



ALA-TALK

Area 30 (<u>www.msafg.org</u>)

Fall 2020

From the Delagate's Desk

All,

Friday was a momentous day in the history of our Fellowship as I took part in a worldwide meeting on the long-awaited Al-Anon Family Groups app! It gave me the same feeling as going to the International Convention, realizing how connected we are with others around the world who gratefully share their experience,

FALL 2020 ASSEMBLY November 21, 10:00 a.m. Starkville, MS

Please go to the **Area 30 Website**www.msafg.org for the latest
updates about meetings and other
information

strength, and hope. There were participants from Scotland, Italy, Canada, and Mexico as well as all over the US.

I'm going to cover a few points that were explained to delegates in a question and answer session but if you have additional questions you can email wso@al-anon.org and put Mobile App in the subject line or afgmobile@al-anon.org.

The app is available on the Google or Apple store and you can download it to a mobile phone, i-Pad or certain computers that are set up to run apps. The app is free unless you choose to subscribe to the Premium content which is a daily meditation. It is about the same price as a book. I am excited as it will be a great aid when I travel as well as at home.

The app is ready for electronic meetings to register, but it must be a continual electronic meeting, not one that is temporarily meeting virtually because of COVID-19. This app has the capacity to host thousands of meetings around the world, so it is a wonderful supplement to our home group meetings. When you look for meetings be sure you give a large enough window of time to search.

As the app has just gone live, more meetings will become available over time. There will be two standing meetings per week for the first four weeks to get people accustomed to meeting on the app. These are being hosted by WSO. The meeting times are Mondays at 11 am and Wednesdays at 6 pm (Central Time). All meeting times will display as the time zone you are in. Any member can take part in these meetings. The only restriction is there is a capacity limit of 300 people per meeting! It uses a Zoom platform so it's very user friendly. As of press time for this newsletter two additional meetings have registered.

Other great features are a Journal, the opportunity to connect with other Al-Anon friends and the ability to make contributions through the app.

Lois would be proud of this big step for the fellowship. As she said, "It takes only one person to start something but many others to carry it out." Have fun exploring it for yourself and pass it on!

In grateful service,

Jennifer Magee, Delegate

ALA-TALK NEWS

FALL ASSEMBLY: NOVEMBER 21ST

FALL ASSEMBLY AGENDA November 21, 2020 Starkville, MS

10:00 Call to Order-Chair, Serenity Prayer

10:15 Roll Call, Recognition of first time Attendees

10:30 Reading of the Steps, Traditions, Concepts, Warranties

10:45 Secretary's Report

11:00 Treasurer's Report

11:15 Break/Raffle

11:30 Delegate's Report

12:30 Lunch

1:30 Raffle

1:45 District Reports (need DR for District 2)

2:30 Area World Service Committee Members Reports

3:00 Break/ Raffle

3:30 Workshop

4:00 Report from workshop

4:30 New Business to combine districts 1 and 6

4:45 Convention Report by Districts 1 and 6

5:00 Treasurer's Budget for 2021

5:15 Ask it Basket

5:15 Declaration and Adjournment

Fall Assembly Meeting Details

Saturday November 21, 2020 9:45 AM - 5:00 PM (CST)

Plan To Attend
In Person or Virtually

In Person Meeting at:
St. Luke's Lutheran Church
1104 Louisville St., Starkville
Entrance at the north end of
the building in the activity
center.

Bring a mask!

Virtual meeting from your computer, tablet or smartphone.

https://global.gotomeeting.co m/join/676929141

You can also dial in using your phone.

For supported devices, tap a one-touch number below to join instantly.

US: +1 (872) 240-3412

- One-touch:

tel:+18722403412,676929141# Access Code: 676-929-141

What a Year!

2020 Brings Challenges and Opportunities

So many changes have occurred as a result of life in the midst of a pandemic. COVID-19 has changed our world in ways we could not have ever imagined. We are facing challenges and opportunities, heartache and grace. All of these things we experience in life, but somehow they are magnified by the circumstances in which we find ourselves.

