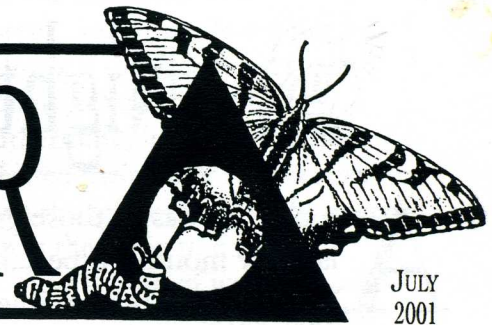


# THE CATERPILLAR



JULY  
2001

## I Wanted What She Had

**A**fter 15 years of worrying about my husband's drinking and continuing to do the same things to try to change the alcoholic with no results, I had had enough. I asked for a divorce and moved out. There I was in an apartment with two daughters, one starting college in a few months and the other in fifth grade. I had no idea where to go or what to do.

To this day I do not know where I heard about Al-Anon—I have absolutely no recollection. Through this whole period of my life, I was just going through the motions. I think I may have called AA and was told to call Al-Anon,

*Through this whole period of my life, I was just going through the motions.*

but I somehow found out about a noon meeting at Club 12. I found myself at this meeting with all these people who could not control the alcoholics in their lives, at least that is all I heard. What the hell was I doing here? I began to cry and cry and cry.

There was this older woman sitting next to me with long white

hair and she simply put her arm around my shoulders and I believe she shared at some point. I do not remember a single word that was said but I do remember her serenity, kindness, acceptance and

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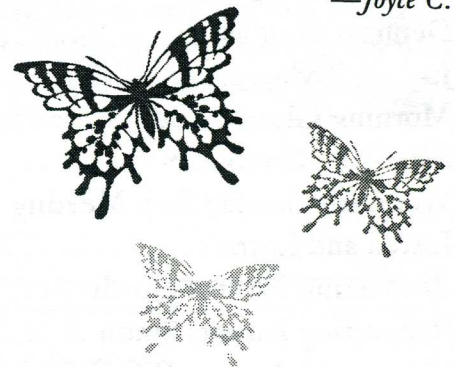
*. . . I do remember her serenity, kindness, acceptance and unconditional love.*

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unconditional love. I went to a few more meetings and then quit for a

year before coming back as a requirement of the Tau Center. I have never seen this lady again, but I will never forget her. She is the reason I came back - I wanted what she had.

—Joyce C.



## When I Was a Newcomer

**I**tried to look nonchalant and didn't speak up to admit I was a NEWCOMER. But the lady next to me then whispered to me "Are you a newcomer?" Somewhat against my will, I nodded and she announced my status to the group. As people looked at me and started to share, the tears fell uncontrollably—I was not comfortable being the center of attention. I couldn't say anything but tried to nod occasionally so that you did not think I was completely unstable. Somewhat frozen and somewhat confused, I didn't hear anything that night but I did feel something. I had to keep coming back to figure out what it was. I was glad I did. Thanks Al-Anon.

—Jeri S.



# Night Phone



A special thanks to those groups manning the phone over the last few months, especially during holidays. Following is the list of groups responsible for the night phone starting on July 2 and ending on September 30. A letter requesting volunteers will be mailed to the contact person for each group at least a couple of weeks prior to that group's turn. If the contact person for your group changes, please notify the AIS office at 924-0029 or Evie V. at 272-2877 as soon as possible.

*Thanks so much for your help and support.*

—Evie V.

I Am Important (Al-Anon Adult Child) .....	July 2 - 8
Powerless Step Study .....	July 9 - 15
Denham Springs .....	July 16 - 22
Just for Today .....	July 23 - 29
Morning Glory .....	July 30 - August 5
Saturday Newcomers .....	August 6 - 12
Wooddale Sunday Step Meeting .....	August 13 - 19
Listen and Learn .....	August 20 - 26
Recovering Parents North .....	August 27 - September 2
Recovering Parents South .....	September 3 - 9
Monday Al-Anon .....	September 10 - 16
Steps to Serenity .....	September 17 - 23
Triangle Al-Anon .....	September 24 - 30

