

FAN & FANonline



voice of the families anonymous
fellowship
Autumn 2012

STOP PRESS !

FAMILIES ANONYMOUS NOW HAS ITS COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE -
OFFICIAL



Forgiveness is the fragrance the violet sheds on the heel that has crushed it'

Mark Twain

'They who forgive most shall be most forgiven'.

William Blake

Families Anonymous is a self-help organization for relatives & friends
concerned about another's use of drugs or related behavioural problems

£1



Autumn Leaves

Greetings !

Dear All !

What have I included in this edition ?

- **Forgiveness** is a concept that touches all of us in our Fellowship
- Contributions from the Groups, the **most important input** to this Newsletter – **your** response to the editor's requests for individual or group efforts
- BoardWalk – what is going on with the FA Board
- FA UK becoming a Charity
- In search of new Board members
- Christmas is not too far away!
- Something about FA beyond our shores
- Selected Quotes, Poetry and Clip Art

Dear All!

My first words, writing this autumn edition in the final days of October, must be reserved for the last steps in FA's attempt to become a Charity registered by the England & Wales Charity Commission in the near future. I am sure that there have been some disbelievers and doubters on the way and maybe some still lurk! It transpires that FA started down this road once before many years ago but did not complete the course, as the world then was not so litigation-conscious; nor were the tax authorities over-concerned about our status and becoming a charity was finally deemed – at that time - not to be worth all the effort. However, whilst FA always operated legally, it is now comforting to know that our position in these areas should be about to become more secure. We should soon be joining the ranks of other Twelve Step programmes that are already registered Charities - an achievement which we hope, fingers crossed, to be celebrating. A little more about it, hopefully, with a short update on page 3 together with our vote of thanks to our Treasurer, Diane.

At the FA Convention in April 2011, I explained that I would be issuing three editions of FAN each year – one before the Convention, one in summer and one in the autumn, which I call the FAN-cycle. This is my third and final edition in my second out of three FAN-cycles and have to admit to how much I have enjoyed and learnt from the experience, especially about recovery.

Whilst I am not vacating my editorship just yet (!), when that time comes after the 2013 Autumn Edition, I will have absolutely no hesitation to recommend the fulfilling task of FAN editor to any FA member. I am sure that the words of my predecessor, Jaki, will ring in my ears at that stage – that FAN editors are normally dragged screaming into the job, but in the end are reluctant to go. But go I will in due time! New or different ideas, approaches and ways of thinking are vital to FAN's on-going health and survival. Most importantly, it will be the opportunity for another FA member to actively bring on his or her own recovery. So don't all rush when the Time comes! I joined the Board in May 2010; my first FAN was in spring 2011 and I was co-opted at the AGM in 2011. Although this is my sixth out of nine 'contracted' FANs, I will not be a Board member during the time of my final three FANs. I will, however, be a fly on the wall during 2013 Board meetings so that I can continue reporting what goes on to you, FAN readers; let me have your own views too!

Finally, let me tell you that much to my relief, I only do the bone-shaking bus journey to the Horsham meeting fortnightly now because most of the Horsham members have planted the FA seed additionally in Brighton where I live and where we meet now, also fortnightly. We followed the example of others and meet in an NHS hospital for a charitable donation rather than rent. A dream achieved! WLITF Richard,

Forgiveness as seen in 'Today a Better Way'



Too often the notion of forgiveness is overlooked, as if it were merely some sort of unrealistic religious concept. In fact, forgiveness is the spiritual foundation of letting go, of self-esteem, and of serenity and recovery.

An interesting attribute of forgiveness is that it proceeds from inside out. We get angry about those characteristics in others that we dislike most about ourselves. So we must forgive ourselves before we forgive others.

The act of forgiving ourselves makes it possible to let go of the drug-user by forgiving him or her. It allows us to

regain our self-esteem by refocusing our energy away from the abuser and into ourselves. Self-forgiveness lifts the heavy burden of guilt, anger, resentment and hate, so that we can achieve serenity.

As one of the spiritual foundations of recovery, forgiveness is a good daily ritual when it is focused properly on one's self. The forgiveness of others can follow. This focus helps in the recovery of both myself and others.

TODAY I WILL forgive my own shortcomings so that I can forgive those of others.

[August 12 reading in *Today A Better Way*, © Families Anonymous]

We learn in FA that to allow resentment to develop and grow into a very negative force is inviting a situation which can be of no help to anybody. We are likely to feel that we have every right to feel indignant and resentful about the way we have been treated, and maybe to a certain extent, or even to a large extent, we are right. But we are unlikely to be in this fellowship if we do not feel very strongly about the well-being of the person who brought us to this programme – our addict.

A person whose behaviour, for the time being at least, is unacceptable or just plain terrible.

But will feeling the full force of our resentment, day after day, improve that behaviour? Very unlikely. In fact, it would most probably even worsen an already tense and unmanageable position.

This is where the much better option of **Forgiveness** comes in. How on earth can I forgive my addict for all the awful things he or she has done? is the immediate and, perhaps, natural first reaction.

