

OHIO Al-A-Notes

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Hi Ohio Family

Though my first thought was to quickly get the word out to members to not send love gifts or cards to VA Beach, after reading another Delegate's sharing with her Area I think the following says more of what I would like to say. So I am borrowing a lot of her message to reach out to our members. This is a challenging time for many of us due to the necessary social distancing that has ended many of the face-to-face meetings that we have relied on. The good news is that many groups, districts and members have begun to reach out electronically, at times even setting up their own electronic meeting as per the WSO guidelines or joining the already established virtual meetings that can be found on the electronic meetings page on the WSO site. I wish to pass along that after much gathering of information and utilizing the KBDM process, the Board of Trustees has decided that the World Service Conference in Virginia Beach in April will be shortened, virtualized and postponed. We will have electronic meetings as well as getting and sharing information on our AFG Connects site during the week of April 20th. I will not be able to answer many personal phone calls, emails or texts during that time.

I have thoroughly enjoyed being your Delegate and will continue to serve through December 31, 2020, but I will miss the special event that is the World Service Conference. I will still be preparing reports from the conference that I will give for our remaining 2020 Assemblies and Fall AWSC. I will keep you informed of any votes taken or decisions made at the 2020 World Service Conference. Given the seriousness of this pandemic, only time will tell how we hold our Area meetings the rest of this year. Your input into this will be necessary to the Officers as we get nearer to those gatherings.

Please do not send Love Gifts to Virginia Beach. But, if you were planning to send them, a small donation to WSO as a general Love Gift would be appreciated. Love Gifts to AFG of Ohio, Inc. would also be appreciated as donations from closed face-to-face meetings will most likely be down. I am very blessed to be able to give my dollars in gratitude for and support of this life-saving program. Please stay safe. Continue to reach out to each other and any newcomers. This too shall pass, and we can all look forward to our reunions with face-to-face meetings in the future,

Theresa M
Delegate, Panel 58

From our Chairperson

By Ginny C.

My term as Area Chairman began January 1, 2019. My background is as follows. Just prior to this position, I had been Area Secretary, but the Chairman position came open within the year after the election. Previously, I had served as Delegate, Alternate Delegate, Literature Coordinator, DR, GR and alternate GR. At the local level, when I was a GR, I served as the Literature Coordinator for the Youngstown Information Service. I never planned, nor could have imagined becoming Chairman when I first showed up at Assembly. But through a series of yeses' to suggestions by others in service, I gradually took on more and more responsibility. Each position prepared me for the next.

The Chairman position, like the Delegate position, varies depending on the time of the year. Much of the position relies on good communication skills both during meetings as well as in between meetings. Daily, I spend up to an hour catching up on email or AFGCONNECTS. The chairman has the privilege of reading all the AFGCONNECTS exchanges on all communities except the Delegate Community. This makes it possible to stay well informed on issues across the US and Canada as well as good ideas other Areas have implemented. It is often very interesting and exciting.

The month or two prior to and after AWSC and the Assemblies, I am busier. My most important goal is to assemble the agenda with consultation with the Delegate, officers and coordinators. Second, to allow enough time for the Delegate to give their report. The Chairman also reviews and signs any contracts for hotels. Having been previously involved in Convention planning and with Assembly hotel arrangements, has helped with knowing what to look for and what to watch out for. I have chosen to be involved in several task and thought forces but that is not required of the Chairman. Those do take extra time.

The Chairman runs the AWSC and Assembly meetings. In a large notebook for each meeting, I script out everything I plan to say. This helps the meeting to run smoothly. Although one can not predict everything (like life) it really helps put my mind at ease. Writing this script can take quite a bit of time for each meeting.

Finally, this fall, I will oversee making sure the election runs smoothly. My role, at minimum, is to make sure there are paper ballots and counters. As Chairman, I can ask another person to run the election who is not running for office, usually a Past Delegate.



Area Treasurer Position

March 31st was fast approaching, and I just remembered that I was to write a job description for the Spring AI-A-Notes. I stood for the position of Treasurer just as the Fall 2015 Assembly was closing. I have held this position for six years. As for the time it takes, it varies. I am responsible for writing and then sending the plea letter twice a year to all CMA's. I record and deposit donations, pay and record expenses, file an Ohio non-profit report and a 990 report to the IRS. (both by May 15th). I prepare financial reports five times a year. Two for AWS, two for Assembly plus the year end report. The officers have been meeting before each of the above gatherings. I am also a member of the Budget committee which meets before the first AWSC meeting.

I learned to put my trust in my Higher Power. I had so much fear as I was preparing my profile. The lights were even blinking on and off. Tina L was sitting next to me and I was asking her if she would help me do the job as she has a financial background. When I heard that the Assembly was a corporation, I knew that every corporation cannot function without a financial officer. I felt my HP was hitting me over the head to volunteer. So....with the lights flashing and my stomach rolling and close to tears; I took a leap of faith.

