

FAN & FANonline



voice of the families anonymous
fellowship

Spring 2015



You always do what you want to do. This is true with every act. You may say that you had to do something, or that you were forced to, but actually, whatever you do, you do by choice. Only you have the power to choose for yourself.. *W. Clement Stone.*

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

£1



Greetings !

Dear All !

What have I included in this edition?

- **Choices:** Life is full of forks in the road where we have to decide to go left or right. Logic and emotions both play their part.
- 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's going on on the FA Board
- All set for the 2015 UK Convention in Birmingham
- Call for Volunteers for the coming FA year
- FA UK raises awareness in the prison sector.
- Selected Quotes, Poetry, and Clip Art

Hallo again everybody!

As the computer generated FAN file no longer has to go to the printers to enable our newsletter to roll off their presses, I am able to finish writing each issue later than in the past and am actually writing this latest edition in spring rather than at the end of the winter as used to be the case. Although Easter is just around the corner there is little sign of sustainable uplifting weather yet. So, having said that, I hope that you have wintered well and are looking forward to better times and a little warmth!

Spring will have arrived when you read this and with it the Convention period; a chance for us to meet and share again. Do think seriously about joining us and read about it on page 7. I must assume that there are some who wish to join us but cannot for various reasons which are not too hard to imagine. We will remember those in that predicament.

This time last year the Board was grappling with the new experience of having to prepare formal documentation for Company's House and the Charity Commission for the outgoing year 2013. Having done it once the process is much easier this year and will be so from now on.

I vouch for the fact that time flies! I was co-opted to the FA UK Board in May 2010 and after a period of

training by Jaki, my predecessor, produced my first edition of FAN in spring 2011. This means that with this issue I am now entering my fifth year of editing with not much hope of a newly trained editor taking over much before spring 2016 unless that person has done a similar activity in the past or is at home with desktop printing. Maybe inadvisably I have assured members that we have no intention to discontinue FAN but if nobody is able to produce it, reality might have to step in.

I have chosen as the main theme for this FAN – **Choices.** Life choices that we make can substantially make for a good, not so good or simply for a bad life. So it is worth reflecting on them. 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 Spring Days! WLITF Richard – *Chair and outgoing FAN Editor.*

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Choices as seen in 'Today A Better Way'



We all have choices. My loved ones need to be given the dignity to make their own choices. I can give them that dignity by telling them , "You are free to make your own choices" and mean it.

But since I have a right to choose light instead of darkness and serenity instead of insanity, I must also give them the dignity of *learning from* their choices. "I'll always love you ", I tell them, but the consequences of your choices will be yours to contend with. I owe you that freedom".

However, I will not speak these thoughts until I am *strong* enough to carry through on them

TODAY I WILL make choices for myself and leave others the dignity of making their own.

[November 5 reading in *Today A Better Way*, © Families Anonymous].



To say that everyone has free choice is, perhaps, basically true. Maybe this statement is not quite as open to discussion and attack as the one that maintains that everyone has free will but I do not think that either of these statements are one hundred per cent simple or incontestable. Maintaining that we have no choice in life could be regarded as an easy way out and a reason for inaction especially when faced by the enormity of some problems. We might use this device to practise self-protection but this may turn out to be short- lived or ineffectual self-protection. The phrase 'take the bull by the horns' comes to mind and so does the hope that actually making a positive choice sooner rather than later might be easier than suffering the long-term effects of fear, dread and indecision. Letting someone get away with continuous abuse, if that is the problem, helps neither party. *Ed.*

Man is fully responsible for his nature and his choices.

[Jean-Paul Sartre](#)

More about Choice(s).....

“**Choice** involves mentally making a decision, judging the merits of multiple options and selecting one or more of them. One can make a choice between imagined options ("what would I do if ...?") or between real options followed by the corresponding action. For example, a traveller might choose a route for a journey based on the preference of arriving at a given destination as soon as possible. The preferred (and therefore chosen) route can then follow from information such as the length of each of the possible routes, traffic conditions, etc. If the arrival at a choice includes more complex motivators, cognition, instinct and feeling can become more intertwined.

Simple choices might include what to eat for dinner or what to wear on a Saturday morning - choices that have relatively low-impact on the chooser's life overall. More complex choices might involve (for example) what candidate to vote for in an election, what profession to pursue, a life partner, etc - choices based on multiple influences and having larger ramifications.