But, by reading our FA Literature, we find that there is a far more positive option, both for our addict and for ourselves. Letting go of all our pent-up resentment and anger will liberate our mind from being continuously in a state of negative battle; a battle that nobody can win. If there is any hope of rebuilding our relationship with our addict, it is very likely to be blocked unless both 'sides' are prepared to forgive. Forgiveness is only really effective in a two-way scenario and if we think that it is our addict is totally to blame for everything which went, or is going, wrong and that we ourselves are whiter than white, maybe we need to revisit the facts with an open mind. Honesty is a fine companion of Forgiveness and together they can work wonders! Ed.

To forgive is the highest, most beautiful form of love. In return, you will receive untold peace and happiness.

[Reinhold Niebuhr](#)

A Mother's Reflections on Forgiveness

'To err is human, to forgive divine'. So only God can truly forgive – let's not worry about it then – forgiveness is not for us mortals!

The truth is that the father who lost his child in an act of terrorism spoke about the peace he found in forgiving the perpetrators. And we understand that forgiving a person who has done us harm relieves us of the burden of hatred. We hear in our readings how 'harbouring painful thoughts' - which can include resentment and hatred - is destructive. The hatred we will feel, as victims of drug abuse, may be for the drug-dealer or drug-taking friend who may have encouraged our addict to use. Or we feel resentment which can turn to hatred of our own loved-one for their behaviour, before we realise – with a little help from FA - it is the addiction we hate and our loved-one we love - and can forgive.

I lived in a state of despair with my son while he used but have never felt the need to forgive him because I never blamed him for his destructive behaviour. With nothing but praise for him since he 'got clean' some 12 years ago, what is as important, is that I am learning to forgive myself. I supposed that I was to blame for his addiction by my neglect of his and his sister's needs while my marriage collapsed. FA helped me discover the fine line between removing blame and guilt and assuming responsibility for one's actions.

We speak of addiction as an illness – a sick person we treat with care, medicine, maybe even surgery. It seems there is no 'cure' for the family illness of addiction – our 'treatment' in many cases has to be tough love. But in the 12 Steps there is a wonderfully healing therapy and for the losses and disappointments of life I can learn to forgive, live and let live, and take comfort in the company of FA.

Jenny K. Cambridge FA.



Remember this picture some time ago?



This was the depiction in the very best of taste to show our Treasurer Diane grappling with piles of forms and the like on our long journey to Charity status. Regretfully and at this late stage of preparing FAN, it is not possible to make the ultimate announcement. Understandably, Diane is reluctant to write about her efforts, feeling that doing so might be tempting providence. Underneath it all, I am sure that she is confident. At this moment, another document is travelling the country by post to all Board members for signatures. I, too, am waiting for it to arrive for my mark to be added. Having said all that, I too am confident of a positive outcome. Have faith and all will come to pass! At this moment we are experiencing the ultimate technical hitch. My, and everybody else's, thanks go to Diane for her tenacity for success. *Ed.*

PS - I am a member, for my sins, of the Friends of Arundel Castle Cricket Club in Sussex and have been invited to an EGM next month to vote for or against *'incorporation... in order to.... establish structures....suitable for the modern world. It is also most important that trustees are relieved of any personal financial liabilities and so the formation of a company is considered the best way forward'*. Sound familiar? It certainly does! Race horses are stabled at the castle, but I bet for Diane being the odds-on winner in the incorporation race! *Ed.*

The 4 C's - Control Cause Cure Change

I have attended Al-anon for many years because I was living with an alcoholic. Can I say that the day I started to go to Al-anon was the beginning of a new era in my life? Having lived with this problem for a number of years, trying to cure and control the alcoholic, it was a life-changing experience to realize that I was powerless to change this person, and that I didn't cause the problem.

My alcoholic went to AA long before I went to Al-anon, so he had found sobriety for a long time. I never thought about our beloved son drinking, but as so often happens at 14, our son started to take drugs. As I was a member of Al-anon, my group was and still is an amazing support to me, and I often tried - as you do - to get help for my son and ourselves - his dad and me. There was very little about for the family of a drug user so that I had often thought of trying to start a group.

One night, I went to an Al-anon meeting, a meeting I very rarely go to, but I did it to take a friend along. A couple there were at their first meeting and, when it was time for them to share, they said they were parents of a drug user. Fortunately, I had shared about my own son so they at once related to what I had been saying. To cut a long story short, on that very night I decided to try to start a group. I then found Families Anonymous website and that was it!

After a lot of hard work trying to get a meeting place, free of charge, I started the meeting in April this year. We have 12 members who attend on a regular basis and we laugh and cry as well. But we all agree that coming to FA every week helps us to keep sane and to try to get our own lives back in order. Our son is still using whatever it is he takes, but we can now try because it's not always easy to put the 4 C's into practice.

I have always found it so sad and frustrating that there are so many people in the world struggling on their own to deal with addiction. I consider myself to be a very lucky person because I have found, not only one but, two fellowships that have had such a fantastic effect on my life.

CHANGED ATTITUDES CAN AID RECOVERY
WLITF Denise – from a new group in Scotland.

