

# Area Assembly

Meeting Minutes  
AFG Area 22\_LA  
Saturday, August 15, 2020

## **\*\* UNAPPROVED MINUTES \*\***

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Louisiana Area Assembly was held online using the video conference program Zoom, at 2:00 p.m. on Saturday, August 15, 2020. Angela A., Chairperson, opened the meeting with a moment of silence followed by the Serenity Prayer. She welcomed all in attendance, and introduced the Area 22 Officers, who then read Al-Anon's Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions, and Twelve Concepts of Service, including the General Warranties. Angela then referred everyone to page 22 of the *2018-2021 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27) and reminded them about the "Three Obstacles to Success" in Al-Anon.

Angela then read the Area 22 Assembly Mission Statement: The mission of the Louisiana AFG Area Assembly is to foster and support participation in service for Al-Anon and interest in the Steps, Traditions, and Concepts; to provide opportunities for groups to associate with other groups; to inform about the activities and service in our region; and to maintain representation to and from the World Service Conference (WSC).

Angela announced the future tentative dates of the Area Assembly weekends:

2020: November 7-8

2021: March 27-28\*, May 22-23\*, August 21-22, and November 6-7

2022: January 15-16, April 9-10, August 20-21, and November 5-6

\* *Not our usual "Assembly months"*

When the Assembly returns to meeting in person, it will be held at the Wyndham Garden Lafayette, 1801 Pinhook Rd., Lafayette, LA 70508.

Angela reminded Assembly members that all the documents that are needed for today's meeting were on the Area website, [www.la-al-anon.org](http://www.la-al-anon.org) (password: serenity). She then reminded everyone of the online conference procedures for participating in discussions, asking questions, dealing with technical problems, online meeting etiquette, etc.

Rachel B., Area Secretary, asked for any corrections to the unapproved minutes from Saturday, January 18, 2020. She suggested that approval of these minutes be deferred until the next Assembly in order to add reports that were submitted late and not included in the minutes. Alyson M., Tammy M., and Sylvia G. requested that the minutes be amended to include their reports. A motion to defer acceptance of the minutes until the next Assembly was made by Denise T., Group Representative (GR), and seconded by Lucy W., GR. The approval of the minutes was deferred until the next Assembly (November 7, 2020).

## OFFICER REPORTS

### Treasurer's report: Hope L., Treasurer

- ◆ Alateen Fundraiser has money left over after the event & was earmarked to sponsor Alateens to attend the Deep South Alateen Conference (DSAC) or Area Assembly. We used \$200.00 in year 2019 to sponsor an Alateen's expenses to attend Assembly. Leaving the \$90.00.
- ◆ SCRDM seed money is for when the event South Central Regional Delegates Meeting will be held here in Louisiana.
- ◆ Due to the cancelation of the April Assembly we saved on hotel and travel expenses. Prayed the COVID would be gone soon, but it was not.
- ◆ Was Blessed to have 34 groups send contributions
- ◆ Blessed one of our members celebrated 38 years of Al-Anon recovery with a donation of \$200.00.
- ◆ Praying our virtual Assembly will be Blessed

### Alternate Delegate's report: Eric N., Alternate Delegate

- ◆ Erica F. will be our speaker tonight.
- ◆ Duke H. will be Saturday night speaker at the November Assembly.
- ◆ Rebecca P. and Mary F. will present a workshop in November about conducting a district meeting.
- ◆ Tammy M. has brought workshops back from the WSC that are available for members to present to the Assembly.
- ◆ I encourage members to create their own workshops by teaming up with a “workshop buddy”

### Delegate's report: Tammy M., Delegate

- ◆ Protect AlAnon's Name Vali F., Executive Director Kerri K., Associate Director—International Erin Keavney, Interim Legal Assistant (Nonmember) Trademark and Copyright Protection on the Internet:

Based on research undertaken by the Electronic Meeting Work Group—then a Work Group of the Policy Committee—and a recommendation from the Policy Committee, the Board of Trustees at its April quarterly meeting, prior to the WSC, approved a motion “to direct the Office to pursue all appropriate remedies to protect the AlAnon name, pursuant to the 'Electronic Meetings' portion of the 'Digest of AlAnon and Alateen Policies' section of the *20182021 AlAnon/Alateen Service Manual* (P24/27). Following this direction, Staff began the process of cataloging violations to the AlAnon and Alateen trademark identified by members, Staff, and Volunteers. By midyear, over 30 violations ranging from mobile apps and unregistered social media groups using the AlAnon name and or logo to websites not linked to AlAnon service arms posting excerpts from Conference-Approved Literature (CAL) were cataloged. Despite having access to general counsel who provides intellectual property support as part of a monthly retainer agreement and a trademark attorney engaged to register the AlAnon trademark internationally, it became evident existing administrative Staff could not undertake the effort necessary to

investigate ownership, communicate our concerns, and address continued violations. AFG, Inc. has granted permission for AIAnon structures outside of the WSC Structure to reprint and after discussing the situation with colleagues at the A.A. General Service Office—who employ a fulltime paralegal—Staff asked the Board for approval as part of the Strategic Plan Organization Goal initiatives to contract an experienced, intellectual property paralegal as a trial to pursue the violations, create templates for responding to future violations, and identify the scope of ongoing work.

The Interim Legal Assistant started in November and has already successfully collaborated with members both within and outside the WSC Structure who have cooperated based on an informed understanding of the need to protect our name, as identified in Warranty Four. International Copyright Protection and Accessibility, since the late 1960s, translate Conference Approved Literature (CAL).

- ◆ WSO is becoming more flexible with temporary electronic meetings. Face-to-face meetings may photocopy *The Forum* for one-time use, with the number of copies limited to the number of people present, and limited to what can reasonably be discussed in a meeting. Photocopies are not for sale and should not be distributed beyond the meeting. Photocopies are used to maintain accuracy, and should be printed with permissions (printed line, copyright information). This exception usually only applies to face-to-face meetings, but is being extended to temporary electronic meetings as long as they meet the same requirements as face-to-face meetings (groups registered as electronic meetings have different permissions). Screenshots and sharing of CAL with others is not permitted.

## **SPECIAL COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Newcomers to Area Assembly Meeting report: Sylvia G., Newcomers Coordinator

The meeting was facilitated by the coordinator Sylvia G. There were a total of 20 participants. Of those, five were attending Area Assembly for the first time, and three of the five were GRs.

One of the attendees reported that they would have not been able to attend unless the meeting was being held virtually. There was discussion regarding what to expect during the GR Meeting, District Representative (DR) Meeting, Delegate's Report, the Business Meeting, and the AWSC Meeting.

GR Meeting report: Carmen O., GR Meeting Coordinator

We had 48 participants; meeting was opened with an ice-breaker, following the spiritual principle of willingness (willingness to participate). Education/awareness: we went over the Guideline for GRs (G-11). Ended with members sharing their experience, strength, and hope.

DR Meeting report: Alyson M., Alternate Chair

- ◆ 19 participants with past Delegates and visitors from Canada!
- ◆ Computer and Phone participants
- ◆ 3 Tech Guys- Thank you to Danny, Michael, and Duke!
- ◆ We discussed assignments for the November 2020 Assembly and discussed positive events taking place in the districts during this COVID experience.
- ◆ Assignments for November 2020 Assembly in Lafayette

- ♣ Saturday morning meeting: Rebecca P.– District 6
- ♣ Saturday morning registration: Susan A. – District 10
- ♣ Salts: Patti V.– District 7
- ♣ Sweets: Mary F. – District 8
- ♣ Sweets: Danielle H. – District 15
- ♣ Saturday Night Owl Meeting: Jane S. – District 19
- ♣ Sunday Morning Meeting: Danny C. – District 2
- ♣ Sunday Morning Registration: Clara E.– District 4

