

FAN & FANonline

voice of the families anonymous
fellowship



Autumn 2013

REPEATED PLEA !

NEW FAN EDITOR STILL SOUGHT



main theme – WORRY!

“That's the secret to life... replace one worry with another....”

[Charles M. Schulz](#), *Charlie Brown* - US cartoonist (1922 - 2000)

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

£1



Greetings !

Autumn Leaves

Dear All !

What have I included in this edition ?

- Our main theme this time is: **Worry**.... something that we are particularly prone to in our situation
- 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 is progressing on course with the development of online shopping and PayPal
- Convention Corner; Looking back at the September Scottish Convention and forward to the NEC as usual in April.
- Looking back to the old days of the first FA Mexican National Convention
- Selected Quotes, Poetry and Clip Art

Dear All,

As I write, the nights are drawing in and by the time you read me, it will probably still be autumn. But let us not fool ourselves, for most of us our least favourite season will soon be upon us – winter! But at least the summer was better than usual. These long nights remind me that it is time and my pleasure to address you again but this time I have to start with an apology – I may have created some confusion in the last issue of FAN. The ways that the Service Board (now Service Office) of Families Anonymous has had to deal with becoming a Limited Company and Charity has brought with it challenges and not all the regulations and changes have been easy to understand. I am the first to admit that. So to recap: it is confirmed that Families Anonymous remains the Fellowship that it always was, still governed by its By-Laws which are updated, and will continue to be updated from time to time, as agreed by the membership at AGMs. So, the Fellowship remains just that and the implication in the last issue of FAN that Families Anonymous itself had become a Charity and Limited Company was misleading, or rather – plain wrong. For that, I offer my excuses. The new Charitable Company does, however, exist to manage the affairs of the Fellowship, including the all-important finances of FA.

So, having dug myself out of that hole, what about the main theme of this autumn issue? I have chosen – **Worry**. We are simply programmed to do it. It is a

natural part of the human psyche. So, if that is true, what can we do about it? At our meetings we see the popular slogan – **Worry is Optional** . It takes days, weeks, months or even years to really sink in – until we realize that it is true. We hear of people these days having to attend anger management courses. Why not then worry management courses too? They probably already exist somewhere. But in FA, together with the support of other members and our literature, we are gradually able to set aside this potentially paralyzing feeling. Overcoming it can require application and strength but the reward is tangible.

I once reproduced an article by one of our US members attending an FA Greek convention; although it is old, I include this time the same on another US member attending the first FA Mexican convention. Attending an FA convention is a timeless and inspiring experience, if you haven't found that out yet. Why not try it?

Do remember that your views about FA and FAN can be made known on these pages. Simply email richard.jones813@ntlworld.com or contact the Office –see last page for details. Happy Winter! WLITF Richard – *Chair and outgoing FAN Editor*.

Worry as seen in 'Today a Better Way'

Worry is a habit acquired through repetition. My legitimate concern for someone who's misusing drugs can reinforce the worry habit until it becomes a powerful, destructive obsession. I am



learning that I can change worry and negative thoughts through conscious, deliberate practice. I *can* replace worry with positive ways of thinking. I *can* cultivate good habits through repetition, just as I once cultivated bad ones.

Worry is not productive. It does not solve problems. I need to let go of those people and situations that cause me to worry by turning them over to the care of my Higher Power, entrusting Him with the outcome. Only then can I replace these obsessive thoughts with grateful thanks that a Power greater than myself is taking care of my concerns better than I ever could.

TODAY I WILL refuse to worry, knowing my worrying has never helped my higher Power get the job done. [January 6 page in *Today A Better Way*, © Families Anonymous]