AN OFFICIAL STANDING INVITATION TO THE OFFICE IN BATTERSEA

I was taken to task, in the friendliest possible manner, by one of my colleagues not so long ago for not frequently promoting in FAN visits to the office by members, including to Board meetings. I was convinced that it was part of the back-page template, but alas – when I checked – I had dropped that for a reason unknown some time ago. So, my apologies! Now I need to put the record straight and be more vigilant. Meanwhile I remind everyone of this paragraph on the Summer FAN this year which said -

All members of the Fellowship are reminded that they are more than welcome to come along and observe a Board meeting. This would entail a discussion with a Board member about the possible reimbursement of travel costs by FA to the person attending.

Apart from Board meetings, there is an official standing invitation for members to come and see how the office works. But, do phone before to advise of your intended visit. Better still, come on an Open Day when they are announced to Group Secretaries. Just pop in for a cup of tea or coffee and to see how things work in the office, says our office manager, Jan. She reminds us that the office is on the Doddington & Rollo Estate, off Battersea Park Road, SW11 5HD, a short walk from Battersea Park and Queenstown Road train stations, or a short bus ride (route 44) from Clapham Junction and Victoria terminuses. More detailed directions can be provided on request. Looking forward to seeing you there one day, she says. *Ed.*

BoardWalk

BOARD MEETING HELD AT BATTERSEA OFFICE ON 22nd.
SEPTEMBER 2012



- This was the second Board meeting of the FA-year, the following one being in December and the penultimate one before the 2013 Convention/AGM. It was a unique occasion because of the 'never before experienced' surreal scenario of all of those present signing some documentation for submission to Companies House for our *limited company by guarantee*. Once our company is confirmed, we will be able to proceed to achieve charity status. I am writing this shortly before FAN goes to press. The best that can be reported here and now, is that we are in the lap of the gods, or should I say of our Higher Power. What I can say with confidence is that, if important news breaks before the next edition of FAN, the Office will let the Group Secretaries informed.
- Paul of Gants Hill announced that due to pressure of work, he was going to have to relinquish one of his roles - that of PI. Carrying on would only mean that PI would not be adequately covered. But Sam of Queens Park offered to add this activity to her portfolio. Thank you, Sam! Paul is continuing to do the Evening and Weekend Phone Rota.
- After a long period of our relying unfairly on Jenny of Cambridge to help us out with literature, Jan reported that all literature items have already been listed within the website and that we have our PayPal account in readiness to be activated, following charity status achievement. Company incorporation will make this exciting facility come true!
- Diane confirmed that a separate Company AGM will not become necessary and that our existing arrangements with the Fellowship AGM will be adequate. What a relief!
- The Board recognized the continuing technical advances that Jan is bringing in and now we have been introduced to Google.docs remotely, for testing. This means, for instance, that any Board member can alter his/her details on the Service Board List from home without the necessity to request an update.
- This report is a mere snapshot of the 8-page Minutes. Find out more, and what other Board members said, by asking your Group Sec. or the Office to get you a full copy.

Remember ! You are encouraged to ask for a Board discussion on any preoccupation you may have!

Future Board meeting dates - 1/12/2012 - 2/3/2013.

AGM - Sunday Morning: 21 April 2013

CONVENTION & AGM NEWS

**Hilton Metropole, National Exhibition Centre,
Birmingham.**

Saturday 20 & Sunday 21 April 2013



Michael of Aberdeen, who was the Chair of 2012 FA Cross-Group Convention Planning Committee, has kindly offered his services to undertake the same role in 2013. Please note that, following the very successful changed format of the 2012 Convention, the 2013 Convention will again be held on the Saturday, followed by the AGM on the Sunday morning.

Having become practised in the new cross-group format, it is planned to have the first meeting of the Cross-Group Convention Committee during November, but too late to catch this edition of FAN. You have not missed out if you want to be part of the action - we are still looking for more FA members to join in!

The theme of next year's Convention was still to be decided at the time when this edition of FAN was being set up for printing but again we will be looking for FA members who are willing to give a Share. As in previous years, we are looking for a Parent, Partner and a Sibling to share at different points of the proceedings during the day. If you would like to give some service back to FA by, either joining the Convention Committee, or you think you could and would be willing to give one of the Shares, please contact the FA Office in London and express your interest which will be passed on to the Convention Committee.

Michael hopes again that some of you who intend to come to Birmingham next year will feel that you can help out, either by joining the Convention Committee, or by just helping on the day with - for example - participants' registrations or by selling raffle-tickets. There is a re-issued flyer in this Autumn FAN which you can also use to join the Convention Committee or to declare your willingness simply to help-out. Alternatively, just inform the Office in Battersea.

Forgive me for addressing you in this Convention Column but Michael is very busy work-wise at present so that I am taking the liberty of writing this piece in his place. I am sure that he would want me to remind you that, there will be a meal held on the Saturday evening for those staying at the hotel and, as Michael did last year, I would urge all of you who are coming to stay over on the Saturday and attend the AGM on the Sunday. As you know, the AGM is the opportunity for the FA membership to meet the Board and to hear what is being done on the Membership's behalf. It is also your opportunity to tell us if we're doing a good job or not. As Michael reminded us last year, we are, after all, only your trusted servants.