An unprecedented year so far...

In-person meetings were cancelled as we sheltered at home and socially distanced. Meetings that were cancelled or postponed:

- 2020 Spring Assembly cancelled
- SERDGT in Puerto Rico cancelled
- AWSC to plan for Fall Assembly cancelled
- 2020 Fall Assembly is set for November 21 in Starkville.

Many of our Family Groups are not letting the virus stop them from meeting. When there's a will, there's a way! Not only can members find a meeting to fit their schedule, they can attend a meeting even if they are out of town or cannot drive.

- ZOOM has become the new normal for 'face-to-face' meetings.
- Telephone conference calls have given a new meaning to flexibility in attendance.
- Travelling to meetings is not mandatory. Meeting by ZOOM or conference call gives more people the opportunity to participate in the sharing experience, strength, and hope to fellow members around the world.

Returning to Face to Face Meetings

In response to the pandemic many Areas reached out to WSO to inquire as to how to display temporary online meeting information so that members could still find help and hope in Al-Anon meetings. In that evolution, a temporary online electronic meeting change form was created for members to use for temporary meeting information to be displayed on al-anon.org. Not all meetings have this temporary meeting information displayed with WSO; most is displayed on local District and AIS websites.

DONATE

Consider what you have been given...

And give back!

Birthday donations are a way to celebrate our years of recovery in Al-Anon.

Make a donation on your Al-Anon Birthday!



You can donate to:
MS Area Family Groups

Make checks payable to

"MSAFG"

Mail to:

MSAFG

1158 Ferncrest Drive

Jackson, MS 39211

Or

WSO

Make checks payable to

WSO

Mail to:

AFG Inc

1600 Corporate Landing Parkway Virginia Beach, VA

23454

Include your Group Name and Group# on the Check

What the WSO requests is that if your meeting has resumed face-to-face and your temporary online meeting information is displayed on alanon.org, that a member of the group please submit the change information to remove the temporary online meeting information. This does not mean that the group cannot have members meeting in the physical location in addition to using an online platform to connect additional members into the meeting that are concerned about safety. Members are encouraged to check to see what meeting information is currently displayed on al-anon.org and decide from there how to proceed. Also, do not hesitate to reach out to groupservices@al-anon.org if you have additional questions.

Similarly, with our area website www.msafg.org, please make sure if your group is listed as meeting online due or postponed due to the pandemic but has returned to in-person meetings that you update the meeting information. Updates should be sent by email to: webmaster@msafg.org.

Letting Go

Letting go does not mean to stop caring; it means I can't do it for someone else.

Letting go is not to cut myself off; it's the realization I can't control another.

Letting go is not to enable, but to allow learning from natural consequences.

Letting go is to admit powerlessness, which means the outcome is not in my hands.

Letting go is not to try to change or blame another; it's to make the most of myself.

Letting go is not to care for, but to care about.

Letting go is not to fix, but to be supportive.

Letting go is not to judge, but to allow another to be a human being.

Letting go is not to be in the middle arranging all the outcomes, but to allow others to affect their own destinies.

Letting go is not to be protective; it's to permit another to face reality. Letting go is not to deny, but to accept.

Letting go is not to nag, scold or argue, but instead to search out my own shortcomings and correct them.

Letting go is not to criticize and regulate anybody, but to try to become what I dream I can be.

Letting go is not to adjust everything to my desires, but to take each day as it comes and cherish myself in it.

Letting go is to not regret the past, but to grow and live for the future. Letting go is to fear less and love myself more.

MSAFG

Do you need a meeting?

During this time as we physically isolate amid the spread of COVID-19, you can connect with others through online Al-Anon meetings at home.

Check out our Mississippi
Al-Anon webpage for
information about the latest
updates on meeting times
and locations
www.msafg.org

WORLD SERVICE OFFICE (WSO)

Find out what's happening in the newsletter *In The Loop* www.al-anon.org

ARCHIVE YOUR ACTIVITIES!

