

Recovery Through the Steps
Unity Through the Traditions
Service Through the Concepts

Inside This Issue

Topic: Compassion

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Newsletter Editor Pat H.
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Northern Hi Lights

nynafg.com

Al-Anon News from New York North Area

Delegate

Compassion on this healing journey begins with me. By working the steps and getting familiar with the traditions and concepts, my Higher Power is continuously revealing ways my life has been impacted by someone else's drinking. Over the years I have had the humbling experience of looking at my trauma and also making amends for my behaviors. I can't change the past or the tools I learned to help keep myself safe. What I can do now, is embrace that younger self and let her know she is safe. When I react in specific ways it is an opportunity to show compassion for myself on the journey. I can change with the help of my Higher Power, in their time not mine. In recognizing my imperfect process and my mistakes I can also have compassion for others on their journey to wholeness as well. What I love about this program is that we learn how to move through conflict, make decisions, and allow others to be who they are and love them right where they are. In any situation, I don't know what our Higher Power is asking us to learn.

Emily K. 1

.Chairperson

I want to express my gratitude to Pat H who continues to get these newsletters to us each month. Thank you, Pat!!!! If you know someone that you think would be a good Newsletter Editor, please pass along their name to me, I welcome your nominations. (Please help!)

Lately I have been feeling like I'm trying to move full speed ahead with the emergency brake firmly on. I'm noticing my aggravation and frustration level rising and I'm happy that I have Al-Anon which gives me the tools to HALT and pause. I'm so grateful for my sponsor and my service sponsor who hold me with kindness as they listen to me while I express my frustration and work on letting it go. When I forget to have compassion and love for myself, they are there with it to prop me up. I can't give to others what I lack for myself. Compassion is the gift of sponsorship. Gratefully growing through service, Carol C.

Group Records

Compassion is one of those words I thought I knew the meaning of, but when I researched the definition, I was partially incorrect. Briefly, the definition I read defines it as a positive response and desire to help with an inner motivation to lessen or prevent suffering of others. It means "to suffer with." I had that part right, because throughout my 40 years with an alcoholic, I TRIED to be compassionate. And I certainly suffered with my alcoholic trying to "feel" his dependency so I could take it away! I didn't succeed at all! Being compassionate became less and less a "marital obligation" but now a way to escape my defects of character. I thought the less I showed my resentment and hostility towards my loved one, it would be easier to maintain my compassionate way of thinking and behaving. I was unsuccessful. No matter how I tried, compassion always pushed towards an emotional role. I realized I had a long way towards serenity. I truly believe my Higher Power helped me find the real meaning and feeling of this word when my loved one died. Until then, I "played" the compassionate wife, I sounded like a compassionate wife also. But in retrospect I didn't receive a clear picture of what the meaning was.

Understanding compassion is very different while on my own path to serenity than it was in the role of an alcoholic's wife.

With every submission I write, the more I learn about myself, the more I value my journey in Al-Anon, the clearer a definition becomes to me now, 40 years later. It is never too late to re-define me!

Most Sincerely,
Joan L.

Newsletter Editor

From the Miriam Webster dictionary -
"sympathetic consciousness of others' distress together with a desire to alleviate it." "If your compassion does not include yourself, it is incomplete."
- Buddha

"If you want others to be happy, practice compassion. If you want to be happy, practice compassion." - Dalai Lama

"Compassion, it's not just a word. It's a way of being. It's not just a concept. It's love in action." - Jeff

Brown

"Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring, all of which have the potential to turn a life around." - Leo Buscaglia

In service,
Pat H.

Reminders

Articles for the December issue are due November 15th - Topic: Acceptance
There will be NO January issue.

Help Wanted

Still searching for a Newsletter Editor and someone to print and mail the newsletter to approximately 50 subscribers.

Immediate Past Delegate

Business First:

- Group Representatives – I have a file of electronic documents filled with helpful information for you. I send it out to the attendees of the New Group Representative Orientation prior to Assemblies. If you would like one send me an email with your district and your group's name. My email address is at the end of the newsletter.
- As a NYN Officer, I serve on various service groups. The Thought Force: Assembly Format is one. The assembly is the business meeting of the area held twice a year attended by the Group Representatives from all the Al-Anon groups in our area. We are looking at what is working and what is not. Do we need to change anything? Has your GR attended the assemblies? If you have ideas or thoughts on our assemblies, please let me know. The group meets monthly and will report at the next AWSC meeting.

