.F. / AIS Office (No smoking) - 8:00 p.m.
9425 Lindale, Suite B

Zachary Friday Night - 8:00 p.m.
St. Patrick's Episcopal Church-Library
Hwy 64, Zachary, LA

SATURDAY

Just For Today - 9:00 a.m.
University Methodist Church / 3350 Dalrymple Dr.

Morning Glory - 9:00 a.m.
AIS Office (No smoking) / 9425 Lindale, Suite B

Saturday Newcomers - 2:00 p.m.
Club 12 / 1695 Beaumont Drive

Prairieville AFG - 6:30 p.m.
St. John Catholic Church / CCD Building, Hwy. 73
Prairieville, LA

Alateen Meetings

TUESDAY

Sereniteens - 8:00 p.m.
Lutheran Church of Our Savior
3555 Jones Creek Road
(Ages 8 & up)

WEDNESDAY

Listening Learners - 5:30 - 7:00 p.m.
St. Vincent DePaul Building
Corner - St. Vincent & Williams St.
Donaldsonville, LA

THURSDAY

Broadmoor Alateen - 8:00 p.m.
Broadmoor Baptist Church Scout Hut
9755 Goodwood Blvd.
(Ages 13 & up)

FRIDAY

Magnolia Alateen - 8:00 p.m.
Magnolia Methodist Church
16116 Greenwell Springs Road

TREASURER'S REPORT

GROUP NAME	DEC 97	JAN 98	FEB 98
Brownsfield	\$ 50.00	\$ 40.00	\$ 40.00
Comite AFG			224.33
Courage to Change		2.50	
Faith and Hope		37.68	
How Al-Anon Works		8.34	
Individual Contributions		5.00	15.00
Joyce G. Birthday		20.00	
Listen and Learn			185.00
Mollysharp Discussion		75.00	
Monday Noon Discussion		50.63	
Morning Glory		46.00	
New Roads Monday p.m.			40.50
Pebble's Birthday		13.00	
Powerless Step Study	20.00		
Quarterly Meeting Basket		30.00	
Recovering Parents		98.00	
Recovering Parents South	25.00	25.00	25.00
Saturday Newcomers		38.39	15.00
Stepping Stones		159.00	89.00
Steps to Serenity		60.00	
STP			10.00
TGIM		100.00	
Together We Can Make It	10.00	10.00	
Triangle			50.00
Tuesday's Children		25.00	
Tuesday Sereniteens		12.50	
Wooddale Step	26.00	35.00	
TOTALS:	<u>\$131.00</u>	<u>\$891.04</u>	<u>\$703.83</u>

Tradition 7 - Every group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.

Please remind the groups you attend that it is very important for them to contribute to the local AIS office, State Area Assembly, and World Service Office in Virginia Beach, so that we can continue to "Carry the Message."

Remember: every little bit helps.