South Central Regional Delegates Meeting (SCRDM) report: Clara E., past Delegate

- ◆ The SCRDM was held in Wichita, KS, on March 5, 6, & 7, 2020. Our current Delegate, Tammy M, Immediate past Delegate, Carmen O., past Delegates, Gail F., Clif B., Sylvia G., Clara E., and one member attended; Eric, our Alternate Delegate, was unable to go.
- ◆ We fulfilled our purpose of preparing the three new delegates in our region for the WSC. We had a report from the WSC trustee, Cindy K., which included 24,000 groups and 300 electronic meetings. Contained some really good information, some shared earlier today by Tammy.
- ◆ The chosen agenda items included:
  - 1) How can we have more growth (especially younger members) and diversity (language, distance, financial)?
  - 2) How do we encourage more electronic/virtual communication?
  - 3) A concern on the impending COVID-19, what will the meetings look like?
- ◆ A discussion on the Conference theme "What are my dreams for Al-Anon Family Groups?" yielded 30+ thoughts.
- ◆ The Workshop focused on the "Qualities of Positive and Negative Leadership".
- ◆ At the business meeting the registration fee was raised to \$30; Sylvia G. was elected program chair and Angela A. was elected general chair for the SCRDM in LA in 2021. We presented two hotel sites. The Embassy Suites was chosen; however, the contract is yet to be signed related to COVID-19.

## **ACTION COMMITTEE REPORTS**

*Special Note: All committee reports were submitted in writing prior to the Assembly meeting and posted on the Area website, and were not given orally, as usual, during the meeting. Assembly members and attendees were asked to read the reports before the meeting and have any questions about the Committee Reports ready to be asked at this time.*

Group Services Committee: Mary F., Group Records Coordinator

Our discussion was on “Ideas to Attract More Members to Come/Return to Area Assembly”:

- ◆ Elizabeth B. offered to visit other groups throughout the state and share how Assembly helps her and offer encouragement for members to attend. Also, she will enquire what keeps members from attending. Rural areas might prove to be a problem.

- ◆ We spoke about encouraging DRs to delegate responsibilities to members of their districts to serve at Assembly and appeal to the fact that their help is needed and wanted.
- ◆ For those who may feel overwhelmed by jumping into service we spoke about reminding others that it's rewarding to try something new and also it's okay to make mistakes. There is always someone to help out.
- ◆ Rather than mention, "If you want to find out what your defects are just do service work," we encourage the positive by sharing how service work is an opportunity for personal growth and self-confidence. Share these types of experiences.
- ◆ Help newcomers and GRs feel they belong and show how important they are by buddying up with them at Assembly doing service work.
- ◆ Asking people directly to step up for a service position.

We did not set any specific goals to accomplish. Our decision, as a group, was to return to the April Area Assembly with our ideas and brainstorm an action. There were approximately 12 members.

Fellowship Communications Committee: La Treasure Chest (LATC) Editor position was vacant for part of the year, report submitted by Erika R., immediate past LATC Editor

Thirteen members were in attendance. Members of the committee will go back to their districts for a "procedural" inventory regarding Conference-Approved Literature (CAL), asking questions/considering the following:

1. Does each group have a Literature Chair or books for sale? (If neither, do they direct members to where they can be bought?)
2. Have available a listing of CAL available for sale
3. Make announcements in meetings regarding pamphlets, books, and *The Forum* for awareness
4. Chair meetings using different CAL for topics, and *The Forum*
5. Electronic options available for some CAL and *The Forum*
6. Share books and copies of *The Forum*
7. Display CAL and *The Forum* in meetings
8. Promote CAL and *The Forum*
9. Groups can choose to buy books and donate them to public libraries

Next meeting will have a review of inventory to create more refined goals. By next Assembly, we should have resolution of sending newsletters to members.

Membership Outreach Committee: Newcomer Orientation Coordinator position was vacant for part of the year, no report

Public Outreach Committee: Public Outreach Coordinator position is vacant, no report

Budget & Finance Committee: Lisa A., Budget & Finance Coordinator—absent, report submitted by Carmen O.