Anniversary Dinners, Speakers, Workshops, or Activities

Please submit a copy of your flyers to Leigh at leighrobertsonpt@aol.com

A CALL TO SERVICE

Betty O. presented the following talk on Service at the 2019 Fall Assembly

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Service

There's more to maintaining a fully self-supporting Al-Anon group than just paying the rent. Continuity of service is important to our common welfare. Today I will think about the contribtion I am making to my home group.

September 7: Today's Reminder from Courage to Change

Area 30 AFG Chair Cindy H. shares the following passage. It is an excerpt from a letter written in 1968 by Lois addressed to Long-Timers. It is reprinted with permission of Al-Anon Family Groups Headquarters, Inc., Virginia Beach, VA.

If at one time we held the active leadership of our group it may be particularly hard to 'let go.' It is so easy to believe that because we have been in Al-Anon for years, we must be qualified to tell others what to do, but our 'actions speak louder than words."

"When taking an inventory we long-timers need to constantly remind ourselves of this point and ask ourselves if for some personal reason (thoughtlessness, egotism, a desire to dominate) we are still telling others what to do and how to do it.

PROTECTING YOURSELF DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Face to Face Meetings-Considerations for Resuming In-Person Meetings

The following is a compilation of guidance from other Areas around the country that many groups may find helpful:

Schools are reopening, as are some of the facilities where we meet, and our groups are looking at what to do next. Some groups never stopped meeting in person, some went to online meetings, and some have tried hybrid meetings or just are not meeting for now. While being locked down, we still have had newcomers contacting us about finding recovery in Al-Anon. As we consider next steps, each group will need to make some group conscience decisions, see how those work, maybe revisit decisions as the group finds what works and doesn't work for them, and make adjustments as local situations change. I hope the suggestions here will help groups address items to be considered about how they will transition to in person meetings. If your group decides to continue to meet online rather than in person, it may still need to review some of the group practices, like group donations and anonymity.

As always, we need to consider our group practices in light of our Legacies, particularly the Traditions. As the group makes decisions, please reflect on how all the Legacies apply to the situation being discussed, how the decision might affect your own group, other groups, and Al-Anon as a whole. Unity is a vital component of our program, and we strive to make decisions that provide for progress for the greatest number (Tradition 1). The 4th Concept tells us that "Participation is the key to harmony," indicating the importance of asking, "How can we make this work for everyone?" Maybe the most difficult issues to navigate will be those of interacting with outside entities, like the facilities where we meet and governmental public health officials. We represent Al-Anon as we interact with others, and we are not above the law.

I am sure that other situations will arise as groups make decisions. In this process, it is vital to presume goodwill. As we talk to each other and reason things out, members with a minority opinion have the right to be heard (Concept 5), with love and respect, and as we hear the concerns of others, we might find that there are valid alternatives to the one way we were looking at things. We have some excellent literature that addresses conflict resolution, and now would be a great time to review that process! We have the opportunity to work our program in a pandemic to reach a consensus, without fostering resentments.

I am happy to help answer any questions or help groups work through this process. Several other Areas have developed checklists for reopening for the different kinds of meetings through the Knowledge Based Decision Making Process, and they have generously made these available to other Areas that wish to use them. I can provide your group with those if you would like to use them. I also have information about using Conference Approved Literature while maintaining the integrity of the copyright, both online and hard copies. Please contact me if I can be of help.

Yours in grateful service, Jennifer Magee

Delegate jen.magee@outlook.com; 662-820-0749

VISIT THE
FOLLOWING
WEBSITES FOR
UPDATES ON
CORONAVIRUS
COVID-19

Visit MS. State Dept. of Health website for latest information regarding your county.

Visit <u>CDC website</u> with information about COVID-19 and ways to protect yourself and loved ones.



