

The Forum's Unsung Heroes: The FEAC.

By - Mark S., Magazine Editor.

Readers of The Forum often ask how the decision to publish an article is made and by whom. And, while there are a number of people who work to produce the magazine every month, one of the most important elements is something most people have never heard of - the Forum Editorial Advisory Committee (or FEAC). The people on this Committee volunteer to review 50 sharings for The Forum each month. As one member put it, "Many Al-Anon members acknowledge not feeling like they had a voice before coming to the program, but with this project, they can share their journeys in a most meaningful way."

First, the FEAC volunteers look to see whether the sharing is topical - whether it reflects some aspect of the Al-Anon program. They score each one and comment on their reason for scoring it as they did. Out of three possible scores, a score of 1 means the sharing is excellent and is suitable for publication. A 2 is still positive, but not as strong as a 1. A 4, on the other hand, means that the sharing is not appropriate for publication. There are several reasons why an article may not be publishable. For example, a sharing that focuses only on other types of addiction, such as drugs, rather than alcohol, is probably not acceptable. Or, it may be too directive, or in the words of one of the Committee members, too "teachy/preachy." In other words, the author writes

with a tone of directing the readers as to what they should do, think, or feel. Further, sharings that focus heavily on the alcoholic loved one and those that focus only on the problems associated with the disease are not likely to receive positive scores. If a reading gets more than one 4 score, it is deemed ineligible for publication. What's comforting to know, though, is that even one of these sharings may contain a small excerpt that is publishable in the "One 'Quote' at a Time" department or for the back-flap quote.

Moreover, though, sharings that reflect hope are the most likely to receive high marks. After all, isn't that why so many people "Keep Coming Back" to meetings? Then, the editing team uses the Committee's input to determine what goes in the magazine. Finally, the Committee members meet via phone conference four times a year to discuss the magazine and how effectively they feel it is working. I am extremely grateful for this band of behind-the-scenes warriors. Further, the fact that they do this service work on a voluntary basis shows the commitment of each of the five members. Without them, this monthly instrument of hope and help for the friends and families of alcoholics would not be possible.

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The Loners letters from all areas can be found on our website

<https://www.alanon.org.za/members-newsletters/>

I Found Support in That Room. By - Loretta V., Ontario.

I met the alcoholic in my life through online dating. Though I felt that I was okay with social drinking, I learned that there is no such thing as social drinking to an alcoholic. My partner was in A.A. but was a binge drinker. When he wasn't drinking, he was kind, loving, and respectful - all the traits I wanted in a partner. I thought he drank to be nasty to me and to sabotage our relationship. I lost sleep worrying if this day would be the start of a binge. I went to A.A. meetings with him for about two years trying to figure out what he was missing so that I could save him, but the other A.A. members would often suggest that I go to Al-Anon. I didn't know what that was or why I needed to go when I felt that he was the problem.

The first program idea that had particular significance for me was that alcoholism is a disease. This actually

made sense to me because I could view it like a form of mental illness. I have a dear family member who is mentally ill. I finally realized that my partner was not drinking "at me" or because of anything I did or didn't do. He was self-harming, much like my family member. He didn't know why and didn't know how to stop. What kept me coming back after my first meeting was that I saw that the people there were having fun. They celebrated each other and shared their successes and struggles. No one judged anyone or told anyone what to do. Instead, they laughed, they cried, and I could sense the love and support in that room. I wanted to learn how to do that and just get some sleep and feel happy again.

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Literature

Please contact Tania Jacquelin at the office Mon - Fri between 9am and 1pm, and she will be happy to recommend Al-Anon books and pamphlets that meet your needs...

Just for today . . .

- I'll stop any negative thoughts as soon as they start . . .
- I'll try to raise people up, and bring no one down . . .
- I'll practice patience with those who make me impatient . . .

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