- Another Thought Force: Including Electronic Meetings in the NY North Service Structure is also meeting monthly. All electronic meetings are now Al-Anon Family Groups. Does our Area wish to permit groups that meet electronically to participate in our Area Structure? This group is gathering information about what it could mean in our Area and districts.

Second: COMPASSION

I confused compassion with control - trying to fix everyone and everything or with pity – “oh the poor thing.” It literally means “to suffer together”. That is the understanding of compassion I received in the rooms of Al-Anon. We suffer together – my fellows in Al-Anon and the Alcoholic. It shows itself in different ways but it is a disease that affects us all. I now can show compassion, not by rescuing but by small acts of kindness - things that lifts another’s spirit. Actions like saying hello, opening a door, giving a hug, taking someone’s shopping cart back to a pen or like I first learned here in this fellowship; listening are acts of kindness.

Peace ...
Molly C.

Alternate Delegate/Forum

Compassion is a great place for me to begin my November article. I need to be compassionate with myself for what I view as my service position failing - not consistently writing monthly articles. I could provide a list of reasons why but to do so is only an act of beating myself up. The truth is simple - I’m a human being and sometimes being is all that I can do!

Service has provided me with ample opportunities to practice compassion. I grew up in a home where compassion was in short supply. Somewhere I learned that to show compassion towards others was a sign of weakness. Al-Anon taught me that it was okay and even a virtue to have compassion for others. Today I believe that compassion allows me to be grateful for all of my blessings.

On September 22, I attended my first WSO Area Forum Coordinator virtual meeting. It was an

eyeopening event. I will share the information from the call over the next few issues. One of the items discussed was the need for articles but also personal slogans or quotes and photographic submissions. Submission information is available on the WSO website’s [Online Sharing Form](https://al-anon.org/formembers/members-resources/literature/literatureresources/send-your-sharing/) (https://al-anon.org/formembers/members-resources/literature/literatureresources/send-your-sharing/).

Another great idea learned; some Areas include an article from The Forum in their Area newsletters. Starting with this issue, a reprinted article from the previous issue is included in the Northern Hi-Lights. October 2021’s topic was Acceptance + Surrender = Serenity.

Yours in Service,

Kathi D



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 ~~~ To help promote The Forum, NYN will be giving you the opportunity to win a subscription with each issue of the Northern Hi Lights. Go to the [WSO website](http://alanon.org) (alanon.org), locate The Forum’s page and read at least one of the member sharings from November 2021. Send an email to [altdelegate@nynafg.com](mailto:altdelegate@nynafg.com) with the article’s title and the author’s name. On November 31<sup>st</sup>, one of the correct entries will be randomly selected. The winner will be sent an email and announced in the next issue of the Northern Hi Lights.  
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### 2021 The Forum Subscription Winners

Carla K. Mary S.  
Ogdensburg AFG

# Al-Anon Healing Hearts

## Beginners Meeting

Saturdays zoom

meeting

11:30 am- 12:30 pm Meeting

ID

9140 8458 854 PC

036707

Questions? Call

AIS Rochester

585-288-0540

## Alateen Coordinator

Compassion: Early in my recovery, my Personal Sponsor suggested I complete a Step 4 Inventory using the Blueprints for Progress workbook. When I began to share my responses with her; she listened with compassion. She cried with me, and laughed with me. With her unconditional love and encouragement, she taught me how to be a compassionate friend to myself first, to her and then to others. This quote, found in the workbook, summarized how completing a Step 4 inventory was the beginning of me taking care of me and showing compassion for myself. "I thought I was the worst person I knew and that no one would like me for myself. Then I went away on an Alateen weekend event and did my Fourth Step inventory. I got to know myself and, at first, I didn't like myself very much. The whole idea of the Fourth Step and self-acceptance was new to me. But gradually I

began to learn about myself, and the most amazing thing happened-- I started to love me." (Courage to Be Me, p.122)