Five members were in attendance. Lisa A., the new Budget & Finance Coordinator, just accepted the position, so was not present. We discussed the Delegate's Expense Fund and whether to take the advance or be reimbursed for expenses submitted. We also discussed the

need for an annual budget to be voted on by the Assembly. The goals set at this meeting included:

1. Making a budget
2. Write a mission statement for the committee
3. To identify other “appropriate members” for the committee (who identifies—delegate, chairperson)

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:** Alyson M., Alternate Chair

- ◆ Area checking account signatures: motion was rescinded at last Assembly, but nothing was decided to replace it. This issue will be presented at the next AWSC meeting for consideration for now.
- ◆ Policies & Procedures Handbook Thought Force (Rachel B.): this is to gather information about whether it would be beneficial for the Area to create and develop a handbook of our policies and procedures that are not covered by the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27)
- ◆ Safety in Alateen Meetings Thought Force (Danielle H.): the goal is to create guidelines, rather than mandates, for Alateen groups; anyone interested in joining this thought force, please contact Danielle H., District 15 Representative (district15@la-al-anon.org)
- ◆ Safety in Al-Anon meetings and the July 2018 Chairperson of the Board (COB) letter: (the letter can be accessed on the WSO website: [al-anon.org/for-members/board-of-trustees/chairperson-letter-archives](http://al-anon.org/for-members/board-of-trustees/chairperson-letter-archives)) for clarification, our Area is not being asked by WSO or the Board of Trustees to create a policy regarding safety at Al-Anon meetings. The Area Officers do not see a need for the Area to take action on this issue right now; groups are free to discuss safety for their own meetings.

**NEW BUSINESS:** Alyson M., Alternate Chair

- ◆ Election of a new Alternate Chairperson: Susan A. (current District 10 DR) was elected
- ◆ Holding a virtual State Convention in 2020:

Convention report: Duke H., Convention Chair; full report submitted in writing and posted to Area website, the following is the first two sections of the report. This report was given orally prior to discussing the new business of holding a virtual State Convention in 2020.

- ♣ Directives: Panel 57’s Membership Outreach Action Committee requested the following changes for the Convention:
  - ♣ Make money, or break even, but stop losing money. The convention fund is low.
  - ♣ Include members from as many locales as possible to serve on the committee.
  - ♣ Move workshops away from a lecture format and toward a participatory format.

- ♣ Accomplishments: Initially, the greatest accomplishment by the Committee was being ready to host a convention by the time of the Assembly that was scheduled for March 28<sup>th</sup>, despite being formed only two months earlier. Remarkably, the Committee shaved \$3,500 in costs from the Convention, moved the hospitality suite beside the main speaker space, replaced one workshop with eight breakout sessions, streamlined the schedule so that attendees no longer needed to rush to and from the elevators, improved the banquet, and included artwork and skits from AFG members from across the Area. In time, the most significant accomplishment was the ability to adapt as circumstances changed (and kept changing) after COVID-19 arrived. As numerous authorities offered recommendations, the Committee continued its work. Even after it became apparent that a physical convention was no longer feasible, Committee members continued to serve in the hope of bringing a virtual (aka remote) convention to members of our Area. This devotion is reflected in the three Knowledge-Based Decision Making (KBDM) documents that the Committee produced. The crowning achievement of Committee members is their loving commitment to serving the fellowship. This was commented upon by numerous members from other areas who interacted with the Committee. The Convention Coordinator hopes that the Assembly will allow the Convention Committee to fulfill its primary purpose of hosting a convention for members throughout our Area and beyond.

Motion 2020-05:

*Matter under consideration:* Holding a virtual State Convention in 2020

*Wording of Motion:* To move forward with a virtual LA AFG State Convention in 2020

*Motion made by:* Steve G., GR; *seconded by:* Clara E., GR

31 voting GRs; yes: 26, no: 5; abstain: 0

*Motion passed*

- ◆ Area fund-raising calendar: no discussion at this time, but to be continued later

Alternate Chair's report: Alyson M., Alternate Chair

- ◆ Chairperson for AA (Molly) emailed July 15, 2020 on the following: "The contract for 2021/2022 has been signed and here the dates:  
2021: March 27-28; May 22-23; Aug 21-22; Nov 6-7  
2022: Jan 15-16; April 9-10; Aug. 20-21; Nov. 5-6  
\*Dates are subject to change\*
- ◆ First Virtual Assembly: 73 Participants. We discussed the map of district borders and importance of knowing districts in order to join the appropriate action committee.

Assembly was closed with a moment of silence, followed by the Serenity Prayer and the AI-Anon Declaration.