Face to Face Meetings-Considerations CONTINUED

Here are some items to consider as your group looks at the transition back to face to face meetings:

- 1) Can we meet requirements of the facility where we meet? They may have requirements for maximum capacity, spacing, face coverings, and air flow, for example.
- 2) Can we meet the governmental requirements and recommendations? Currently, there is a state recommendation regarding face coverings, and many counties have mask mandates, as well. There are Mississippi State Department of Health (MSDH) guidelines regarding gathering size and spacing. The group must consider if it is willing to meet these requirements, and what will happen if someone comes to the meeting who refuses to abide by the group conscience.
- 3) Are there temporary alternatives to consider? Some options available beyond online or in person (in regular meeting space) include hybrid meetings (some people in person and some online) or outdoor meetings (in a park, on a parking lot/driveway). Consider things like whether the technology/tech assistance is available, and what to do if weather isn't ideal. Choosing to delay going back to in person meetings is an option.
- 4) Do we need to reconsider our routines? Seating may need to be rearranged, and groups may choose to avoid hugs and hand holding at the close of the meeting. Doors and windows may need to be open to allow for air flow. Consider minimizing the number of things that different people touch, like shared books or readings. (The opening, closing, Steps, Traditions, Concepts and many other items are available in the Groups at Work booklet, which is \$1, or can be downloaded onto a phone in the Service Manual, or single use copies may need to be used, remembering copyright law considerations). The electronic welcome can be provided to newcomers, or they can be shown where the newcomer packets are kept and asked to pick one up. Groups may decide not to have snacks, have individually wrapped items only, have one person prepare and pour coffee, or have individual drink bottles. The donation basket can be placed in one location rather than passing it, with only the treasurer handling it, or the treasurer could set up a system for electronic donations. Does the group want to provide masks for people who come to the meeting and don't have one?

5) How do we maintain our principle of anonymity? Having open doors or windows means maintaining an

- awareness that people outside the meeting may be able to overhear what is said in the meeting. The same problem is present during online meetings, when we may not know whether others are in the room where the device is being used to attend the meeting. You may wish to remind members of our principle of anonymity for themselves and for others, which could mean using a headset or finding a more private location to use when at an online meeting.

 Maintaining anonymity for people at a meeting becomes a concern if a person at the meeting develops symptoms or tests positive for Covid-19. If this happens, contact tracing is required, introducing concerns about anonymity. Some facilities have asked people entering to sign in at the entry or the group to provide names and contact information for people who are in each meeting. So far, arrangements have been made for the group to keep a list to be provided, if needed. There are ways to maintain anonymity and still provide for contact tracing. The contact tracers do not need to know what type of meeting the person attended! They just need to know who the person came in contact with, which can mean providing a first name and phone number. I'd suggest having one person volunteer to keep a list of who was at the meeting (first name and phone number is fine), and the list can be destroyed three weeks later, if it is not needed. (Don't pass the list around. Remember to minimize the number of items touched). Please
- 6) Can we reassess our decisions when our situation changes? There is no one right action that applies to every group or as a permanent solution. A small group in a location with a low number of cases may make a different decision than a large group with a substantial number of members who are at risk. I suggest that each group regularly review their transition back to face to face meetings and make adjustments as their local situation changes.

encourage people to stay home if they don't feel well!