Hallo All! I was worrying what I was going to write in this gaping empty hole virtually at the beginning of this new edition of FAN but have left it right to the end to tackle. As so often happens, an outside force gave me the shove I needed by leading me to look at the nine motivating items in the FA leaflet - *Only for Today*. In it, I am firmly put into my place by the words - *Only for Today, I am going train myself in three ways*: One of those ways, reads the text, is something like 'I should undertake at least two tasks that I did not want to face, just for practice!' No more putting off until tomorrow what I really should complete today. Worrying about what I am going to write, like all worry, is absolutely counter-productive. To use another well-worn FA slogan, 'it blocks effective action'. So on with the effective action I must go. If we put things off until tomorrow, then the day after, then the day after that, the task facing us becomes more loathsome by the day. It is like compounding interest on a loan. The more we put off the repayment, the higher the price in the end. I use this as an example and assure you that now that I have taken the bull by the horns, I am enjoying writing to you. What I am trying to say is that worry left uncontrolled and unchecked can develop into a monster which can control our lives. We cannot simply wish it away because it is too strong. We have to train ourselves to keep it under control, reminding ourselves of the futility of worry as well as the enduring stress that it can put us under which cannot be good for our overall health. Various contributors have described in TABW how they managed to deflect their attention away from the problem which was taking control of their lives. One such contributor recounts how (s)he tried to say good-bye to worry and replace it by faith and acceptance. We all have to find our own ways of controlling this beast, but knowing that it can be controlled and overcome is a fine start. Easy to say, you might think. Of that there is no doubt. *Ed.*

I never worry about action, but only inaction.

Winston Churchill

Hope

CHANGES EVERYTHING

My name is Audrey; I am a very grateful member of Families Anonymous.

I first found FA through my daughter, She is one of the addicts in my life and the only one in recovery today. While my daughter was in a 12 step rehab. around four years ago, she was attending an NA meeting and started chatting to a lovely lady from FA who suggested that FA might be of help to me. Soon after, I attended my first meeting. I thought I had a fair idea of what recovery meant for me at that time, but I was wrong. By attending meetings regularly, doing some service and reading every piece of literature I could find, I slowly began my journey of recovery. I became more aware of myself, my behaviour and my reactions to stressful situations. I also learned that I was not to blame for the things the addicts in my family did and that I was not the failure I once thought I was. Mostly, I learned to forgive myself for being unkind to ME.

When my daughter relapsed for the first time on alcohol, I didn't go to pieces and fool myself into thinking this was a lesser evil than using "drugs"! I later came to understand that alcoholism and drug addiction are, in fact, bad for my daughter and that complete abstinence is the only way for her. I got on with things as usual and kept attending meetings. All seemed to be going well until my daughter relapsed once again. This time it was really a bad one. I thought we were going to lose her to this horrible disease and couldn't see a way back for her this time and I fell apart... I realized then that I had been basing the quality of my recovery on how well my daughter was doing!

That night at my meeting, I got really honest for the first time and I asked for help. I completely surrendered and handed all my fear and hurt over to a "power greater than myself" My group were a huge support to me that night. It was the first time I really felt the power of my group. As they gathered round me, I felt protected. I believe I experienced a spiritual awakening that night. I needed to be strong because I had some "tough love" decisions to make. As I left the meeting, intending to put tough love into action, I knew my higher power was with me.

That night, my daughter hit rock bottom and finally asked for help. I don't understand exactly what happened that night but I have come to believe my Higher Power took the situation over and I felt lighter, as if a huge weight had been taken off my shoulders.

Our lives have all taken a turn for the better. It's by no means perfect and there are still ups and downs of course, but I am able to see what IS my business and what's not, most of the time not. Most of the time, I no longer expect perfection from myself or others... My daughter is clean and sober today, both my daughters now have a close relationship. Our daughter is expecting her first baby early next year. I am so grateful for this fellowship and I would like to share a message of hope to those still struggling to come to terms with loved ones in active addiction.

This is my experience, please take what you find useful and leave the rest...

With love in the fellowship

Audrey
Aberdeen/Fraserburgh groups

Spice up your Meetings with a Guest Speaker from FA !



Does your group invite guest speakers from time to time? It can be quite inspiring to have a share from a recovering addict or alcoholic, but have you thought of inviting an FA member to share their story of recovery with your group?

FA keeps a list of members willing to give shares, which is available from the office or any board member. Look at the list and choose someone who is in reasonable travelling distance and make contact directly with them, offering a date with plenty of notice, perhaps a choice of dates. Make sure everyone in your group is aware, especially those occasional members who would perhaps make an effort for a

special speaker meeting.

The host group usually offers a contribution towards part or all of the travelling expenses of the speaker. If the speaker has to travel a long distance and yours is an evening meeting, maybe one of your members could offer a bed for the night.