I was surprised that I had to use Excel and Word and had very little exposure to either program. (They are not mentioned in the handbook) I found a software program, "The Professor teaches Excel"; and I learned. I gained more confidence, more personal acceptance and stronger belief in myself.

Basically, I GREW thanks to my HP and the AI-Anon support I received. I have been so blessed and have a great

Caption describing picture or graphic

deal of gratitude for this program. Thanks to all of you for allowing me to serve and for supporting me in my journey towards recovery.

Judy A

Treasurer, Panels 55 and 58



DISTRICT NEWS

HELLO from Youngstown Districts #4 and #9. Fortunately, we were able to hold our 40th Annual Spring Banquet on February 29th at the Mahoning Country Club before the Covid-19 distancing guidelines were implemented. The theme was "Bloom Where You Are Planted" and about 165 Al-Anons and AA loved ones along with their families or friends gathered to hear a great Al-Anon and AA double lead. Together we celebrated with great food, fun and fellowship, and many danced into the night. Our raffle included an Alateen basket along with a variety of themed baskets donated by our groups, plus a 50/50 raffle. With so many groups, this annual event serves as a wonderful reunion for our **members**. The same venue has been reserved for next year's Spring Banquet, so **SAVE THE DATE– February 27, 2021**. Plan to join us to celebrate recovery... AGAIN!!

At our recent Districts meeting, we voted to cancel our 2020 Spring Day of Sharing in April due to the Covid-19 crisis. Instead we will move it to a date TBD in spring 2021, using the same chairpersons and committees. Since recovery must continue, especially in these times of great stress and uncertainty, our groups are being creative in their efforts to technologically reach out and connect with not only their own members, but also other groups locally and elsewhere. Hopefully the circle of recovery will expand for each member as such a time as this, not disappear. Let's start to think positively and hopefully "Act as if" this crisis will end... because it will.

As elsewhere in Ohio and nationwide, we are dealing with "social distancing" to curb the spread of Covid-19. It's during times like these that we truly value the Al-Anon fellowship and our face-to-face meetings that offer sincere smiles, unconditional love, warm hugs and handshakes, as well as one on one conversations to encourage us to "Keep Coming Back" for greater recovery. We are trying to stay in touch as best we can via telephone and social media, but long for the day when we can return to the safety and comfort of our home group meetings.

Our regular Districts meeting in April will be held via conference call to accommodate GR's who do not have access to a computer at this time, since every voice and vote is so important. In addition to regular business, one item on our agenda will be to discuss the current status of each meeting along with an exploration of the need for each group to develop a protocol for cancelling a meeting under any circumstance. When a full group conscience is not available, who makes the decision to close, or suspend a meeting? When meeting sites abruptly close their doors for any reason, who are the key voices to speak on behalf of the group? Finally, how are those decisions then communicated to not only members, but also visitors to the group (s) affected? It should be a very good discussion.

Stay positive, preserve your peace and sanity, reach out in loving support, and remember "This too shall pass." Be patient and give time, time. HP will see us through until we can see one another in person....AGAIN, Woohoo!!



Covid 19 Updates and information from Ohio Groups

The 2020 OAC has been cancelled due to Covid-19. A poll was sent out to all AWSC members and a vote was taken. At this time, no decision has been made by AWSC for 2021, but I wanted to share the following from the Youngstown Districts.

The 2021 Convention planning committee, with Youngstown Districts as host, is on hold pending a decision by AWSC after cancelling the 2020 Convention in Dayton. We have researched possible venues and have elected officers and selected most of the Committee chairpersons. The willingness to do service has been so impressive to date, and we are just waiting on the **starting** line for the flag to drop so we can charge forward (whenever) to prepare another great gathering of Al-Anons from across Ohio who are eager to grow in their recovery...one step, one day at a time.

Other cancellations:

Founders Day in Akron has been cancelled. Spring Assembly will be held through Zoom, more information will follow as we get closer to the date

Fall AWSC- date has been changed to August 29, 2020.

What are Ohio Groups doing to stay connected?

From Carmen I- Sunday morning Coffee AFG held their first "Go to meeting" via the internet. This meeting was chaired by Jane MacP. There were between 13-16 attendees, some had cameras attached; others were just on their phone. We tried to stick to Al-Anon Principles as much as possible and used the Al-anon/ Alateen Service Manual 2018-2021. Our first meeting was a learning curve. We tried to run the meeting just like we the Sunday meeting even suggesting that donations can be made personally to cover the costs of the electronic meetings. Personally, I enjoyed the meeting this morning. It was relaxed, but everyone has the opportunity to talk. Everyone at the meeting expressed how much they got out of the meeting that was held and there was even time for fellowship afterwards. All things considered, the meeting was a success.