Finally, I would also say that this is YOUR Convention & AGM, so do please come along and enjoy the experience.

WLITF Richard, standing in (purely for this communication) for -

Michael, Chair: 2013 Cross- Group Convention Committee

PS. The Convention Committee Volunteer Form follows page 14 of this online FAN

Families Anonymous London Mini Convention

Saturday 24th November 2012

St Luke's Church

Fernhead Road, London W9 3EH

'Tools of Recovery'



The day will focus on the tools of our recovery, which enable us to live comfortably in spite of unsolved problems.

11am – 4pm

Refreshments provided at 12.30pm

Come and join our free meeting sessions, which will take place throughout the day.

Families Anonymous members and newcomers are all welcome.

Link for directions to St Luke's:

<http://stlukeskilburn.wordpress.com/how-to-find-us/>

Nearest tube: Queen's Park – Bakerloo Line

Because of the infrequency of the production of FAN and its programmed Autumn edition is only due to arrive with group secretaries at end November, and because the timing of this Mini-Convention was not envisaged at the time of the Summer FAN, notification has meanwhile been looked after by the Office in Battersea by email and post. So hopefully you already know of this event which has come to complement the National Convention in April next. A long-standing member of the Queen's Park Group explains that the group feels passionately about this event as important twelfth step work. So, it is hoped that due support is given to this and that FAN will be able to provide a favourable report in the Spring 2013 FAN. Our thanks to Queens Park for providing this opportunity ! **Ed.**



St Luke's Church

YOU HAVE MORE TIME TO THINK ABOUT GIVING BOARD SERVICE !

There will be four FA Board vacancies to be filled at the 2013 AGM in April because the present holders of these posts will be rotating-off, having completed their three years' service. They are Fellowship Secretary (Angela), Treasurer (Diane), New Group Liaison (Kate) and FAN Editor (myself: Richard). There are two flyers tucked into this FAN showing the job-descriptions of the posts that will become vacant.

Let me remind you what our Secretary, Angela, wrote in the spring: "To some it still seems a bit grand (which it certainly is not) to join the board, and the insecurity associated with taking on a role - which people have no experience of - can also put FA members off from standing for board membership.

Whilst the Board feels that, in general, it is a sign of good organization to prepare for changes, and that is surely true, it is felt by some that efficiently presenting what might be seen as commercial-style, demanding post-descriptions, we might frighten off more potential candidates than we attract. After all, one member of the present Board emailed to me as follows: *My only reservation about the role-descriptions is that they sound quite daunting.....confidence and self-worth are very low at the early stages of recovery.* So, we are here to reassure potential volunteers. Please remember that all the present Board members have their own stories and have benefited from taking that initial step into the unknown. The most significant thought about the documenting of each role is that there can be an extended dialogue between the outgoing post-holder and the potential new volunteer, before and after the hand-over. This is thought to be much more satisfactory and clearer for both parties, as opposed to an 'on the spur of the moment' induction and hand-over by hand-shake at the AGM!

As for the skills required, the most important ingredients are enthusiasm and commitment, in spite of everything. Do not stand back because you can't do this or that. A talk with the present post-holder and his/her reassurance to see you through the initial stages until you can 'fly', might be the solution. Remember that he or she was probably in the same position as you are now. Think

about it, please. You might be doing yourself and FA a great favour.

Although the Board position of FAN Editor will become vacant at the AGM in the spring of 2013, I am ready to edit FAN until and including the Autumn 2013 edition, having then done three years of actual FAN service. This means that, like I did, the new applicant will have some time to become accustomed to the inspiring, pleasant and satisfying Board way of life and forming his/her own ideas before putting pen to paper, or rather the Word Processor in motion, about what is going on in our fellowship. This time can be used also to acquire the technical skills needed for FAN-production. I intend to be around from now on until you start to produce FAN (and beyond) and to launch you onto this life-changing recovery experience. My colleagues are ready to offer the same kind of support.

So, the ball is in your court now. If you step forward, you won't regret it. But there is no obligation to 'come aboard'. You can stand back if you feel it is not for you. Only remember that Board members are 'ordinary' members doing a pay-back stint for three years; nothing more complicated. Thank you very much for reading these thoughts. *Ed.*



YOUR CHAIR WILL BE WAITING FOR YOU!

Just phone the office to be put in touch with one of the present role-holders and have an informal chat without obligation!

PS. The available role-descriptions are right at the end of this online version of FAN.

And How Board Service Has Changed Since 1998!