Recently my Service Sponsor gave me the Conflict Resolution Kit (S-70) to have as an additional resource for my work with groups and districts. While reviewing the Conflict Resolution Using our Twelve Traditions cards(S-72), it reminded me that Tradition Five says that our one primary purpose is having compassion and understanding for our alcoholic relatives and for each other. As I have been growing and changing with the support of both of my Sponsors, so has my compassion for others. I now try to show compassion by treating everyone with respect and I don't immediately jump to rescue them or prevent a crisis from happening. "Compassion and understanding on my part can have the power to heal because they teach me not to punish." (One Day at a Time p.24)

Alateen Interest Meetings (AIM) will continue to be held electronically each month. Refer to the Events Calendar on the NYN website for upcoming dates. All are welcome. If you are interested in joining us, to learn more about Alateen and/or an Al-Anon Member Involved in Alateen Service (AMIAS) I can be contacted at [alateen@nynafg.com](mailto:alateen@nynafg.com) Together We Can Make It  
Mary S.



## Treasurer's Report

This month we did as directed by the Group Representatives at our Assembly, and mailed checks totaling \$8,053 to World Service, doing our part in this difficult financial time for Al-Anon.

Quite a few districts are still sending their donations to the old PO Box in Syracuse, although the new address, (NYN Area Assembly, PO Box 64176, Rochester NY, 14624), has been in Northern Hi Lights since the December 2020 issue. I've been thinking of writing a letter to the District Representatives about this.

Compassion is our topic this month. I have it, but I don't feel the need to feel others pain, especially when it is the result of their destructive behavior. That pain may make them change, one of the first lessons I learned in this program.

Helping someone who is suffering through no fault of their own makes me feel good about myself, and I don't agonize about it. I heard early on that if I want good self-esteem, I need to do esteemable things, and it works for me. Donations:

Monday Night Fly Rd.	\$20.00
Thurs Eve Serenity #30580948	55.00
Subscription	10.00
Workbook Study #9677	12.70
Courage of Serenity #503929	50.00
Eastside #9722	25.00
Sidney Wednesday #10302	20.00
Lake Placid New Beginnings	50.00
Keep It Simple #66096	45.00
East Amherst #9711	50.00
Serenity Seekers #30576552	25.00
Days of Healing #40786	25.00
Amherst Family Grp. #9577	25.00
Queensbury AFG. #9765	30.00
Faith & Hope #30375	18.70
Total Donations & subscriptions:	<u>\$ 461.40</u>

Expenses :

Joan L. Records Coordinator	\$73.43	Al-
Anon-Family Groups, Inc.	5000.00	
AFG Delegate Actual Expense	3053.00	
John O., Newsletter print& mail	50.00	
Total expenses paid:	\$	
	<u>8176.43</u>	

John O.

## Presentation Coordinator

Can't believe November is coming up! Even though we sometimes struggle with our new reality things went quite well at the Fall Assembly. The one thing I found most disappointing was the attendance. Please encourage your Group Rep or a stand-in to attend. Keeping our lines of communication is so important.

Compassion is a word that I have struggled with over the years. I always had a vision of tenderly caring for someone's every need and desire. In Al-Anon I have learned that this is not healthy behavior. I have learned that caring about someone does not mean that I need to attend to their every need, it does not mean that I must put my own health and well-being last on the list, it does

not mean I have to accept unacceptable behavior. What compassion means to me is accepting someone just the way they are, even when they do not do what I think they should. To me, compassion is a large dose of acceptance combined with a heaping helping of love.

I LOVE YOU JUST THE WAY YOU ARE

Fred Rogers

Patti M.