Area Groups By District

| GroupName | District | MeetingCity |
|-----------------------------------|--------------|------------------------|
| Bay Saint Louis Rebirth AFG | 0001 | Bay Saint Louis |
| AFG Diamondhead | 0001 | Diamondhead |
| Nugent AFG | 0001 | Gulfport |
| Gulf Coast Mens AFG | 0001 | Gulfport |
| Bayou View Serenity AFG | 0001 | Gulfport |
| Gulf Coast Parents AFG | 0001 | Long Beach |
| Wed Morning Courage To Change AFG | 0001 | Long Beach |
| Pass Christian AFG | 0001 | Long Beach |
| Picayune AFG | 0001 | Picayune |
| Columbia Serenity AFG | 0002 | Columbia |
| The Hope Group AFG | 0002 | Hattiesburg |
| Progress Not Perfection AFG | 0002 | Hattiesburg |
| Hattiesburg Monday Nite AFG | 0002 | Hattiesburg |
| Fellowship AFG | 0002 | Laurel |
| Serenity AFG | 0002 | Meridian |
| Aberdeen AFG | 0003 | Aberdeen |
| Amory Encouragers AFG | 0003 | Amory |
| Discovering Hope AFG | 0003 | Caledonia |
| Happy Hour AFG | 0003 | Columbus |
| Thursday AFG | 0003 | Columbus |
| Canton-Madison County AFG | 0004 | Canton |
| Crossroads AFG | 0004 | Clinton |
| Living Sober AFG | 0004 | Jackson |
| Monday And Thursday Noon AFG | 0004 | Jackson |
| Seekers Of Serenity AFG | 0004 | Jackson |
| Sharing AFG | 0004 | Jackson |
| Courage To Change AFG | 0004 | Madison |
| Today's Hope AFG | 0004 | Madison |
| Pike County AFG | 0004 | McComb |
| Keep It Simple AFG | 0004 | Natchez |
| Summit AFG | 0004 | Summit |
| Hope And Healing AFG Serenity AFG | 0004 0004 | Vicksburg Vicksburg |
| Vicksburg AFG | 0004 | Vicksburg |
| Woodville's Renewed Hope AFG | 0004 | Woodville |
| Batesville AFG | 0004 | Batesville |
| Cleveland AFG | 0005 | Cleveland |
| Monday Nite Study AFG | 0005 | Greenville |
| Tuesday Night AFG | 0005 | Greenwood |
| Courage To Change AFG | 0005 | Grenada |
| Leland Newcomers AFG | 0005 | Leland |
| North Carrollton AFG | 0005 | North Carrollton |
| Hope For New Beginnings AFG | 0006 | Biloxi |
| Sunset AFG | 0006 | Biloxi |
| Ocean Springs Step By Step AFG | 0006 | Ocean Springs |
| Keep It Simple AFG | 0006 | Ocean Springs |
| Ocean Springs AFG | 0006 | Ocean Springs |
| Pascagoula AFG | 0006 | Pascagoula |
| Tuesday Night AFG | 0007 | Booneville |
| Corinth AFG | 0007 | Corinth |
| New Albany AFG | 0007 | New Albany |
| Just For Today AFG | 0007 | Oxford |
| Oxford University AFG | 0007 | Oxford |
| Cornerstone AFG | 0007 | Tupelo |
| Peace Seekers AFG | 0007 | Tupelo |
| | | • |

JUST FOR TONIGHT

Bookmarks and all Conference approved literature is available for purchase.

When we buy literature, we help WSO and ourselves! There is a new book on intimacy and the Just for Tonight bookmarks are just a dollar a piece! We do not need to buy from Amazon as that only gives a portion to Al-Anon

JUST FOR TONIGHT

Just for tonight, I will be grateful. I will give thanks for the past day—its failures as well as its successes, its sadness as well as its joy and its pain as well as its pleasure. I will take comfort in knowing that every event and circumstance that occurred today can be used for my good and the good of others.

Just for tonight, I will accept that I have done the best I could, remembering that my goal is spiritual progress and not perfection. I will let go of any expectation I had for this day, as well as any disappointment, shame or guilt I felt for not being perfect today.

Just for tonight, I will be humble. I will give my shortcomings to a Power greater than myself, trusting that doing so can bring about changes in me that I could not bring about by myself.

Contact Charlotte

<u>Cwood311@comcast.net</u>

Literature & Forum Coordinator



BE A CONTRIBUTOR!

ALA-TALK would like to include your stories or quotes. Please submit a story of up to 150-200 words or a favorite qote. Email submissions to: alatalk@msafg.org.

