

THE 2021 VIRGINIA AREA AL-ANON SPRING ASSEMBLY MINUTES
May 15-16, 2021
Virtual Meeting by Webex

“Moving Forward with Unity, Courage, and Perseverance”

SATURDAY
OPENING

- TOM S., Area Chair, opened the meeting with the Serenity Prayer, followed by a welcome to our second virtual Assembly. Thanked Sue, Becky, Cheryl and the whole virtual team for helping the Area do a great job of adjusting our meeting to meet the environment in which we find ourselves – a special thanks to Stephanie, Assembly Coordinator. Referred to protocols for virtual meetings posted on the Area website and advised that all Assembly documents including all reports are posted on the website along with a lot of Al-Anon literature.
- The 12 Steps, 12 Traditions and 12 Concepts were read by Wendy R., Randi M., and Ellie F., respectively.
- Introduction of new groups – seven new groups since last Assembly including one Alateen group.
- Introduction of Past Delegates – Dee M. Panel 8 and Duane F. Panel 56.
- Introduction of Area Officers
- Concept 3 was read again to reinforce the purpose of Assembly.
- Area Update: due to Covid 19 we have meetings meeting face-to-face (20), virtual (143), hybrid (18) and some meetings are temporarily suspended (41). The Area purchased a 3rd Webex bridge to help with demand. A decision about what type of Fall Assembly we will have – virtual or face-to-face, will be made soon. The Area is revisiting job descriptions in light of changing needs. The Area Convention has been scheduled for August 12-14, 2022.

FALL ASSEMBLY REPORT

- Positive: great participation; tech worked
- Challenges: missed seeing everyone in person
- Success: registration went smoothly, costs were minimal

FUN FACTS

1. Number of districts in Area – 25
2. Number of registered Groups in the Area - 292 active
3. Number of meetings – 323
4. Which district has the most groups? Peninsula (24)
5. Which district has the fewest groups? Southwest (2)
6. How many Alateen Groups are in the Area? – 17
7. We hold 2 Assemblies and 2 Alateen conferences a year and one Convention every panel

8. Number of coordinators – 8
9. Number of Liaisons – 8
10. Number of standing committees – 1
11. When was the Virginia Area started? 1952 with 2 meetings – Arlington Y Newport News (Al-Anon started in May 1951)
12. Oldest group in the Area – Central AFG (Roanoke), 1952

ATTENDANCE AND REGISTRATION

- Virtual roll call of DRs and GRs was taken through the polling feature.
- VAWSC members present: Terry Woodside, Tom Spillman, Stacy Lewis, Rick Arsenault, Bruce Burrows, Ginny Kelly, Ann Fletcher, Valerie Palamountain, Sue Vencill, Chris Batchelder, Stephanie Page, Wendy Rowden, Phyllis Fabian, Duane Faircloth, Dee Moore, Katherine Pabody, Gail Kropf, Kathryn Holland, Rosemary Reid, Mary Foster, Sean Millington, Ellie Fetterly, Debbie Polston, Jenks Hobson, Ann Gorrell, Randi Murdock, Debbie Teer, Alice Jones, Becky Dimon, Regan Knutson, Fran Brune
- Not present: Laura Lovern, Christy Boone, Tina Estes, Ami Smith, Jenna Miilu, Yasi Sherbaf, Kevin Greer, Robert Rice, Joanna Charlton, Mahender Dudani, Shannon Howard, Debra Gessel, Samantha Harden, Paula Stallard, Joyce Maxwell, Sheri Turner

ASSEMBLY MINUTES

- Minutes from 2020 Fall Assembly were available to members on the website prior to Assembly for their review.
- Terry had a couple minor changes which were noted.

MOTION

Made by: Patti M.

Second by: Sarah H.

That the 2020 Fall Assembly Minutes be approved as amended.

Motion Passed: Unanimously by virtual vote through WebEx polling feature (95% approved, 5% abstained, 0% opposed).

OFFICER REPORTS

Treasurer Report: Bruce B. (report available on the Area website – vaalanon.org)

- Bank balances are as expected. The roughly \$25,000 balance is about where we are supposed to be.
- Contributions are at 23% of goal which is very nearly at the 25% we should be at this time of year and given the pandemic, this is a really good result.
- Encourage groups to make Area contributions via PayPal to reduced administrative burdens on both ends. Also, GRs please pass word to group treasurers to include group number and/or name on checks if you are paying by check.