## Convention Coordinator

The New York North Area 2022 Spring Convention and Assembly is scheduled to be held virtually over Zoom on May 20, 21, and 22, 2022. On Friday, May 20<sup>th</sup> at 6:30pm will be the Assembly Icebreaker, followed at 7:30 pm by the AWSC Meeting. On Saturday, May 21<sup>st</sup> at 8:00 am will be the New GR meeting, followed at 9:15 am with the Spring Assembly Meeting, which will run until about 4:00 pm with a break for lunch. On Sunday May 22<sup>nd</sup> there will be an Alateen Interest Meeting at 9:00 am followed by Spiritual Speakers at 10:00 am. Members will be able to register online at [www.nynafg.com](http://www.nynafg.com) in advance for the Spring Assembly starting in April of 2022. A Host District or Districts are still needed for the 2022 New York North Area Virtual Spring Convention and Assembly, which will be held over Zoom. What is needed from the host districts is to come up with virtual non-business-related programming such as a panel, workshop, or ice breaker event for Friday evening of the convention as well as to put together a virtual Spiritual Panel of speakers from AA, Al-Anon, and Alateen for Sunday Morning. District 14, from Rochester advised the 2021 Fall Assembly meeting that they would take the issue back to their groups and will report back to the AWSC and Assembly if they decide to host the virtual 2022 Spring Convention and Assembly. The 2022 New York North Area Fall Assembly is tentatively scheduled for September, 16, 17, and 18, 2022. These dates would be for a virtual Fall Assembly. If the 2022 Fall Assembly is held in person or in hybrid form at a hotel or another such venue, it is possible that those dates may change. A Host District or Districts are still needed for the 2022 New York North Area Fall Assembly whether it will be held virtually, in person or in Hybrid form. What is needed from the host districts is to come up with virtual or in person or hybrid nonbusiness-related programming such as a panel, workshop, or ice breaker event for Friday evening of the convention as well as to put together a

Spiritual Panel of speakers from AA, Al-Anon, and Alateen for Sunday Morning. Would your District please consider hosting the 2022 Fall Assembly?

During the 2021 Fall Assembly Meeting on September 18, 2021, a question arose as to how we select our host districts for the Spring Convention and the Fall Assembly, whether they are in person, virtual or hybrid format. After reviewing the NYN Job Description for the Convention Coordinator, I was surprised to discover that finding the host Districts for upcoming Conventions and Assemblies is not actually listed in my job description. When I took on this position in May, I indicated that my role was akin to that of a cheerleader and a guide. A cheerleader to encourage Districts to volunteer to host our Conventions and Assemblies, and a guide to aid the Host Committees in putting on their conventions and assemblies by sharing the resources of New York North as well as my own experience, strength, and hope.

The Spring Convention is always held in the hosting district’s geographic area. If you look at the list of districts that have hosted a Spring Convention you will see that the majority of the Spring Conventions have been held in the Buffalo area, Rochester area, Binghamton area, Albany area and the Counties North of Albany such as Plattsburgh and Saranac Lake. Olean, NY also has been the site of several of our Spring Conventions.

The Fall Assembly is always held in Syracuse (Districts 3, 15, 18, 21, and 28) and can be hosted by any District or Districts who volunteers. Traditionally, the Fall Election Assembly is hosted by the Districts from the Syracuse Area.

In the years between 2010 and 2021, 20 of our 28 NYN Districts have hosted either a Spring Convention or a Fall Assembly. They are as follows: Districts

1,2,3,5,6,7,8,10,12,14,15,17,18,19,21,22,24,25,26 and 29. During that same period, 8 Districts have not hosted an Assembly or Convention, although some of these districts have hosted them in the past. These include District 4,9,11,13,20,23, 27 and 28.

Below you will find a chart, by District, of the Hosts for the last 10 years of Spring Conventions and Fall Assemblies. To do this I have updated a chart made by previous Convention Coordinator, Kevin M. Thanks

Kevin! The last in person event that was held was the 2019 Fall Assembly, hosted by District 21. 99 members were registered and 71 banquets were served. The 2019 Spring Convention was the last in person Spring event and was hosted by Districts 2, 14, 25 and 29. 201 members attended and 111 banquets were served.

Convention/Assembly Hosts 2010 – 2021 (By District)

District		District	
1	Spring 2014	15	Fall 2013, Fall 2018
2	Fall 2015	17	Spring 2012
3	Fall 2012, Fall 2017	18	Fall 2011, Fall 2013, Fall 2014, Fall 2017, Fall 2020, Fall 2021
4		19	Fall 2010, Fall 2014
5	Spring 2013, Spring 2018	20	
6	Fall 2011	21	Fall 2012, Fall 2019
7	Spring 2016	22	Spring 2013, Fall 2016, Spring 2020, Spring 2021
8	Spring 2016, Spring 2020, Spring 2021	23	
9		24	Spring 2011
10	Spring 2010, Spring 2015, Fall 2020, Fall 2021	25	Fall 2010, Spring 2019
11		26	Spring 2016
12	Spring 2017	27	
13		28	
14	Spring 2019	29	Fall 2010, Fall 2015, Spring 2019

I hope this information will assist your District in deciding whether to host a Spring Convention or Fall Assembly in the future.