How do names get onto the list of members willing to give shares? They come from members anywhere in the country who feel they would like to give back to others some of the recovery they have found in FA. It could be you, or someone in your group. Please mention the list at your next meeting and see if anyone would like to offer to be on it, and ask them to contact the office or a board member for the next step.

If you offer your name as a member willing to give shares, it doesn't mean you will be flooded with invites and rushing all over the country! In practice this list is hardly used at all, which is a shame because it's a useful resource. If you do get asked and it's inconvenient or you're not up for it at the time for any reason, you can always say 'no'.

Occasionally FA gets asked to give 'outside' shares, outside the fellowship that is, perhaps to a meeting of another 12-step fellowship like NA, or perhaps in a prison or to professionals for PI purposes. When offering your name for the list, please indicate if there is any area outside FA that you would *not* be happy sharing, and also give an indication of how far you are prepared to travel, either by car or by public transport.

Jan (Office Manager)

Thank you for that, Jan. All the above represents "carrying the message to others" as described in Step 12 of the FA programme, either internally at our meetings and conventions, but also externally by sharing our experiences with interested professionals such as doctors, probation officers and the like, or by talking publicly with due caution concerning anonymity and other relevant considerations. When we are addressing an outside organization, an important point to bring out is that we as individuals make clear that we are talking of our own experience and not officially for Families Anonymous.

Guest and public speaking is a concept near to, and allied to, that of Public Information (PI). Whilst the situation on the filling of Board roles has improved since our last AGM, a significant hole surrounds the empty chair to be filled by a member who would appreciate the challenge of leading our efforts to attract new members and direct the public face of FA UK. Whilst this function is at present being covered by the Board as a whole under the able guidance of our Office Manager, a PI Chair is what is really needed. Might you feel called?

» P.I. CHAIR SOUGHT! .. read on «

FAMILIES ANONYMOUS UK

ROLE DESCRIPTION – PUBLIC INFORMATION [PI] CHAIR

This is an opportunity for an FA-member to become our PI Chair 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!

Useful Skills and Attributes:

- Enthusiasm, imagination, commitment and belief in self to do the job, given support and help until confident.
- Efficiency in email and general electronic communications.

Location:

- There is no requirement to attend the office for this role, although see below under general duties. As PI opportunities occur anywhere in the UK, delegation and follow-through with local members is important. The PI Chair might only be expected to attend when circumstances call for this and it is economically viable.

Role details:

- The FA Board appoints the PI Chair and the PI Sub-Committee which currently includes Fellowship Liaison and Prisons, two areas where FA needs to extend a public face. There is generally no requirement specific to these roles to attend the office.
- The PI Chair role entails fostering the awareness of the Families Anonymous programme to the general public and to professionals working in the area of drug abuse and related behavioural problems; developing awareness of Families Anonymous to public agencies, the medical and legal professions, schools and school counsellors and other personnel at the local levels who might refer families or friends to Families Anonymous. The Committee will prepare announcements for newspapers, radio and television, maintaining anonymity of individual members, some of which will be appropriate for individual group use in their particular areas. All national announcements and national public speaking engagements shall be cleared through the PI Chair. They would include review of manuscripts written for national publication.

Getting started: At present there **is** no PI-specific volunteer on the Board and this function is being covered by other Board members. The induction of a new volunteer will therefore be looked after by other members of the Board.

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. Phone-conferencing available, if appropriate.
- 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 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 the Office and have an informal chat without obligation? The reality of learning a new skill can be pleasing and is much less daunting and demanding than this role-description might suggest! Surprise yourself!

July 2013

BoardWalk

BOARD MEETING HELD AT BATTERSEA OFFICE ON 7th. SEPTEMBER 2013



This was the second Board Meeting of the 2013-2014 Service Board towards the end of a summer which had actually offered us a fair helping of sunshine.

- A warm welcome was given to our new co-opted Board member Bev who introduces himself on the next page. He had already expressed an interest in the World Service Board and explains his position in his introduction. At the September meeting

we were still very worried about the lack of movement on finding a new Treasurer and discussed a plan of action for filling this role and the other less crucial, but nevertheless important roles. As I write this report, certain volunteers have come forward so that the situation is manageable but still but we are still without a PI Chair.