Looking at the 50p October 1988 edition of FAN, I see that - of course - they were seeking new members of the Service Board then, as well. It is said that this is no 'arduous commitment'. Agreed so far. But there were at that time "only" twelve Board meetings a year, meeting once a month in the evening in London. It is easy for me to say this now, but was meeting in London twelve times a year really necessary? These arrangements must have meant that volunteering for the Board was effectively restricted to those living within easy reach of London. I think that, by making sensible adjustments in the last 14 years, our Board today represents the overall nationwide membership better than in the past. *Ed.*



“Today A Better Way” extracts
from daily readings on -
FORGIVENESS

© Families Anonymous

In the FA Program ‘we learned to deal with our fear and **forgive** ourselves’. *February 24.*

- When we go to Step Nine and make amends to those we have harmed, we make proper restitution. We hope to be **forgiven** for wrongful actions in the past. Asking forgiveness teaches us to **forgive** in return. *March 7.*
- With love and **forgiveness**, my Higher Power greets and sustains me. It is one of the wonders of recovery that I am invited every day to let go of useless guilt and shame and allow love and **forgiveness** into my heart. *May 31.*
- As I work at replacing my negative traits of envy and resentment with love and acceptance, I also learn to **forgive** myself. With the help of the Twelve Steps, I can strive to improve. *June 2.*
- Knowing how unpleasant I find others’ attempts to “con” and manipulate me, , I’ve resolved to work especially hard at overcoming any tendency to behave in the same way. With humility I can ask God’s **forgiveness** and then **forgive** myself for my self-deceiving ways. *June 21.*
- The act of **forgiving** ourselves makes it possible to let go of the drug- user by **forgiving** him or her. It allows us to regain our self-esteem by focusing our energy away from the abuser and into ourselves. *August 12.*
- **Forgiveness** of others and of ourselves allows us to reclaim responsibility for our own fate. It lets us abandon our opinions and compulsion to control. *September 23*
- *TODAY I WILL* remember that **forgiveness** is the first phase of healing. *November 16.*

Why not order your very own copy of TABW from the FA Office in Battersea by downloading the FA Literature Order Form from <http://famanon.org.uk> A very helpful investment for a few pence a day!



The Circle of Forgiveness

"Sorry seems to be the hardest word to say", or so a well-known song goes. But forgiveness is often not much easier either. Both apologizing and genuinely forgiving can be so very difficult.

Maybe "sorry" is hard to say, because it's an admission that (horror of horrors!) I may have acted less than perfectly.

Similarly, "I forgive you" can be hard to say, maybe because it can feel like its saying that whatever it is that happened doesn't matter, when in reality the hurt may still be very much felt. So how can we really forgive, and what about forgiving where there is no apology – is this even possible?

In our FA programme, we are encouraged first to cease trying to change others, turn to a Higher Power, and then focus on those areas we can do something about – most particularly, ourselves.

One of my challenges has been to find forgiveness, especially for my ALO ("Addicted Loved One"). Over the eventful period of time which brought me to FA, I had become angry and wound-up inside, although mostly beneath the surface, sour words were often quick to rise to the surface. Finally, I faced it. Slowly I began to understand that I needed to change, and part of that was forgiving others, even without any apology – because this was better for me, as well as other people. Instead of denying my feelings, **"The Three A's"** slogan helped here: Acknowledging, Accepting and then taking the Action ... of forgiving*.

Being able to forgive can only be described as a small miracle. The bonus point is that this gift of forgiveness is as much a benefit to me as anyone else. I have experienced a feeling of restoration, and released from the prison of resentment and underlying anger – forgiveness definitely feels better than being angry! For me, this was possible only by turning to my Higher Power for help. I had to ask for it, I had to want it – and I definitely could not do it by myself.

I am (slowly and with many blips) learning how to follow our wonderful, effective FA 12 step programme, letting the care of my loved ones rest with my Higher Power, whilst trying to work on my own defects, taking regular inventory (I cannot say it is daily as yet) and also starting to make amends where I can. As our optional meeting closing statement says:

"It works if you work it, it won't if you don't – so work it you're worth it!"*

I hope I will remember always to be generous with forgiveness when asked for it from others, and even when not asked. It is a gift we can give freely, and which seems to keep circling back happiness and peace to us as we do so, in increasing measure.

Member of Hitchin and IMWW



SOMETHING ABOUT FA BEYOND OUR SHORES

SPREADING THE WORD IN OTHER TONGUES

The World Service Board's Literature Committee has been busy with the *Today a Better Way - TABW* series, being high on the their list of projects during the past few months. Nearing completion are an e-book version of *TABW* and a brand-new Spanish hard-copy translation of it called *Hoy Un Mejor Camino* based on the latest (2011) version of the English original. Next on their list will be the conversion of *Hoy Un Mejor Camino* to e-book format. *Hoy Un Mejor Camino* is not to be confused with *Hoje Um Caminho Melhor*, which is the Portuguese version of *TABW*, first copyrighted 21 years ago. So we can see that a lot of effort has gone and is continuing is to go into spreading the FA word.

Having written in the last edition of FAN about our fellowship in St Petersburg, I was interested to come across in the March-April 2001 *Twelve Step Rag* an article by Valerie D. of the World Service Office (WSO) entitled *From Russia with Love* which explained the teething problems encountered in Russia as follows:

<<< Another saga of FA around the world and our Higher Power at work! Strange things happen!

March 13, 1999: WSO received an email from Natalia V.V. of St, Petersburg, Russia. She is the mother of an addict and a two-year member of Al-anon. She said they, the Al-anon mothers and addicts wanted to start a Famanon group in their city and requested literature and information to start a group.