Most people regard having choices as a good thing, though a severely limited or artificially restricted choice can lead to discomfort with choosing, and possibly an unsatisfactory outcome. In contrast, a choice with excessively numerous options may lead to confusion, regret of the alternatives not taken, and indifference in an unstructured existence; and the illusion that choosing an object or a course leads necessarily to control of that object or course can cause psychological problems”.

So says wikipedia, a free source without fear of non-compliance with copyright, unless the author of the above original in wikipedia lifted it from a copyrighted source!

One of the effects of our having choices is that when we choose ‘x’ instead of ‘.y’ the effect on another person or people will be different. We should take this into account in making our decision but we should not be brow-beaten into making the wrong decision for us. Often, on closer examination, the ‘right’ **choice** for us happens to coincide with the best interests of another or others so that we can have the best of both worlds.

One's philosophy is not best expressed in words; it is expressed in the choices one makes... and the choices we make are ultimately our responsibility.

Eleanor Roosevelt

FA IS FOR FANTASTIC

FA is for fantastic, the support you receive
FA is for fatalistic, the way not to proceed
FA is for family, you want to keep hold
But maybe you can't and need to be bold.

DEALERS

Dealers - who are they?
These men who do feed
On youth who experiment
On lads and their need

Dealers - who are they?
These men who succeed
In breaking the life flow
They murder - in deed

NO TRUST THERE WITH H

No trust there with H
No chance to relate
Only lying and deceiving
No need for connecting

No joy there with H
No hope, only hate
Distance and seething
The wish for believing

No life flow with H
No chance to create
Not meant for those living
Its there for our passing.

BoardWalk

BOARD MEETINGS HELD AT BATTERSEA OFFICE ON 6th DECEMBER
2014 AND ON 28th FEBRUARY 2015

- These were the third and fourth Board meetings rounding off the FA-year 2014-15, to be followed only by the AGM on 19 April 2015. I am writing this shortly before this FAN is issued, yet again in a completely different scenario to last year. Last year was the first time that we had to make our Trustees' Report including Accounts available for the Charity Commission for the first time. Last year I wrote that having done this once, it would be much easier in the coming year. Now that we are at that future moment in time, the truth is that it is definitely easier when you get used to it.
- What is not so easy is the annual rotating-off process of Board members who are coming to the end of their three year service period. This time we thank Jan (Churchdown), Toni (Bermondsey) and Paul (Gants Hill) for their dedicated Board service and for all that they have done for our Fellowship in that time. It is not going to be easy to replace them but this is where we have to start trusting that our higher power will inspire other members to step up and offer service on the Board.
- One of the most preoccupying concerns of Paul and of the Board in general has been and continues to be is the manning and organization of the Helpline. The trusted long-term volunteers cannot be expected to go on for ever and gradually some are feeling that they 'have had enough'. Add to this the reduced office attendance of late when voicemails are normally picked up and the situation becomes concerning especially as we do not leave messages for security purposes. It would help enormously if people would call in our operating hours!
- Please take into account that this report is only a sketch of what happened at these two Board meetings, but that any member is welcome to receive full Minutes of these, 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 that you may have!**

AGM - Sunday Morning 19 April 2015

**FA 2015 UK NATIONAL
CONVENTION & AGM**

Hilton Metropole, National Exhibition Centre,
Birmingham.

18 & 19 April 2015



Families Anonymous 2015 Annual Convention and AGM. Convention costs £8 pre-booked or £10 on the day. Venue: Birmingham Hilton Metropole at the NEC. Date: 17th to 19th April. Theme: 'A Better Life'. Terrific hotel deal, £66 per night including dinner, bed and breakfast. Aim to arrive on Friday 17th, to meet up with FA friends old and new over an informal supper. Convention day Saturday 18th, where powerful shares and thought provoking workshops, will inspire our recovery. We round off the day with dinner, a quiz and disco. Sunday 19th is the AGM and takes place in the morning. It is an important part of our small fellowship and is where all FA members can have their say and air their views to the board. We need our fellowship, it's our lifeline. For your convenience the penultimate page of this FAN is the 2015 Convention – AGM Booking Form.