- Diane reported that she had finally managed to open our new bank account in the name of the Service Office with Lloyds TSB and was preparing to get all direct debits and standing orders transferred to it.
- Whilst Cassandra was on holiday and could not attend this Board meeting, she had prepared a detailed Literature report for consideration. We started to come to terms with the reality that our stock of TABW will not last much longer and that replacing it was going to be a major investment. A final decision was left for the November Board meeting as the matter was not urgent.
- This demand on our bank account has come at the same time that we need to continue the development of our website to enable it to engage in e-trading for our literature which is today's norm. We will continue to accept cheques by post but feel that selling online against debit and credit cards is now a 'must'.
- Diane advised that our Charity No. is to be displayed on our letterhead and displayed in the Office; Company name only to appear on cheque book. Jan and Diane are to update paperwork as letterhead is required for official communication. Communication with Fellowship as the Fellowship does not need to display Company Name and Charity. Literature needs to be updated to reflect the above. Company name and Charity No, is to be removed from the website. The meeting felt that these details from the Minutes should be reported in FAN.
- Discussion on various aspects of Public Information were held, One area was the possibility of FA applying to be listed in telephone Yellow Pages. However, we would have to meet the demanding requirements made on helpline operators which cover various aspects, including training. We were in favour of this idea but the provision of formal on-the-spot help-line training for all our volunteers, especially the travel aspect could prove beyond our means. Is being investigated.
- Please take into account that this report is only a sketch of what happened on 7 September, but that any member is welcome to receive full Minutes of this, or any other Board meeting or AGM, simply by asking the Office to email or post them a copy. Do get involved!
- All members of the Fellowship are reminded that they are more than welcome to come along and observe any Board meeting. This would entail a discussion with a Board member about the possible reimbursement of travel costs by FA to the person attending.

WLITF Richard - Chair and outgoing FAN Editor.

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

Future Board meetings: 30 November 2013, 01 March 2014

AGM: Sunday 27 April 2014

Introducing another Board member – Bev

I have been a member of the Chelsea group of Families Anonymous for about ten years and Westminster for three years, and felt it was about time that I offered some assistance to the board.

As the stepfather of my addict, I have been very aware that I have not had to directly endure the emotional rollercoaster as has his mother (Sue, whom most of you know). However, I would be very sad to lose the profound changes to my attitude to life that the FA programme has brought me.

My task will be to represent FA-UK on the World Service Board which is now based in Chicago, but perhaps more significantly, I am to become a member of the WSB involved in FA worldwide. This will be done via electronic link to their board meetings. If any member or group has a concern which they would like to have aired on their behalf, then please contact me.

Bev

Diane rotates off the Board. Entrat Simon

Finally the time has come to do one of the things that I find really hard – Letting go! But I am very happy to say that Simon from Gants Hill Group has agreed to become our new Treasurer and I am sure that he will bring exactly what is needed as we move forward into online sales and the like.

The next Board meeting, coming up at the end of November, is going to be my last, sadly. It has been quite an experience over the last three years or so – especially since taking over as Treasurer – and I have met a group of amazing and committed people. I will really miss all their support and friendship.

I have to confess to being a bit scared when I volunteered to take over as Treasurer, but thought it would be a challenge that I needed for my own recovery – and a challenge it has certainly been! The book-keeping was, in the end, the easy bit!

As he handed over, Norman said it would be really straightforward applying for Charity status – he had already collected most of the information to fill out the application form. How wrong that turned out to be! We first realized that as Trustees, the Board would be financially liable for any debts that Families Anonymous incurred that weren't covered by our assets – a big shock to us all! In fact this had been the case ever since the Board was formed, so it was definitely time to do something about it. This meant forming a Company Limited by Guarantee – but where would we find the money to afford legal advice?? Fortunately Richard came across a website called LawWorks where we could apply for free

legal advice and within a couple of days we heard from the legal firm, Holman, Fenwick Willan who offered to help. They have been truly amazing! Particularly Ian Mathew who has worked so hard to get us where we are – and it has taken about 2 years to do it! The Board finally became registered as a Charitable Company Limited by Guarantee on November 8th 2012 and then thought it would be very straightforward to become a Charity – since what we do is certainly charitable. However, it turned out to be more complicated – and there were several more hurdles to get through before the Board finally became a Charity in April this year – just after the AGM and convention. Soon we will be able to start online sales of our Literature, as well as being able to claim Gift Aid on personal but not Group donations – once HMRC has processed our application (and that has taken 3 months so far! – about the same time that it took to open a new bank account for us!)