April 10, 1999: Responded to her email, promising to send the requested information and some sample literature. When we got the package ready to mail, I checked the USPS Int'l Mail Manual and found a restriction against sending printed materials to Russia, so we were stopped in our tracks. I emailed them back about this situation.

April 11, 1999: Received an answer to the previous day's email from Sergei B. who is a psychiatrist. Natalia had asked his help to establish contact with FA, promising to forward any messages from her later. . Never heard any more.

June 12, 2000: Found a message to call Phyllis Smith-Pemberton of the ARROW (American-Russian Recovery Options at Work) Foundation in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin. I had an informative and inspiring conversation with Phyllis, during which I related our Russian story. Phyllis was leaving for Russia the very next week and offered to hand-carry and deliver our package to Natalia. I provided her with the address that we had, rushed the package to Phyllis and never heard any more.

February 12, 2001: Picked up a registered-letter at the post office from Russia! From E.L.I. (preserving anonymity), who was forwarding translations and nicely printed copies of 'Then and Now' and 'A Father Faces Drug Abuse'. His letter says – Dear Friends, Thank you very much for sending us materials including 'Then and Now' and 'A Father Faces Drug Abuse' which are now translated into Russian. Please find enclosed the both translated brochures with the gratitude for a possibility to use your experience. (From) Nan-Anon Group 'Fathers of Drug Addicts', contact person E.L.I. (with an address).

February 17, 2001: Presented the brochures to the Board of Directors at the meeting this date. Tony L. has access to a huge staff of translators and is having these booklets checked for translation and approval. --- This is just one reason I love working in the World Service Office, Yours in Service – Valerie D.>>>

Well, for those of you who read the article entitled *From Russia with Love in the Fellowship* in the latest Summer FAN. the E.L.I. mentioned above is none other than the Yevgenni who gave all the substance to that article. I am confident that I am not breaking an anonymity taboo as there must be thousands of Yevgennis in St Petersburg! I certainly found it interesting to read the earlier background to this Russian group. It could also be that Yevgenni did the translations, although he might have simply passed them on. I hope that you found it interesting too! Ed.

CHRISTMAS IS NOT TOO FAR AWAY!

Christmas can be a time of overwrought emotions, a time when families and people close to each other are normally expected to come together. Even the most stable and loving families, partnerships and friendships can come under strain because of the absence of loved ones, or due to the strain of the enforced pressure of being cooped up for days in a house with relations that one sees just once a year. Add to that the scenario of having your addict as one of the guests who might, or might not, behave normally and let the cat out of the bag to the horror of all assembled; or maybe worse, in that you are totally distraught because your addict has disappeared without trace on the latest of his or her 'trips'. Whichever way you look at it, Christmas can be a really distressing time for those close to an addict; if it is not, we in FA probably know better than most how to appreciate a serene Christmas.

In the year that I joined FA, an American member from Washington State named Terry shared his thoughts on how he was going to deal with the imminent Christmas holiday, following a tense time at Thanksgiving, all of which I would like to repeat to FAN-readers these some years later for their perusal:

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It is very easy for some of us to become depressed during the holidays. I'm finding that using my FA program can be an excellent way to avoid sadness. Before FA, I allowed people to control my moods. If I was happy, it was because they were doing well. If they weren't doing well, I was ill. Three years ago I was standing over my stove crying in my turkey gravy, wondering if the addict was going to show up for Thanksgiving dinner. I was so focused on the addict who wasn't there that I totally ignored the guests who were there. When the addict finally walked in, I was so relieved and happy. After that weekend was over, I looked back on that time and said never again will I allow someone else to control my sadness or happiness. As a matter of fact, the next year we left for a week over

Thanksgiving, Well, this year – same people, different problems, but I decided how I was going to feel. I chose to invite my golfing buddy over and her family. My own family left right after dinner and we played cards all afternoon. So during the Christmas holiday, when the skies are grey and I might start feeling a little SAD – which can stand for "Seasonal Affective Disorder" or "Seasonal Addict Disorder", I can pick up my FA literature, phone a friend or go for a walk. FA has given me tools, a good spine, and a desire to change my life for the better.

Terry in Richland, Washington State.

"But I am sure that I have always thought of Christmas time, when it has come round...as a good time; a kind, **forgiving**, charitable, pleasant time; the only time I know of, in the long calendar of the year, when men and women seem by one consent to open their shut-up hearts freely."

-- Charles Dickens (1812-1870)

Forgiving is love's toughest work, and love's biggest risk. If you twist it into something it was never meant to be, it can make you a doormat or an insufferable manipulator. Forgiving seems almost unnatural. Our sense of fairness tells us people should pay for the wrong they do. But forgiving is love's power to break nature's rule.

This issue has focused on Forgiveness

The content, unless specifically identified as from another source, is written entirely by FA members and represents each author's personal experience, strength and hope as part of their individual Twelve Step journey. Every editorial effort is made to ensure that the articles present a positive attitude "in spite of unsolved problems". Once again, if you read something that does not agree with your viewpoint, please try to apply what we read at meetings: "take with you that which you can accept and leave the rest. As before, active feedback is welcomed about any changes you, the membership, would like to see in this newsletter.