In the Sevenoaks Group in Kent we have some ideas which are worth passing on. Long ago we decided that it was a good idea for everyone attending to have their own copies of the five basic readings and of the suggested format for readings. Not only is it useful during meetings but the readings are very useful at home and during the week,

For collections we have dispensed with the traditional basket in favour of a cloth bag. This allows people who can't afford a larger donation to drop in a few coins. We do however have a suggested donation amount. The cost of the accommodation is quite high. We deduct our costs and we send the remainder to the FA Office. It seems to work.

We are fortunate to have three married couples who attend regularly and we usually see ten to twelve at every meeting. For this we erect four trestle tables in a square with one table exclusively for the Secretary and Leader. This seems to work better than a room set out theatre-fashion.

We suffer, as many groups do, in that few people "find" us and when they do all yoo few keep coming back. WLITF from the Sevenoaks Group.

LOSS

[The following lines were written by a partner within our FA Birmingham Group, an experience she found helpful in clarifying for herself the reality of her situation, and a way of reminding herself how far she had come in her journey of realisation]

I carry you abroad like a poisonous boil
which I resist lancing
for fear I will not survive
without you

When people talk of music
I know I have forgotten
how to sing

which is in itself
a loss
A loss of me
swallowed up unsuspectingly at first so full was I
of unerring trust and needing

I put a stone in the stream of my grief
so that I could stem the flow and survive
but the water on the other side of the stone became muddy and overwhelming
And it became hard to ignore
that my life and the way I lead it
was not quite like anyone else's that I knew

But now I know
but I still carry the cancerous boil
Around with me

At times it dissipates
and it's as if it had never grown
into this draining sore

At times there is a glimmer of hope
a moment from the past
which promises a future
worth holding on to

The moments are less
And sometimes more
and sometimes false
and sometimes true
I think
or hope

Phoenix Futures



Registered Charity Phoenix Futures brings positive change in the lives of individuals, families and communities affected by substance misuse. They reduce the impact of drug and alcohol related harm and enable service users to rebuild their lives. Their purpose is achieved through the skills and dedication of their staff.

The letter which follows was written by Phoenix Futures and is self-explanatory. It relates to the intervention of our FA volunteers Kathy, Marie and Ilona alongside FA Board member for prisons, Toni. Although Toni is due to rotate-off the FA Board this spring she intends to continue her prison support work as this position does not require Board membership according to our by-laws.

xxxxding Futures Family Support Service
London

To Whom It May Concern

I am writing on behalf of the Building Futures Family Support Service across HMPs [two unidentified London prisons for security purposes] to express our ongoing gratitude for the members of the Families Anonymous fellowship (Toni, Kathy, Marie and Ilona) who have been so committed to hosting monthly meetings for the prisoners. We really appreciate the sacrifice that they make, in terms of their time, their finances and their honesty. We consistently have high levels of interest in and attendance at the meetings, and have sent FA information packs to a number of the prisoners' families. The sharers inspire powerful reactions in the attendees, with typically loud personalities silenced into reflection and 'show-boaters' moved to tears.

We, at both sites, feel honoured and privileged to be able to host these meetings on a regular basis, and it only happens thanks to the kindness and dedication of the FA members.

On behalf of every prisoner and family member who has been affected by the meetings – thank you.

With very best wishes,

Josie Standbrook

Family Support Worker

Building Futures

XXXXXXX

THOUGHT ABOUT VOLUNTEERING SERVICE?

We are again approaching the highpoint of the year for thinking most seriously how we can offer service to our Fellowship. This service can be at any level but it would be a mistake to think that the 'higher' the service offered is, the more important it is. This would be a mistake because our Fellowship needs its members to do a whole range of jobs. Because all these jobs have to be covered they are all equally IMPORTANT. As far as the Board is concerned we have three rotators-off at the forthcoming AGM on 19 April and we need to take into account that we haven't had the full complement of Board members at any time during the outgoing 2014/15 Year. This means that for the coming 2015/16 year we are in need of a substantial input of new Board volunteers. Which volunteer fills which Board post will be decided at the first Board meeting of the new FA year on Saturday 30 May at the FA Office in Battersea.

Obviously there are other ways to volunteer without being on the Board or living in London, and if you would prefer this option, please tell the Office in Battersea and we will work out between us if there is something suitable, immediately or in the future. Not all our office volunteers live in, or even, near London. Our computer is in the Office and is used for printing things like WTF and some literature. It is also used for email, the FA Website and Forum – BUT as all these things are web-based they can be done from any computer anywhere – and indeed they are! These tasks do not demand any special computer expertise and if you do online banking and email you are already nearly there! And do not forget that if you regularly attend our meetings and have done so for a time, you can volunteer on the helpline during the day or evening any day of the week or you can cover a weekend duty. Offer to do something amazing and see how it helps!