So, we have finally done it! And I can happily hand over to Simon, who I am sure will do a great job. Taking on these responsibilities has certainly done a lot for my recovery, in ways that I wouldn't have thought possible.

I want to end by thanking all the members of the Board who have helped so much. I really do appreciate everything you have done – and are continuing to do – on behalf of the Fellowship. WLITF Diane

- Our heartfelt thanks from us all to Diane – Richard, Chair.

& CONVENTION CORNER



SCOTTISH CONVENTION 2013

Glasgow, Saturday 14 September last

For the first time in quite some time, FA Scotland decided to supplement this year's convention calendar by hosting its own event, enticing FA members from Scotland, England and Wales. The host city was Glasgow and the event was divided onto two distinctive parts. Both were held in the facilities of a Partick church – Partick of Thistle fame. Saturday's weather turned out fine, giving an aura of inspiration to the day. Before the proceedings started, non-Scots were given a humorous guide to words which might be included in shares and not be understood; a key word was 'bairns' for 'children'. Then, with the sun shining through the windows, we listened to moving shares from family members from both sides of the situation in which we and our families and friends find ourselves. This is when the inspiration, that I just referred to, became reality. All this was broken up only by a very enjoyable and informal lunch with a chance for everyone one to exchange thoughts and experiences.

The afternoon session continued along the same lines, with the notable exception of a raffle. At about 7 in the evening we re-assembled for the 'social' in the same hall, bringing along our preferred drink if desired, and being offered hot food, including curry. With music for all, and a floor suitable for dancing, the convention certainly did not end early and was enjoyed by all. The following morning brought driving rain and gales – we had had our pleasant event, though!

NATIONAL CONVENTION AND AGM 2014

FA Needs You !

The 2014 convention will be held on the weekend of April 26/27 in Birmingham at the Hilton Metropole Hotel, this is the same venue as we have used for the past few years, it is a superb venue and is very central with good transport links. For the last two years a committee of FA members from various groups have organised the event. So again this year we are looking for volunteers to come forward from various groups to form the committee which will organise and run the convention. This will not be as daunting a task as might first seem as the previous committees have put together guidelines that have been built up over the years.

The meetings usually take place on a Sunday morning, they are normally about an hour long.

The format is a teleconference, so you don't even need to leave home.

So I would ask all our members to consider becoming part of the committee and working with myself and others to put on the convention for 2014 and in so doing so giving service to FA.

If you feel you would like to help please contact myself Michael by e-mail at

michaeljohnabz@yahoo.co.uk

WLITFMichael (FA UK Board member)



RESPONSE TO THIS PLEASE HAS BEEN ALMOST NOT EXISTENT - PLEASE VOLUNTEER !

MEXICO'S FIRST FA NATIONAL CONVENTION IN 2008

by Valerie D.

I had the absolute honor of attending Mexico's first national convention! And it was indeed an honor. Originally two other members of my Torrance, California, FA group and I had planned to attend together, but life stepped in and neither was able to go at the last minute. But I was committed and so I went.

If you have never flown into Mexico City, you are in for a surprise! This is a city of over 20 million people! From the air for about as far as you can see in any direction, blocked only by mountains, is a city so large, it can take several hours to get from one side of it to the other. Traffic is unbelievable! Imagine 4-5 lanes converging into two lanes, cars so close together you just know there will be an accident. I never saw any road rage or discourtesy. Pedestrians everywhere, crossing anywhere, impeding the cars all the time.

Nora, FA Mexico's President of the Board of Directors, and Isabel, who is a very good driver, not to mention both ladies were so much fun, picked me up at the airport. They took me to my hotel (where the convention was to be held with plans for tomorrow (Thursday). Nora, Maru, Fernando, and a driver picked me up for a day of exploring the National Museum which had been King Maximilian and Queen Carlotta's castle, full of beautiful artefacts, many of the gold, and surprisingly, 'retro' ladies' shoes. There was a lovely garden on the rooftop with patterns similar to many in England, but not quite so complex.