You may, for instance, want the focus to be on particular aspect of our recovery?

In the next Spring Issue

The focus will be on Expectations. All contributions will be more than welcome! They certainly do not have to be about our focus subject. The more topics on offer the better! Write a letter to the Editor, get something off your chest, or offer - perhaps the most valuable and important element in our fellowship – a share.

And, as usual, I will ask specific groups to take their turn to contribute – using the alphabetical system, starting with the first and last in the alphabet and two groups in the middle. My calculations make this, for the Spring issue: Bournemouth, Liverpool, Bristol, and Dungannon. If you can't think what to write about, I'll give you some suggestions. Together, we can work it out!



SWANSEA CASTLE FOUNDED IN 1106 IN THE CITY OF OUR WESTERNMOST FA MEETING IN ENGLAND & WALES – SWANSEA

Whichever part of the country we come from, the challenges that we share are the same

Families Anonymous
The Doddington & Rollo Community Association
Charlotte Despard Avenue
London SW11 5HD
Tel: 0845 1200 660 (Lo-Call)
Fax: 020 7498 1990
E-mail: office@famanon.org.uk
Web: <http://famanon.org.uk>

& in: USA (HQ), Canada, Gibraltar, Greece,



India, Italy, Mexico, Portugal, Russia, Spain, S. Africa.



Hilton Metropole, National Exhibition Centre,
Birmingham.

FAMILIES ANONYMOUS

UK CONVENTION & AGM 20-21 APRIL 2013

Cross-Group Convention Committee

Volunteer Nomination Form

*Please complete this form if you are interested in giving valuable service for this event
Alternatively telephone or email the FA Office to declare your interest*

Member's Name (first name only) _____

FA Group Attended _____

E-mail Address _____

Contact Phone number _____



2012

Please fold form and stick down with sellotape
Phone: 0845 1200 660 Email: office@famanon.org.uk

AFFIX
STAMP HERE
PLEASE

Families Anonymous
The Doddington & Rollo Community Association
Charlotte Despard Avenue
LONDON SW11 5HD

FOLD FORM - SEAL WITH SELLOTAPE, please.

Phone 0845 1200 660

FAMILIES ANONYMOUS UK

ROLE DESCRIPTION - SECRETARY

This is an opportunity for an FA-member to become our next Secretary and for the applicant to repay what FA has done for him/her; a chance to find enjoyment, creativity and support as an FA Board Member.

Applicant Requirements :

- Above all, enthusiasm, commitment and willingness to have a go at doing the job. Support and help will be available.
- Familiarity with Microsoft WORD and email.
- Attendance at board meetings in London and the AGM wherever that is held.
- There is no requirement beyond this to attend the office for this role.

Role details:

- Ask for board meeting agenda items 4 weeks prior to the meeting, to include this in the agenda and circulate it in advance of the meeting via email.
- Take the minutes at board meetings.
- Prepare minutes as draft as soon as possible after the meeting and circulate them to all board members for comment prior to issuing final a copy.
- Ensure any proposed amendments to the By-Laws are sent to Groups prior to the AGM.
- Collaborate with the committee planning and hosting the FA convention and AGM to prepare and distribute key letters in accordance with the By-Laws.
- Take the minutes at the AGM.
- Prepare AGM minutes as draft as soon as possible after the meeting and circulate them to all board members for comment prior to issuing final copy.
- Submit all minutes to the office for filing and circulation to group secretaries.
- Prepare any letters as requested by the board.

Role-sharing option: It might be possible for two volunteers to share the Secretary role and taking turns at board meetings. This would have to be scheduled and all board members would need to be made aware of it.

General duties of Board members:

- *Attendance at 3-hour Board meetings at our office in Battersea about 4 times a year, normally on Saturday mornings. Possibility for phone-conferencing for those living far from London.*
- *Participation in general Board business, mostly by email, as and when necessary, and occasional contact with groups allotted to you.*
- *FA will repay all agreed outlays that are necessary to perform all Board functions*

Duration of Service: A satisfying and creative three-year period, a chance to serve the FA Fellowship and to be an integral part of its decision making process. *For the duration of service, an invitation will be extended for the applicant to become a Trustee of the FA charity and a Director of the FA Company limited by guarantee.*

Could be interested?: If you could be interested and would like to know more, why not get the phone number from the Office of the present role-holder and have an informal chat without obligation? The reality of learning gradually can be pleasing and is much less daunting and demanding than this role-description might suggest! Surprise yourself!

October 2012

FAMILIES ANONYMOUS UK

ROLE DESCRIPTION - TREASURER

This is an opportunity for an FA-member to become our next Treasurer and for the applicant to repay what FA has done for him/her; a chance to find fulfilment and support as an FA Board Member.

