

**THE 2020 VIRGINIA AREA AL-ANON FALL ASSEMBLY
MINUTES
October 10-11, 2020
Virtual Meeting by WebEx**

“Dreaming Big With 20/20 Vision”

S A T U R D A Y

OPENING

- Tom S., Area Chair, opened the meeting with the Serenity Prayer, followed by a welcome to our first virtual Assembly, and a few virtual protocols. The 12 Steps, 12 Traditions, and 12 Concepts were read by Patty M., Marie M., and Susan W., respectively. Tom followed with a statement of anonymity.
- Introduction of new groups - Tom introduced 9 new groups to the Area since we last convened, 4 that began in 2019 and 5 in 2020.
- Introduction of Past Delegates and Visitors - Tom S. introduced Dee M., Panel 8, and Duane F., Panel 56, Past Delegates in attendance. Sherry H., Kentucky Area AFG Delegate is also with us this weekend. Additionally, we have some interested Al-Anon members that are not GRs attending
- Tom S. introduced the Area Officers
- Concept 3 was read by Tom S. Tom reinforced the purpose of the Assembly.
- Tom’s slides - The next Area Convention has been moved from 2021 to 2022. We currently have 25 Districts and 291 groups. That is up 13 groups from last year. The Eastern Shore District now aligns itself with the Maryland Area. We have renewed our contract with DoubleTree through 2023. Next October we will be voting for Area Officers for Panel 62. Please consider serving in one of these positions
- Past Delegate, Dee Moore, Panel 8, will be celebrating her 96th birthday on November 18th. Please reach out and wish her a happy birthday.

ATTENDANCE AND REGISTRATION

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

ASSEMBLY MINUTES: Becky D.

- Minutes from 2019 Fall Assembly were emailed to the Assembly attendants prior to Assembly for their review.

MOTION

Made by: Cindy H.
Second by: Troy H.

That the 2019 Fall Assembly Minutes be approved.

Motion Passed: Unanimously by virtual vote through WebEx polling feature (90% approved, 10% abstained, 0% opposed)

OFFICER REPORTS

Treasurer Report: Bruce B. (report available upon request)

- Our expenses are way down, but so are our contributions. We are about \$1,000 behind where we were last year at this time, but last year was not a great year.
- Bruce doesn't see this trend changing until we have more groups meeting face to face.
- We are doing okay financially but it would be nice if groups would come up with a means of participating in Tradition 7 while we continue to meet virtually.
- The cost to the Area per Assembly is roughly \$8,200, so expenses are down for 2020. We anticipate having two face to face Assemblies in 2021, but we will have to wait and see.
- Bruce explained that some of the funds in the "other" income category are certainly unidentifiable group contributions.
- General Q&A took place about the Treasurer's Report and each group being autonomous.
- The Treasurer's Report contains an attachment that explains our Paypal process.
- A concern was expressed about a fee being withheld from online contributions. Bruce explained that this occurs when you use the donate button.
- If a contributor is using his/her own paypal account to make a donation, he/she needs to select the "friends/family" (v. the purchase) option and enter "treasurer@vaalanon.org" as the payee.
- Suggested allocation of excess groups funds is as follows: 40% to District, 40% to Area, 10% to Service Center, 10% to WSO. Bruce explained the rationale behind this suggestion but reminded GRs it is perfectly acceptable to change the distribution, as groups are autonomous.
- The frequency of Area deposits decreased early in the pandemic but are currently being made weekly.
- Some of the money we didn't spend on hosting Assemblies this year was spent on website updates. But funds are still down because of the decrease in contributions.

MOTIONS

Made by: Patty M.

Second by: Sarah H.

That the Treasurer's report and the 2021 budget be accepted.

Motions Passed: Unanimously by virtual vote through WebEx polling feature (both 96% approval, 4% abstention, 0% opposed)

COORDINATOR REPORTS (most available upon request)