After our trip to the museum, we went to Nora's home to pick up her luggage and head for the hotel, when her daughter, Chelo, arrived from Houston. (She became one of my principal translators). Instead of going out to lunch, we ended up in Nora's kitchen with a smorgasbord that was very enjoyable and delicious, entertained by an adorable two-year-old boy, the son of Nora's cook.

The hotel, Hotel del Prado, is on a very busy street with a lot of traffic noise, causing me to change rooms twice. Once in a quiet room at the back of the hotel, I slept much better. On Friday, Chelo and I did some last minute running around (I just tagged along) for items needed for the

convention, which was scheduled to start at 3 p.m.

I had been asked by Nora to speak about (a short) history of FA, service and volunteering, and how Mexico fits into the international picture. Since I wasn't quite sure what Nora wanted prior to arrival, I ended up writing my speech on a borrowed laptop (never used one before and all the screens and menus were in Spanish!) not long before the convention's start. Chelo helped me by translating: first, I would speak and break, then she would translate what I'd just said. I hope the information was useful to the members.

Nora thanked me with a beautiful plaque and an FA medallion. The salon where all the activities except Saturday's lunch was held, was beautiful; well-lit, a solid wall of stained-glass windows in a flower design, high walls with plants around the top, very good sound system, and plenty of room. Seating was set up for approximately 250+ and was usually at least three-quarters full.

I brought back one T-shirt but I'm sure if anyone would like one we can still get them at \$7 .00 each. (Mostly size Large) They also had coffee-mugs, pens, pins, bookmarks and raffled-off a new TV to raise funds to help pay for the printing of the latest translations, *Tools for Recovery* and the *Traditions in Action*, which unfortunately, with the schedule so tight, did not make it from the printer in time for sale at convention, to much disappointment. We each were given a small attaché case (in hot colors) to carry our papers in.



.... Cont.>

Friday's schedule included: Registration, Introduction by Nora, speeches by a government official whose department is very interested in referring families to FA, and a recovering alcoholic-addict, Salvador and me. (I bought the CD of Salvador's talk. He is a well-known speaker in recovery and was scheduled for AA appearances S. California the following week.) The evening concluded with a play by four professional actresses. They played friends who were the 'wives' of alcoholics. They took us through enabling and rescuing, marriage, birth of a child, death and recovery. One character also played an alcoholic. The acting was very realistic. (I got the relationships all wrong due to my limited Spanish and no handy translator: thought they were a mother and three daughters. I did get the family disease right.)

FA members are special people. The many warm, friendly FA members I met at the convention made me feel so welcome. Even on Monday (officially the convention had ended Sunday afternoon) when I got on the elevator there was a couple going to the dining-room, and they remembered me. I had seen them but did not know their names. We knew the language of a smile.

We began at 10 a.m. on Saturday with speakers who are involved with addiction and recovery, testimonials a tasty lunch complete with mariachi band. It was a long and interesting day. During lunch, a young woman, Geraldine, grabbed my hand and took me to her table. She is very interested in supporting and starting more groups for FA Teens and has written some new literature she would like the board to review and approve. She is passionate about helping kids.

Sunday morning started with Margarita, a truly inspired presenter speaking on Spirituality. . She and Nora are long-time friends. I wish all of you could have been there for her presentation. To recap: she held a lovely single red rose and said it represents each one of us as we are now. Then she asked the audience to call out character defects, and with each one she removed one petal from the rose.

There were so many defects that she resorted to removing the leaves and even the thorns! She continued with how working the Twelve Step program helps us to restore ourselves and eventually we are represented by a beautiful white rose of our spiritual self. This was probably the most touching of a very emotional weekend.

Ernesto, a well-known recovering substance abuser in the recovery community, concluded with a workshop on What Blocks Communication? The session ended with a lively exercise in 'getting rid' of all the things that block communication with our loved ones.

The convention closed in a most familiar way: saying the Serenity Prayer in a large circle, holding hands.