## MARK YOUR CALENDER

### AIS BOARD MEETING

September 11, 2001  
5:45 pm  
AIS Office

### AIS QUARTERLY MEETING

October 9, 2001  
6:45 pm  
SBR Church of Christ

### 43RD LA STATE CONVENTION OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

July 13-15, 2001  
Lake Charles Civic Center • Lakeshore Drive • Exit 29B or 30A

## My First Meeting— From Anger to Hope

Anger is what drove me to my first Al-Anon meeting. I was angry at everything, especially the alcoholic in my life . . . my husband. The joy, happiness and contentment I once knew at the beginning of our marriage, had made its exit ten years prior. The confident, motivated, ambitious person I once was, gave way to a quiet, resentful and angry person whose self-confidence was slipping away by the moment. I found myself isolating from friends and family, so my fall from a perfect marriage and home life could not be detected.

In the midst of my angry state, my higher power somehow guided me to my first meeting. The reason I believe my higher power guided me is because I know I would not have gone willingly on my own. After all, I wasn't the problem at home, it was his drinking and his behavior that caused this chaos in my life . . . or so I thought.

After attending that first meeting, I realized that I might find some relief from the anger and resentment that had consumed my entire being. I learned that there were others who understood me because they had already walked miles in my shoes. I saw among them a sense of calm that I badly wanted. I learned about focusing on me, working the steps and the importance of getting a sponsor. At last, I saw a path of hope and I was ready to start walking.

—Robin J.

A very special thanks to all the contributors for providing sharings for this issue of *The Caterpillar*.



# THE PARENTAL MERRY-GO-ROUND

I wonder how many of you remember when a younger couple attended our Al-Anon meeting because they had a child who was addicted? The mother asked the question, "When do you stop being a parent?" You could tell from her voice she had deep sorrow and mental anguish. I do not know if we helped her or not as she has not been back to date.

I think her question is a very good one and it sums up the feeling that I think most of us had when we learned we had an addicted child and before we discovered Al-Anon. I have wondered if she was intermingling parenting with responsibility. When we have a child we become responsible for

that life until the child matures and has learned enough to be responsible for their own life. Then we let go of responsibility. When we have a child, we become responsible for that life until the child matures and has learned enough to be responsible for their own life. Then we let go of responsibility and can just be a parent.

If we could just quit being a parent then our emotions could return to "normal." Of course we all know we can not quit being a parent, for as they say there is not an exit from this merry-go-round we find ourselves on. Her question is so full of possibilities that it would take a book to explore them

all. We can never stop being a parent. Some people try, but I wonder if they really ever quit thinking about the child. Furthermore, has their decision affected their life for the worse, even though they probably thought it was the thing to do.

Our feeling of wanting to stop being responsible is one born of frustration, of not knowing what to do and of trying to change the child only to always have failure. Then someone suggests Al-Anon. We came because all else had failed so why not try it. If we will keep coming back, we can not only find out how to stop being concerned, but how we can adjust our lives to cope with the situation. It has helped me as now I know I was an enabler. Al-Anon has helped me learn how to cope and stop feeling responsible. It has helped me learn to give the responsibility to my son and I can just be a parent.

—Chuck

## My First, First Al-Anon Meetings

I attended my *first*, first Al-Anon meeting in 1982. My husband was going to AA meetings and his sponsor was urging me to go to Al-Anon. That first meeting was at Broadmoor United Methodist Church. When the chairperson asked if there were any newcomers, I didn't raise my hand or say a word. At the end of the meeting, I picked up the blue flyer on detachment and sneaked out. When I got home I said, "I can do this by myself."

Two years later I was reading the Sunday paper and came upon an article which said that in families where a spouse does not

go to Al-Anon, the odds are that the alcoholic will drink again or that the marriage will end in divorce.

I remember thinking that I did not really care what happened, but that I did not want it to be my fault.

So I went to my *second* first meeting. I remember having difficulty finding the meeting I was looking for, but I knew I was in the right place when someone read the opening for the Al-Anon Adult Children. Although I am not the child of an alcoholic, I could not believe the words I was hearing.

I had a similar reaction when I read *The Dilemma of an Alcoholic Marriage*. This was my autobiography.

I believe that I said at that meeting, "I know we all walk on eggshells, but . . ." And Faye said, "No, we don't." I couldn't imagine that.

At those *first*, first meetings, I had no idea what a difference Al-Anon could and would make in my life. At the time, I was resigned to a miserable future. Al-Anon has made all the difference.

—Anne S.