-- 'TODAY I WILL give service for the good of the group, the total organization of FA, and most of all for myself'.

[September 3 reading in *Today A Better Way*, © Families Anonymous].

Families Anonymous UK
Families Anonymous UK
Convention & AGM 2015

Venue: Hilton Birmingham
Metropole

National Exhibition Centre,
Birmingham B40 1PP
www.birminghammetropole.com

How to get there: By plane or
train to Birmingham International
then walk through the NEC (20
mins). If you're staying at the
hotel, there's a free shuttle bus
that can be requested using the
freephone in the station.

By car to M42 J6 (NEC). Hotel
parking is £3 per day if you
state you're with FA. Map and
directions are on the hotel
website.

The hotel offers a special deal of
evening meal, bed and breakfast
for each of the 2 nights Fri 25th,
and Sat 26th at £66 ppn. If you
book this deal, the evening meal
on Friday night is available in the
restaurant (not the bar), and on
Saturday is served in a private
room designated for FA. Use of
the hotel pool, spa and gym is
included in the price.

To book for 1 or 2 nights, call
0121-780-4242 or book online at
www.birminghammetropole.com
and quote Group Code 'GFA15'.

The convention fee covers
refreshments during the morning
break of the Convention. At
other break times the hotel
designates an area where we can
buy hot drinks, and you can buy
refreshments at the hotel bar.

Lunch on any day is excluded
from the cost. You may either
bring your own lunch or buy it
from the bar or restaurant. On
Saturday the hotel caters a
special light lunch for us which is
for sale at the Convention. There
are also snack bars in the train
station.

FA UK Convention & AGM
2015

Fri 17 April 2015

(if you're staying in the hotel)

Check in, free time, dinner.
Please indicate on the booking
section if you'd like to join others
at dinner from 7.30pm. We'll let
you know where to meet.

Sat 18 April 2015 -
CONVENTION

Theme: 'A Better Life'

09.00 - 10.00 Registration in
hotel foyer

10.00 - 10.15 Welcome /
Housekeeping

10.15 - 11.00 Share

11.00 - 11.30 Break
(refreshments provided)

11.30 - 12.15 workshops

12.15 - 13.00 Share

13.00 - 14.15 LUNCH (light lunch for
sale)

14.15 - 15.00 Share

15.00 - 15.30 Break(refreshments
for sale)

15.30 - 16.15 Share

16.15 - 16.45 AGM agenda preview

16.45 - 17.00 Raffle and Close

Each share will be from an FA or
NA member who will share their
Experience Strength and Hope in
the 12 step program.

Please bring suitable gifts (no
alcohol please) to be raffled and
hand them in at Registration.

Followed by Dinner and Quiz
(if you're staying in the hotel)

Sun 19 April 2014 - AGM

08.45 - 09.30 Registration >>

09.30 - 13.30 pm AGM
(including a break)

Followed by free time.

FA UK Convention & AGM
2015

Please reserve me a place
at:

☐

The Convention

£8.00 advance

booking

please enclose cheque
with booking

payable to Families
Anonymous

OR

£10 to be paid on
the day

☐

The AGM

FREE

Name: _____

Address: _____

tel: _____

email: _____

Which FA Group(s) (if any) do
you attend: _____

Would you like to meet up
with others for dinner Friday
evening? _____

Tear off this section and
return to: Convention 2015,
Families Anonymous, DRCA,
Charlotte Despard Ave.,
SW11 5HD

For Office Use only: Date:

Initials: D_____

This issue has focussed on Choices

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 Summer Issue

The focus will be on **Letting Go**. 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. Each group is asked to make

this special effort about every 30 months, so hardly too demanding! My records show that it must be the turn of these groups for the Summer Issue: Cardiff, Gants Hill, Borehamwood and Inverness If you can't think what to write about, I'll give you some suggestions. Together, we can work it out!



BETTER FA COVERAGE IN DEVON AS EXETER PROVIDES ANOTHER MEETING TO
SUPPLEMENT BARNSTAPLE

Whichever part of the country we come from, the NEC should be our destination of choice in April!

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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, Italy, India, Mexico, Portugal, Russia, Spain, S. Africa.](#)