- An old error resulting from the use of a personal SSN resulted in a temporary charge of about \$15,000 but Bruce is working with a tax attorney to clear this up by the end of the year.
- The group contributions report is on the website

MOTION

Made by: Sheffi

Second by: Jan T.

That the Treasurer's report be accepted.

Motion Passed: Unanimously by virtual vote through WebEx polling feature (99% approved, 1% abstained, 0% opposed).

DELEGATE REPORT – available on the Area Website

- Terry recently attended the 61st annual World Service Conference (WSC) – the theme is Moving Forward with Unity, Courage, and Perseverance
- The WSC is the largest Informed Group Conscience of Al-Anon/Alateen in the world
- It's an annual business meeting attended by 67 Area Delegates plus trustees and WSO Executive Committee and voting WSO admin staff. This year there were 91 voting members
- Delegates serve on either a Thought Force or a Task Force. This year our Delegate will be serving on the Thought Force: Diversity Today. They are charged with using Knowledge Based Decision Making to determine what we know and what we don't know about diversity in Al-Anon. The committee will meet virtually throughout the summer and report to the Chair of the Executive Committee by Sept. 1, 2021
- 2021 was the first fully virtual WSC, last year was an abbreviated meeting
- This year's Conference passed 2 historical motions :
 - changes the status of 449 permanent electronic groups to Al-Anon Family Groups. This means these groups may now elect a GR and will have representation
 - permanent electronic groups may now form a new Electronic Area; each electronic group may decide whether they want to belong to the new Electronic Area or a geographic Area of their choice
- The Virginia Area must now create a policy regarding this process.
- Other motions presented and passed:
 - Change to the suggested Alateen Preamble
 - A clarifying change regarding the "Contributions to WSO" section of the Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual
- Another motion was presented but was not passed:
 - Remove certain words deemed confusing from the Service Manual regarding announcements of events. The proposal wording injected new confusion of a different sort and was sent back to the Policy Committee for further revision.

- The Literature Committee approved a Just For Tonight Alateen bookmark which was suggested by and written by two Alateen groups from the same Area. They also approved a compromise suggestion to add a new preface to *The Dilemma of the Alcoholic Marriage* which continues to have strong sales, and create a booklet made up of 'gems' from the book. They also approved a new preface for *One Day at a Time (ODAT)*.
- Membership Survey – Conducted every three years since 1985. It is open to all Al-Anon members 18 and older from June 16 to July 27, 2021. The survey does not collect personal information or break your anonymity. Please encourage participation in this survey among your groups.
- In addition, members will be given an opportunity to opt-in to a Longitudinal Study which attempts to understand the impact of consistent Al-Anon membership on mental health. Those chosen for the study will be emailed the same set of 10 questions for five years in a row beginning in 2022.
- Interpretation Services – we are a tri-lingual organization and provide interpretation services in Spanish and French. The WSO Operating Budget cannot absorb the cost of these services; the Conference voted to continue the services when requested and the Areas will absorb this expense.

COORDINATOR REPORTS

- Public Outreach – Val P. – there are two new Alateen PSAs; WSO has an agreement with Nielson stations nationwide which has increased our visibility tenfold; please let Val know if your districts or groups would like to have her speak to them about public outreach.
- Literature – Ann F. – electronic welcome packages are coming soon; Many Voices, One Journey is on sale through June 30 to celebrate Al-Anon's 70th anniversary; the new daily reader has a planned release at the 2023 Al-Anon International Convention in Albuquerque; consider submitting a sharing on how CAL has helped your recovery; subscribe to the Forum!
- Group Records – Chris B. – 292 active groups and 323 meetings; as of May 1 there are 27 face to face meetings, 144 virtual, 18 hybrid and 50 temporarily suspended; there was a 92% response rate for groups reporting their status – Thank You!
- AAPP – Stacy L. – it has been very quiet; no new AMIAS, no training scheduled; the new address for Alateen document mailings is: Virginia Area AFG PO Box 50126 Portsmouth, VA 23703
- Alateen – Ginny K. - working on scheduling new training sessions for prospective AMIAS
- Convention – Val P. - the Virginia Area Al-Anon Convention has been rescheduled to August 12-14, 2022.; we have a hotel liaison committee and Katherine P has joined the convention committee to handle workshops; a nice lanyard will be offered to earlier registrants; the boutique is back; registration will be open beginning August 7, 2021
- Website – Sue V. – group records and the Area website are now fully synced; what WSO has for group records is what the Area has and it is what is on the website; new meeting

search criteria by type (FTF, virtual, hybrid), search by multiple districts and print a PDF list of meetings