Nora and Hilda picked me up Monday morning for a tour of the city and to visit the official FA office. Hilda is an exceptional driver, pointing out all the important buildings and their history, all while avoiding other cars and keeping her composure. (She said due to an unexpected protest march by the teachers of Oaxaca (wa-ha-ka) traffic was exceptionally light.)

We were greeted at the office by Rosario (also called Chayo), the FA employee-member. She is a treasure of program and office skills. They also hold a meeting in the office.

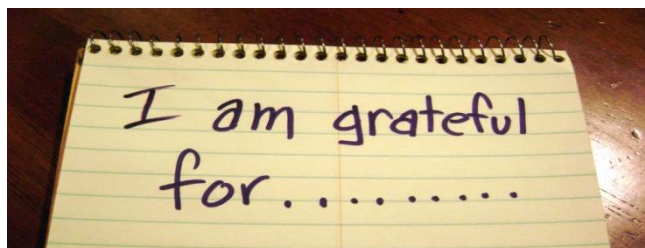
Then it was back to the hotel, saying our goodbyes, finishing packing, taxi to the airport and flight home. Next year's [2009] convention will be held in Saltillo, near the city of Monterey, in the north-western state of Coahuila.

¡ hagan planes de acompañarme el próximo año para una experiencia especial !

[reproduced from the Twelve Step Rag of November-December 2008]

PS – The last sentence was in Spanish in the original!





All Groups are reminded that February 2014 is to be the year's Gratitude Month. You are invited to give extra if at all possible and your group treasurer or secretary should send the resulting collection separately to the FA Treasurer in Battersea, marking the payment 'Gratitude Month 2014'.

Your generosity will be highly appreciated by the Board and by future members who have yet to find us. Thank you!

Some worrying thoughts by Sedley of F'A Chelsea

When you're worried about something, it's often difficult to detach from the feeling. But that I think really is the trick. You have to find something that absorbs you. In my case it's writing. I find that if I can in some way transform the worry into words on the page it will disappear. I don't know whether everyone feels like that. But it is my way of coping with worry. Today I am quite happy, but this feeling can easily evaporate if I start dwelling on the past and lapsing into bad old habits. At the moment I am keeping a journal. I've just looked back over the last six months of entries. It starts off pretty gloomy. (I had just extracted myself from an abusive relationship.) Gradually it gets less gloomy. I write about the books I read and the things I see. I describe the garden, flowers in bloom; I write about myths and legends, paintings and plays, and ideas that have interested me. The journal has become rich with other things. Not preoccupations and miseries.

Here are two very short stories about worry:

Tom woke up in the middle of the night. He couldn't get back to sleep.

All day long he didn't go out to play with his friends. He stayed on his own, moping around the house. In the evening, his mother asked: What's the matter, Tom?

Tom confessed that he was worried. What are you worried about? She said.

Tom told his mother about his restless night and the fellow he'd seen with the scythe.

His mother listened. After a while, she said: How tall are you, Tom?

Well, he said, taking a moment to consider. Last time I measured about an inch and a quarter. Tom, said his mother, I think you have a long way to grow before you need worry about death.

* * *

Holly Hood was in a right tizz. She couldn't settle to anything. Her grandmother, who had noticed her flouncing around the house, said: What's the matter, dear?

Granny, she said. I've got all these problems and I don't know what to do.

Holly Hood started telling her grandmother about her problems. Her grandmother waited for her to finish. It took quite a long time; Holly had a lot to get off her chest.

Half an hour later, her grandmother said: Have you got a bag, dear?

What do I need a bag for granny? There's one on the back of that chair, dear. These ones?

Yes dear... Now, said her grandmother, you know what to do with all your problems. Put them in the bag.

Addiction
Mother to Son

I tried to be of help to you
I tried to help you understand as I, and others do
I tried with tears and anger too
You didn't want to listen

I gave my thoughts and reasons
I offered my home for many a season
I consulted with others, with strangers too
You didn't want to listen

I tried with all my power
I tried with all my strength, I didn't cower
I tried with gentleness, with kindness too
You didn't want to listen

I gave the best I could
I offered what I thought a mother should
I didn't accept your wishes, your direction too
I didn't want to listen

Now it is time for your own way
In this old house, my home, no longer stay
You have your own thoughts, direction too
To yourself you must listen

From a member from Sevenoaks Group



and now **FROM ACROSS THE ATLANTIC!**



Hello from your Families Anonymous World Service Board of Directors!