- Public Outreach – Val P. – Public Service Announcements (PSAs) are our best resource during the pandemic. We can still reach people in the health professions, too. Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism is still alive and well, too. Val suggests putting together a packet that fits the group's budget and take it to medical offices. Val has a PO PowerPoint that she is happy to share with Districts.
- Literature/Forum – Ann F. – Discussed several pieces of her favorite literature: *Lois Remembers* excerpt that reminds Ann of a quote she heard that “Al-Anons like progress but not change.” This piece of CAL is about love and forgiveness. *Al-Anon Family Groups*, classic edition, remind us that nothing has changed but everything has changed. Change is important even when it's difficult. *The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* is a great book study for groups. The excerpts are short and simple. Ann's favorite pamphlet is Alcoholism: The Family Disease. She frequently uses the maturity checklist and she thinks it's a great piece of literature for book study groups.
- Group Records – Chris B. – Currently the Area has 291 groups and 316 meetings; we have 36 groups that have been active since the 50's, 60's, and 70's. Chris requested help with 4 groups in a no-mail status and reviewed the Group Records Process document. Chris does not have access to the Alateen database. Group changes for Alateen groups go to Stacy L., Area Alateen Process Person.
- AAPP – Stacy L. – During the pandemic, all loose ends have been tied up and updated, but there has been no new paperwork to process since the pandemic started in March. Stacy also reported that many Alateen meetings are not meeting at all because the teens are over-Zoomed and over-scheduled. They are looking forward to getting back to face to face meetings.
- Alateen – Ginny K. – There have been two trainings since the 2019 Fall Assembly. None have occurred during the pandemic. Ginny is looking into more creative ways to get people processed. Details to follow....
- Archives – position is vacant
- Convention – Val P. – Because of the pandemic, the convention will be held in August 2022. Val is having a hard time getting information from the hotel at this time, so no date has been set. There has been some discussion about having the convention online, although it doesn't seem to be a well-received idea. We may need to revisit.

Delegate Report: Terry W. (report available upon request)

- The Delegate is the liaison between the Area and WSC and WSO
- World Service Conference is the largest group conscience within Al-Anon
- A Delegate participates in either a thought-force (thinking) or a task-force (doing); Terry W., our Area Delegate participates on the Resolution Conflict Workshop task-force, producing a workshop for Al-Anon's future use
- The 2020 WSC was held virtually because of the pandemic
- A conference summary is available online for free or in print for purchase (\$5)
- Service positions are hard to fill during the pandemic so it may be time to look into forming groups of people who work rather than coordinators working singly. Changes are happening.
- Reaching new members and the millennial generation are becoming more and more important very quickly- it is important to find new ways of reaching out
- What can we do about our lack of name recognition?
- 40% of our groups meet outside of the WSC structure - while these groups are growing, our face to face meetings seem to be getting smaller.
- Several updates were provided regarding international expansion
- There are currently two new thought-forces under consideration
- Event Announcements - explanation on p. 91-93 in the Service Manual; Group autonomy has to be considered in deciding what to announce and what not to announce at our group meetings

VAWSC Voting Topic Introduced:

Motion: That the Virginia Area Assembly vote to raise the Assembly registration rate by \$10.00 per person per night starting with the first meeting of the Assembly held in person at a hotel, and continuing thereafter at future, in-person Assembly meetings.

Background: The current rates for Assemblies have been in effect since 2017. Since then we have experienced some cost increases (mainly for meals and hotel support costs). Our financial reports show a trend of increasing outlays for Assemblies, starting at about \$6,500 per weekend meeting in 2017 and now costing about \$8,200 per weekend meeting in 2019. The officers believe it is time once again to raise Assembly registration rates. The VAWSC addressed this issue this past August 1st and agreed to forward it to the full Assembly.

Website Update - Sue V.

- We renewed our WebEx contract in April
- We added a second line in September so we can hold two meetings at the same time
- Calendar needs a refresh
- Discussions are being held about adding all electronic meetings to the Area website
- Sue recommends checking your District meeting list every now and again to make sure all updates have been made

DR Highlights: (available upon request, if turned in)

VAWSC Voting Topic Discussed:

- Bruce discussed current registration fees and the need to increase the fee periodically
- We would hold at the new rate as long as we can – typically 3-4 years and then a new motion would have to be made
- There is financial assistance available to groups that cannot afford to send their GR to Assembly
- There is a clause in our DoubleTree contracts that allows them to increase their fees 3% each year within our contract term
- Discussion was held about whether we should raise the fee by more than \$10, whether we can hold one in-person Assembly and one virtual Assembly each year, and if a hybrid might be offered.

SUNDAY

- Tom opened the second day of Assembly with the Serenity Prayer
- Singing of “Assembly Bunch” by our virtual committee
 - Opening Remarks – Past Delegates in attendance are Dee Moore and Duane Faircloth, and guest speaker Sherry H., Kentucky Area AFG Delegate. Virtual protocols were reviewed. Evaluations were requested. There are service opportunities open and Officer elections will be in one year. The Convention has been moved to August 2022. Tom read the Al-Anon anonymity statement.
- Our spiritual speaker was introduced by Terry W.