DR REPORTS – please see the [Area website](#)

VIRTUAL/HYBRID/FTF MEETINGS DISCUSSED

- Tom discussed the document titled “Information to Consider when Holding Either Virtual or Hybrid Meetings in the Virginia Area” – available on the Area website
- This document resulted from the many questions asked of our Chair and Delegate during the Coronavirus pandemic
- The information in this document will remain relevant until the Virginia Area has its new Policy in place regarding how electronic meetings will be handled within the Area. This process will likely take at least one year.
- Questions regarding virtual and hybrid meetings can still be sent to virtualQnA@vaalanon.org.

SUNDAY

- Tom opened the second day of Assembly with the Serenity Prayer
- Opening remarks: questions about virtual/hybrid meetings should be emailed to: virtualQnA@vaalanon.org and will be posted to the website; service opportunities area available: officer elections are coming up this Fall. Reminder that the Area Convention is Coming up in August 2022 and early registration starts this August. There will be a poll at the end of Assembly and everyone is asked to participate – the question is whether you would prefer a virtual Assembly or a face to face Assembly in the Fall.
- Our Spiritual Speaker was introduced by our Delegate, Terry W.

SPIRITUAL SPEAKER – CINDY J., FLORIDA NORTH DELEGATE, PANEL 58

COORDINATOR REPORTS (CON'T)

- Northern Virginia Service Center – Phyllis F. – the service center is still closed; they are having elections in the Fall – they are concerned about opening the service center if there are few volunteers. Board meeting is Sept 6.
- Tidewater Service Center – Regan – there are open service positions; they’ve had no fundraisers during the past year
- Long Range Planning Committee – Wendy R. – working on setting up a meeting with our web designers in June.
- MEAC – Wendy R. – there will be no in person MEAC this year – have not yet made a decision about a potential virtual event
- ESAC – Reagan – no report due to Board not meeting

Workshop Report Backs
Dialogue with the Delegate

Virtual Meetings
Public Outreach
Conflict Resolution

Registrations and Evaluations – Stephanie P., Assembly Coordinator – 171 registered for Assembly (down a little from Fall Assembly); 106 GRs; 22 of 25 districts represented. There is ongoing Webex training for anyone interested – email Becky at southwest@vaalanon.org if interested.

DELEGATE REPORT (CON'T)

- There are four trustee positions open; resumes due by 8/15/2021
- WSO is still operating with a deficit budget; a 4% transfer from the Reserve Fund is budgeted for 2021
- The average cost of WSO service per group is \$263.33 and the average contribution per group is \$175.04.
- The good news is that contributions for 2020 exceeded literature sales for the first time since 1954.
- Al-Anon is celebrating its 70th anniversary with a free, live online event on July 10, 2021 with several Al-Anon speakers. Spacing is limited to 500 and was filled before the Conference ended. Audio recordings of the Al-Anon speakers will be played periodically in meetings inside the free Al-Anon Family Groups app for the remainder of 2021.
- Stepping Stones will have their Annual Picnic virtually on June 7, 2021 – sign up at steppingstones.org.
- The 2023 International Convention is in Albuquerque June 29-July 2, 2023. Watch for more information in *The Forum* and *In the Loop*.
- Panel 59 Elections are coming up this October. Challenge: Bring the topic of Service back to your home groups. Even if you've only served as GR for one Assembly, you are an experienced member. Consider what your next service position will be.
- The 2021 WSC will be regarded as historic and transformative, bringing Al-Anon into the 21st century. How will we meet the challenges of our organization moving forward into the digital world? What are the opportunities and barriers?

CLOSING REMARKS

- Tom thanked his fellow officers and the WebEx team and our Spiritual Speaker, Cindy J.
- Go onto the website to fill out the evaluation form
- Results of poll re: Fall Assembly – 46% want face to face; 39% prefer virtual
- The Assembly was closed with the Al-Anon Declaration

Respectfully submitted (as taken by Wendy Rowden),
Laura Lovern
Area Secretary