From Fred S- Cleveland Groups are using Sony conference meetings for the Greater Cleveland Al-Anon and Al-Anon Adult Children. There are at least three meetings and more information can be found on the Cleveland Al-Anon website.

From Theresa M- I have tried out various electronic meetings that other members have sent to me. So, far the ones most helpful to me have registered with the WSO website. One group, Hope and Health AFG meets twice a week from 5:00- 6:00 EST. Sunday night is a Topic meeting and Wednesday night is a Legacies meeting using the book, "Reaching for Personal Freedom".

Where: <https://zoom.us/j/510-819-055>

You can copy and paste this into your browser.

Information on “Virtual Electronic Meetings

In the Loop- “ How can we stay connected to maintain our serenity? We can log in or dial in to the many options available in the form of Electronic Meetings.

Electronic meetings are the same as face-to-face meetings, without geographic limits of accessibility. Meetings occur in a variety of platforms, including e-mail, mobile apps, phone and more. Many are available all day so we can participate whenever we get the chance. Accessing ways to help maintain our serenity has never been easier! For a list of all electronic registered with the WSO, just go to their website and click on “ Explore Electronic Meetings”. There are a LOT of different meetings, check it out!

Also from WSO- if you are changing your face-to-face meeting to an electronic meeting temporarily, please update your local website. If you are doing a “temporary” electronic” meeting which will end with the end of the pandemic, there is no need to register this group with WSO.

Information from the Central Ohio Area- thank you Susan H. for sharing, great information!

Please refer to the WSO website on maintaining your anonymity on Social Media.

COAFG Virtual meetings are being set up and the following is information they have shared.

Facebook- Facebook Account name is used. Please note that this is not an officially sanctioned Al- Anon group.

Conference Calls- Please go to “freeconferencecall.com” to set up telephonic meeting. Suggested Etiquette for telephone meetings is listed below:

Put your phone on mute via *6 and then to unmute also use *6.

Please try to log on before meetings begin (as it interrupts the meeting when you try to log in afterwards). Be aware of background noise, if you are unmuted and sharing.

No speaker phone, please- too much static and background noise.

When you wish to speak: unmute your phone, (*6) State your first name- Chair will acknowledge you have the floor- when done, say “I pass” and mute phone (*6)

SPEAK SLOWLY/CLEARLY

BE UBER PATIENT!!! This is new for MANY of us- Be kind and do not hesitate to pass on suggestions.

Zoom-

Software may differ from each person’s device and operating system.

Copy and paste links (these are on the next page) from a computer, pad or smartphone and it will prompt you to either use a website or install the app.

Following on the next page are some Zoom features that may need to be disabled. This information was copied from AA intergroup of San Francisco and Marin County. Sharing in the spirit of Al-Anon.

Virtual meeting information- continued

ZOOM MEETINGS; PROTECTING ANONYMITY AND DEFAULT SETTINGS (as stated on the previous page this information was shared by AA intergroup in San Francisco and Marin County- thank you!)

With the rush to shift to online meetings, many of us did not take the time to investigate what this meant to the spiritual foundation of our recovery- anonymity. Now that online meetings are accessible, we want to pass on our best practices for protecting anonymity.

Here are some suggested settings for your meeting to use. **Please note that most, if not all, of the settings below are NOT the Zoom default: Go to Settings- Recording and click OFF the local and Cloud recording features.**

In the Zoom Settings Section, under the Meeting subtab:

- **Require encryption for third party endpoints**
- **Disable Auto Saving Chats**
- **Disable File transfer**
- **Disable feedback to Zoom**
- **Disable Screen Sharing**
- **Disable desktop/screen share for users**
- **Disable remote control**
- **Allow virtual background (this is the Zoom default and allows the user to use a virtual background instead of the inside of their apartment, for example)**

In the Zoom Settings section, under the Recording subtab:

- **Disable Local recording**
- **Disable Cloud recording**

From your Alternate Delegate- Jo S

I hope that some of this information will be helpful to you as we travel this journey together. I wanted to share that I have been chairing a task force on Isolated groups and how we can best serve them. I cannot help but note the irony that we have ALL become Isolated Groups. But from all the sharing's and information that I have received for this edition, I also know that we are all working together to maintain our recovery and to ensure that we do not become isolated. This too shall pass and hopefully we will soon be able to resume our face-to-face meetings. The slogans have helped me so much these past few weeks as has all of our CAL. From our Al-Anon closing:

“ Talk to each other, reason things out with someone else,” ... “Let the understanding, love and peace of the program grow in you one day at a time.”