SPIRITUAL SPEAKER – Sherry H., Delegate, Kentucky Area

VAWSC Voting Items:

GR Roll Call – Becky D./Laura L. – there are 84 GRs in attendance

Registration Fee Increase: Tom S.

- Tom asked for a raising of hands to determine whether the GRs had enough information to vote on the issue

MOTION

Made by: Tom S., Chair
Second by: Sophie L.

That the Virginia Area Assembly vote to raise the Assembly registration rate by \$10.00 per person per night starting with the first meeting of the Assembly held in person at a hotel, and continuing thereafter at future, in-person Assembly meetings.

Motion Passed: by show of hands, 84 in favor, 1 abstaining, 0 opposed

COORDINATOR REPORTS cont'd

- Northern Virginia Service Center – Phyllis F. – The Service Center is closed and missed their sales at the Spring Assembly, but they are okay. The Service Center's State Farm insurance covers all meetings in the 10 Districts of Northern Virginia. There is no set date for re-opening the Service Center, but the phones are being answered and literature is being distributed
- Tidewater Service Center – Regan K. for Ami S. – The Tidewater Service Center is not open but is answering phones a couple of days a week and distributing literature. There will be no gratitude breakfast this year. Please remember the SC in your wills.
- LRPC – Wendy R. – Efforts need to be put into hybrid meetings at every level of the program. The committee is working on ironing out all bugs in the WebEx system. We don't know where the future is going to take us so we need to be prepared technically.
- MEAC – Wendy R. – There was no MEAC held this year but several involved did have a one day virtual meeting to discuss starting again next year.
- ESAC – Regan K. for Rob – no ESAC this year. Rob is the current AMIAS chair for ESAC.

Workshop Report Backs – one member from each workshop reported briefly on the workshop they attended Saturday night.

Registration and Evaluations - Stephanie P., Assembly Coordinator - reported that 201 registered for Assembly; 117 GRs registered; 24 of the 25 Districts represented. Paige expressed extra thanks and gratitude to everyone who pulled this virtual platform together and made it successful. With this new format, evaluations are extremely important – please fill it out and submit it!

DR Highlights continued: (available upon request, if turned in)

Delegate Report continued:

- Conference Approved Literature sales are down, according to WSO, and electronic literature sales were slightly up this past summer. Contributions are up, operating expenses have been cut back where possible. There was a loss in the reserve fund. WSO is projecting a loss for the year of \$420,000. They still need our contributions.
- Meetings that are registered with WSO as electronic do not have a GR or belong to a District
- Mobile App – WSO has launched the new AI-Anon app. Currently >10,000 subscribers. You cannot find a list of electronic meetings on the app. You will find a list of meetings for TODAY only. The app is free. The paths and

links are in this Delegate report. An address is also listed for feedback. The app is only for permanently registered electronic meetings, not for meetings meeting virtually temporarily

- Maria reported that she purchased the upgrade to the app and it provides her a member sharing everyday
- DRs, please remember that you are the link of service to the GRs - pass along all appropriate information

CLOSING REMARKS

- Terry W. reminded us that this first virtual VA Area Assembly is a landmark! Just a year ago, the Conference determined that we were nowhere near incorporating the changes necessary to have hybrid meetings. Look where we landed this year! She has seen both pros and cons with the changes that were necessary this year, but practicing the program has enabled her to continue feeling normal, meet people from other countries, and even “travel” from Kentucky to Arizona and back to Kentucky all in one day!
- Tom S. thanked everyone for attending and expressed his melancholy over not physically seeing everyone in so long.
- Please visit the VA Area website to make a 7th Tradition donation to the Area since we can’t pass a basket virtually
- Please don’t forget to fill out an evaluation form. It will be available for two weeks
- Tom extended thanks to his fellow officers, the WebEx Team, and our speaker, Sherry H.
- The Assembly was closed with the Al-Anon Declaration

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Lovern
Area Secretary

Tom Spillman
Area Chair

Let it Begin with Me

When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, let the hand of Al-Anon and Alateen always be there, and let it begin with me.

Upcoming Dates:

2021		
January 9th	Area Officers’ Meeting	WebEx
March 6th	VAWSC	WebEx
April 12-16th	WSC	Stepping Stones, NY

May 15-16th	Spring Assembly	DoubleTree, Midlothian
June 5th	Area Officers' Meeting	WebEx
August 7th	VAWSC	WebEx
October 16-17th	Fall Assembly	DoubleTree, Midlothian
2022		
August	Area Convention	DoubleTree, Charlottesville