Group SpotlightColumbia Serenity

We pick one new piece of literature such as REACHING for PERSONAL FREEDOM and go around letting each person read and share about one paragraph. This was done at Columbia Serenity and made a great discussion meeting.

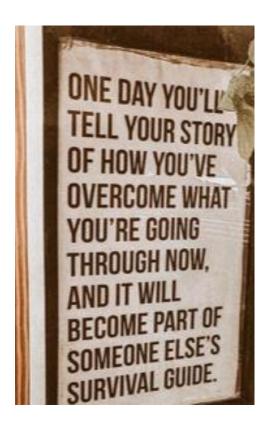
We are looking forward to start meeting again as we had stopped when the Covid virus affected our members.

Yours in Service, Cindy Harrison, Area 30 Chair

Member Spotlight Betty O.

Hello Fellow Al-Anon members!
Thanks for cards and calls during my loss and my broken arm. I am so grateful for our C.A.L.! If you or your group do not get "The Forum," please order one. It will keep you up on World Service events.

In program fellowship, Betty O. Lit., Forum Coordinator



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| New Renewal | Address Change |

Al-Anon Group Records Change Form

Please submit this form through your Area Group Records Process or the WSO

| 1. Group Record | 2. Status | 3. Changes | | |
|--|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|------------------------------------|
| WSO I.D. Number | ☐ Change | ☐ Group Name | ☐ GR | Meeting Place |
| District Number | ☐ Inactive | ☐ Current Mailing | Address (CMA) | ■ Meeting Time |
| Area Name (Abbreviation) | | ☐ Phone Contact fo | or the Public | ☐ Meeting Day |
| 4. Group Registration Overview | | | | |
| Group Name** Reflects Al-Anon principles and is inviting to all. See instructioning of the registration. Contact your Area Group Records Coords | | | compliance with the i | Al-Anon policy will delay process- |
| Mailing Language | | | | |
| Location | | | | |
| Meeting Place | | | | |
| Meeting Address | | | | |
| CityState/Province | ce Zip/Po | ostal Code | Country _ | |
| Group email | | | | |
| Phone Contact for the Public | | | | |
| First Name | | Phone Number | | |
| First Name | | | | |
| 5. Meeting Details | | Additional Meeting | | |
| Day Time | □ AM □ PM | | | ДАМ ДРМ |
| Meeting Attendees: | | _ | Families, Friends Families and Frie | and Observers welcome ends only |
| Spoken Language Member Co | ount | Spoken Language | Me | mber Count |
| ☐ Beginners* ☐ Introductory** ☐ Limi | ited Access*** | ☐ Beginners* ☐ | Introductory** | ☐ Limited Access*** |
| ☐ Handicap Access ☐ Child Care ☐ F ☐ Smoking Permitted ☐ Sign Language | ragrance Free | ☐ Handicap Access☐ Smoking Permitted | | |
| Location Instructions | | Location Instructions _ | | |
| *held in conjunction with a regular Al-Anon group meeting, not ** Attendance changes frequently; not considered an Al-Anon g *** Meeting access is limited due to the facility's entry restriction | group. Attendees are invit | ed to go to regular Al-Anon meet | ings. | |
| 6. Current Mailing Address (WSO mail for the | group is sent to the | e postal and email addres | ses) | |
| First Name | | Last Name | | |
| Street/PO Box | | City | | |
| State/Province | Zip/Postal Code | | Country | |
| Phone Number | ldress in section #4 (See in | astructions for more information) | | |
| 7. For Area Use Group Rep Other | | | | |
| First Name | | Last Name | | |
| Street/PO Box | | City | | |
| State/Province | Zip/Postal Code | | Country | |
| Phone Number | | Email | | |
| The WSO will register any group designating itself as an Al-A to any Al-Anon members. <i>Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual</i> (P. | | - | oide by the Traditions | and that meetings will be open |
| Submitted by: Date: | Phoi | ne: | Email: | |