I wanted to take a moment to update you on the status of our website . As you know, the site (<http://www.familiesanonymous.org/>) was maliciously hacked and destroyed this past August. Currently, a temporary site is up and running. On the temporary site, you will find current US and International Meeting Directories, as well as instructions for ordering FA literature via credit card until our new site is available.

At it's September 21 meeting, the World Service Board awarded a contract for rebuilding our site. While the August event was unfortunate, we believe we will come out of this with a better, more user friendly and more attractive site. We have reviewed past usage and feedback from you on our previous site and have identified areas of improvement in design, appearance, and functionality. For example, our online store, a key component of the site, will be simplified, enhanced, and made more user friendly. We will also be implementing enhanced security mechanisms to reduce the risk of future cyber attacks.

Based on our current schedule, and barring any unforeseen delays, we expect to launch the new site in mid-December, 2013. We will keep you posted on progress. In the meantime, if you have any suggestions for improvements or additions to the site, please let us know via email to our Public Information Committee at pi@familiesanonymous.org.

In fellowship, George R.

and a **BLAST FROM FAN'S PAST** *by courtesy of WSB's Lisa H.*

In her spare time, Lisa H. in Chicago has been scanning some old FANs which we now possess 'for keeps' in our 'library'. Here is an extract from the oldest one which will be 20 years old at the turn of the year - the January 1994 edition. It reports a Board meeting at that time including these extracted points:

Janie(Chair) wished everyone a Happy New Year.

At the end of our financial year, we are approximately £100 up on the same time last year despite the office move. There could be some danger of our having to pay income tax!

Sadly four meetings have closed: Grays(Essex), Parson's Green, Wallasey, and Penzance.

Due to safety considerations, the office will now close at 4:00 PM. 'Where to Find' will be amended. We still need office volunteers.

.....Volunteers? What changes? Thank you, Lisa H.

»» NEW FAN EDITOR STILL SOUGHT! ««

And as Michael is due to rotate-off the Board at the 2014 AGM, we are looking for a new

WEBSITE CHAIR

Please read on!

FAMILIES ANONYMOUS UK

ROLE DESCRIPTION - WEBSITE CHAIR

Purpose – To manage the Families Anonymous website, such that it is in a fit for purpose condition and meets the needs of the fellowship.

Method

- Implement any upgrades or changes to the Website or forum that are agreed by the UK Service Board.
- Liaise with the software engineers who designed the Website and Forum to carry out the above, or other such activities, for instance, security upgrades.
- Produce a rota for the website volunteers to give a continuous cover for the site.
- Along with the other volunteers carry out the tasks detailed below.
 1. Monitor the persons registering for use of the forum.
 2. Carry out the agreed registering procedure for the above.
 3. Monitor the forum for inappropriate posts.
 4. Update the WTF on the website as required.
 5. Update the website with news items etc., as required.

Impending Developments

FA UK plans to enhance its website to allow the Fellowship to enter the field of e-commerce, enabling members and public to buy FA literature online by PayPal or debit/credit card, whilst also maintaining the cheque through the post option. Testing should start this November, meaning that this activity will fall under the portfolio of the incoming Website Chair in conjunction with our website designers, SKDA.

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. If travel to London is not practical due to distance, Board members can dial in to the meeting.*
- *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 three-year period. *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!

This issue has focussed on Worry

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 **Anger**. 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 – departing from the usual mixed-up alphabetical system this time and choosing groups who have not been approached for three years and over. This leads me to the following groups for the approaching Spring issue: Cheltenham, Swiss Cottage, Tower Hamlets and Swansea. If you can't think what to write about, I'll give you some suggestions. Together, we can work it out!



BACK IN BATTERSEA PARK NEAR THE FA OFFICE
THIS TIME IN WINTER!

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

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 has done for him/her; a chance to find enjoyment, creativity and support as an FA Board Member.

Useful Skills and Attributes:

- 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.

Location

- Where the applicant lives is irrelevant, as the preferred and experienced FAN-printer can deliver anywhere; 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!

March 2013