Our topic for this month is compassion. When I first entered the rooms of Al-Anon, I could not feel compassion for the alcoholic, or even myself. Once I accepted the fact that alcoholism was a disease, I was able to start feeling compassion for my alcoholic loved ones, and eventually for myself, too. I stopped trying to “fix” my loved ones and instead I grew to feel compassion for them and that allowed me to love them in more supportive ways than the enabling and controlling I had previously been doing. This gift of compassion became a huge help to me while I was

sponsoring Alateen for many years. Despite the age difference, I could relate to the sharing and feelings of the Alateen members in the group, and through compassion and Al-Anon's gift of unconditional love, the group grew closer to each other and were to share their own compassion and growth in the program with each other.

Love in Al-Anon Service,

Jim M.

New Feature

## From the Forum

### Budgeting with Al-Anon Principles: Balancing Savings and Spending

I was 12 years old the first time I created a budget. The family disease of alcoholism had ingrained a scarcity mindset in my mother and me, and our financial situation left her feeling hopeless. To help, I took responsibility for our family's budgeting.

I knew nothing about Al-Anon's principles of selfsupport, abundance, and balance then. I only knew how to control and isolate, so I tackled our finances completely alone. Not surprisingly, tensions arose between us as I completely neglected the opportunity for my mum to participate.

When I left home, I brought along my defects of scarcity thinking and extreme self-reliance. Always fearing unemployment and homelessness, I bought and collected "things" to ensure I would have enough. And I continued being overly self-reliant when managing the finances in my relationships.

What a startling experience, then, to participate in serene group conscience discussions about finances in Al-Anon. When fears arose, longtime members reminded the group of the Higher Power upon whom we had each come to rely through the Steps, and of His presence in our group conscience as described in Tradition Two.

These experiences gave me courage to stand for Area Treasurer. Of course, my defects came right along with me. Still self-reliant, I presented my first budget at the Area World Service Committee without ever having

discussed it with anyone. The Area Chairperson graciously reminded me of the importance of Concept Four—participation to achieve an informed group conscience. That lesson also taught me the difference between controlling and managing the finances in my home. Today, I can ask for help and share leadership in our financial decisions.

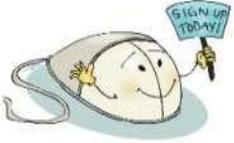
The scarcity mindset has been harder for me to let go. When the COVID-19 pandemic shut down meetings, and the income of the World Service Office (WSO) dropped, I initially felt deeply fearful. Thankfully, the wisdom of Warranty One relieved my stress, reminding me that Al-Anon members' "contributions are willing and generous" when the need is understood. It also reminded me that prudent financial principles do not involve collecting money to the point of "perilous wealth," but rather suggest the balancing of savings and spending to fulfill our primary purpose. As the WSO budgeting season gets underway, this is the principle I am now able to apply in my work here and in all my financial affairs.

By Vali F., Executive Director

The Forum, October 2021

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# NORTHERN HI LIGHTS SUBSCRIPTION FORM

There is no charge for a subscription to the Northern Hi Lights but in keeping with the Seventh Tradition of being self-supporting a donation of \$10 per year for a paper copy is suggested to help pay production costs.

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For address changes or updates

Mail to: Group Records, 135 Berry Road, Fredonia, NY 14063

Or e-mail: [records@nynafg.com](mailto:records@nynafg.com)

Submissions for  
December  
Northern Hi Lights  
Due by: November 15  
Topic: Acceptance

Please send by check or money order. DO NOT  
SEND CASH!!

Make payable to: NYN Area Assembly

PO Box 64176, Rochester, NY 14624 Please  
include group's registered name and  
Group's ID Number

SENDING  
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Northern Hi Lights  
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