Applicant Requirements:

- Above all, enthusiasm, commitment and belief in self to do the job, given support and help until confident.
- Very basic book-keeping skills – to record and pay cheques into our account, pay incoming bills, volunteer travel expenses, printing etc. and keep filed copies of all transactions, bank statements and other invoices.
- Basic computer skills - Microsoft EXCEL to update the monthly spread-sheet of income and outgoings. When we have PayPal up and running much more will be done online.
- It would be an advantage for the applicant to be able to access the office on a fairly regular basis, but no more than once or twice a month, to pay bills, volunteer travel expenses and such like.

Role details:

- The main role entails keeping accurate records of our income and expenditure. Income is from literature sales, including FAN, and donations. Much of this will become online, once PayPal is set up, but cheques will continue to be used by those who do not have computer access. Expenditure is by cheque and Bank mandates for regular expenses rent, electricity, insurance etc.
- The role includes communicating with the bank to update signatories to the account, set up or change bank mandates.
- Also, it includes taking all the account books and documents to our Accountant currently in Chobham Surrey to be scrutinised once a year.
- Finally the Treasurer will need to take responsibility for preparing the Annual Reports for both Companies House and the Charity Commission – since this includes the scrutinised Accounts.

Getting started: I am happy to help go through how the books are kept (it is very straightforward) as Norman did for me when I took on the role in 2011. I am also happy to help with drafting the Annual Reports, first time round and this will make the take-over more gradual and manageable.

General duties of Board members:

- *Attendance at 3-hour Board meetings at our office in Battersea about 4 times a year, normally on Saturday mornings. Possibility for phone-conferencing for those living far from London.*
- *Participation in general Board business, mostly by email, as and when necessary, and occasional contact with groups allotted to you.*
- *FA will repay all agreed outlays that are necessary to perform all Board functions*

Keeping the accounts can sound a bit dry and unimaginative, but I have found being Treasurer a really rewarding experience – and when the columns add up at the end of the month it is a great feeling – especially when our income is greater than our outgoings! Being responsible for the Annual Reports can seem daunting, but having done it once, and with help from the templates provided by Companies House and the Charity Commission, updating each year will be easy.

Duration of Service: A satisfying three-year period, a chance to serve The FA Fellowship and to be an integral part of its decision making process. *For the duration of service, an invitation will be extended for the applicant to become a Trustee of the FA charity and a Director of the FA company limited by guarantee.*

October 2012

FAMILIES ANONYMOUS UK

ROLE DESCRIPTION - FAN NEWSLETTER EDITOR

This is an opportunity for an FA-member to become our next FAN-editor and for the applicant to repay what FA has done for him/her; a chance to find enjoyment, creativity and support as an FA Board Member.

Applicant Requirements :

- Above all, enthusiasm, commitment and belief in self to do the job, given support and help until confident.
- Basic computer skills will be needed from the start but willingness to learn is paramount. Familiarity with Microsoft WORD 2010 an advantage, but not a requirement.
- Production of three editions of FAN per year, in spring, summer and autumn.
- Where the applicant lives is irrelevant, as the preferred and experienced FAN-printer can deliver anywhere; access to a Post Office, large envelopes and sellotape are necessary - but are on hand in the Office in Battersea.

Role details:

- The role falls into two more or less natural parts – firstly the *editing and printing* of each FAN with members' contributions, fellowship news and the like, and secondly the *administration* of FAN-orders, physical distribution and FAN-matters on the FA website.

Role-sharing option: Because of the natural division of tasks just mentioned, it might be possible for two volunteers to share the FAN role. However, in the absence of a role-share arrangement, familiarization with the administration role before actual editing and printing can make the total take-over more gradual and manageable. Familiarization with software in the months before taking on the editing and printing is possible.

General duties of Board members:

- *Attendance at 3-hour Board meetings at our office in Battersea about 4 times a year, normally on Saturday mornings. Possibility for phone-conferencing for those living far from London.*
- *Participation in general Board business, mostly by email, as and when necessary, and occasional contact with groups allotted to you.*
- *FA will repay all agreed outlays that are necessary to perform all Board functions*

Getting involved in FA activities, becoming familiar with the membership and groups induce thoughts as to what might go into the next FAN. Persuading members to write something for FAN takes some time but an effort has to be made in thinking what the main theme of the next edition will be and, subsequently building-up the document, page by page. This is an on-going process, ideas coming at unexpected times, such as in the shower, doing the shopping and the like. Because of this, the use of the virtual FAN-template is advisable, filling in the new edition, as and when ideas develop. Imagination will come into play, trawling the internet for relevant quotations and images to fit in with the emerging contents of the emerging FAN. It may also be the bringer of new and different editorial ideas.

Duration of Service: A satisfying and creative three-year period, equal to nine editions of FAN, a chance to serve The FA Fellowship and to be an integral part of its decision making process. *For the duration of service, an invitation will be extended for the applicant to become a Trustee of the FA charity and a Director of the FA company limited by guarantee.*

Could be interested?: If you could be interested and would like to know more, why not get the phone number from the Office of the present role-holder and have an informal chat without obligation? The reality of learning gradually can be pleasing and is much less daunting and demanding than this role-description might suggest! Surprise yourself!

October 2012