

OHIO AL-A- NOTES

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Dear Family

It has been an honor and a privilege to serve as your Delegate for the past three years. We all had no idea what 2020 was going to bring. But I believe that all the difficulties we have encountered have allowed us to expand our vision as we look forward to the future of Al-Anon in Ohio and worldwide.

We are learning that we are capable of sharing our experience, strength and hope via electronic means when face-to-face is not possible by using our phones, tablets and computers, and now with a dedicated Al-Anon Family Groups Mobile App <https://al-anon.org/formembers/members-resources/mobile-app/>

As I take on my new position as your Chair for the next three years, I am asking for your help by participating in Area meetings and functions. You will be getting information in January and February via your CMA (all groups need to have their current one up-to-date with WSO and our Area Group Records) and can find on the area website <https://ohioal-anon.org/calendar.html> about some Zoom events that will offer information about how to have fun in service as well as give you a chance to ask questions about anything related to Al-Anon happenings from your trusted servants. Service (carrying the message) is our 12th Step and our Third Legacy (Concepts). It is only by risking saying yes to a service request that I have truly grown in understanding and able to begin to practice truly unconditional love. I am far from perfect in that regard. It has been the taking on service responsibilities that has allowed me to experience the joy of learning to both receive and give the gifts of serenity and peace that the loving interchange among members brings. (continued page 2)

Looking forward to hearing from you and seeing you on Zoom in 2021 where we will put into effect the 2021 Conference theme.

- **Moving Forward with Unity, Courage and Perseverance**
- **Avancemos con unidad, valor y perseverancia**
- **Allons de l'avant unite, courage et perseverance**

I will end by wishing all a safe and happy holiday season.

Theresa M.

Delegate, Panel 58, Ohio

GREETINGS FROM YOUR Alternate Delegate Panel 61 Ann F

I am Ann Ferguson, an incredibly grateful member of the worldwide fellowship of Al-Anon and Alateen. I am also your Panel 61 Alternate Delegate and Newsletter Coordinator. Although I have been a member of Al-Anon for many years and have had a variety of service roles (GR, DR, District Treasurer, local AA Convention Liaison, to name a few) I feel as if I am stepping off into uncharted territory with this position. It is scary. Do I have enough knowledge? Will I be able to do what is required? I do not have the answers, but I do know this:

I have received more from Al-Anon than I can ever give back.

I am not getting any younger

As the pandemic seems to close in around us, I have an abundance of time for service. It says on page 343 of ODAT, "I will not forget that the possibilities of this vast spiritual program are limitless for me, I still have much to learn."

Thank you for the opportunity to learn and serve.

Notes from the Alternate Delegate Panel 58 - Jo S.

- **As I type this, the final edition of AI-A-Notes for this panel, I think back to the very first one I did and how unprepared I felt. The last two years have been such a time of growth for me in so many ways. Remembering things like, I CAN ask for help when I am feeling overwhelmed; I can change to a format I am more comfortable with and it is OK if things are not perfect, (one of my character defects).**

I have learned so much in the past 2 years and this is true of every service position I have had. Having the opportunity to learn more on what a wonderful fellowship we are; I felt like I could take the next step and stand for Delegate for Panel 61. With all the service positions I have held in my many years of AI-Anon, this one must be the scariest. When I find myself feeling overwhelmed, I remember that I am NEVER alone, I can ask for help and in time I will learn.

I look forward to serving as your delegate and I thank you for this opportunity to continue in this fellowship that has saved my life.

From your Chairperson—

Thank you for the opportunity to serve as your Chairman the last two years. While the last year was not what I had planned on, we as an Area have risen to the challenges that the Covid-19 pandemic has caused. All our business meetings were done via Zoom conferencing. A small, dedicated bunch of AI-Anon members volunteered their services on the Tech Crew to make our assemblies run smoothly. We adapted and had the business portion of the Spring Assembly in one meeting and a separate day for the Delegate's sharing. Besides the Fall AWSC, we provided Zoom meetings to become acquainted with Coordinator and Officer positions in preparation for our 2-day Fall Assembly elections. In October, we successfully used Zoom conferencing

Meet our new Officers

Secretary- Mary Jo M

I am Mary Jo M. a grateful member of Al-Anon for 16 years. I work with a personal sponsor, an email/phone Step sponsor and at least two informal service sponsors. I attend two daily phone meetings and three weekly meetings. I am having a blast discovering new meetings and meeting people from all around the globe. It is amazing and humbling to me how our "outside issue" has opened the worldwide fellowship of Al-Anon to me. I recently led a meeting in Kazakhstan, it is in Central Asia. I had to look at a map! I can count among some of my closest Al-Anons all around this precious world of ours.

Thank you for accepting me as the Ohio Area Secretary starting January 1, 2021.

Currently, I am also liaison to the Ohio Area for Greater Cleveland Al-Anon Council and the editor of incredibly fun and informative newsletter Al-Anon HiLites. If you are interested in receiving this newsletter or have something you would like to share, please e-mail me at hilites.clrv.ais@gmail.com. I am also a GR and CMA for my home group Brooklyn Friday as well as Dr for District 5.

Panel 61 officers

Delegate Jo S

Alternate Delegate and Newsletter Editor Ann F.

Area Chair Theresa M.

Area Secretary Mary Jo M

Area Treasurer Merri G

Below are our newly elected Coordinators

Group Records Shelly C.

Forum Cathy C.

Literature Irena H.
Alateen Sara M.
Public Outreach Sheri B.
Archives Open Service Opportunity

Standing Committee Chairs

AAPP Carmen I.
Handbook Ginny C
Two Day Fall/OAC Sandy F
Web Master Mike K.
Registration Open Service Opportunity
Budget Open Service Opportunity
Review Open Service Opportunity

District News

The Districts of Miami Valley are “working the phones” so to speak. We are contacting every group in our service region to confirm: (1) A contact person (first name only); (2) A contact phone number; (3) group’s status, i.e., meeting in person, temporarily meeting on zoom, changed location, etc. It has been a rather daunting task as groups have not kept up their contact information, so there has been a lot of phone tag. As we get updated meeting information, we are updating our website and as we get updated contact information, we are updating our group records. That same information will be passed along to WSO as well. Submitted by Phil H. District 24

Notes from District 56- submitted by Chris M

Circle of Hope is meeting Saturday at 9:30 a.m. at Christmas Run Park. Please bring lawn chair and warm clothes as this is an outdoor meeting.

The Monday gratitude meeting is face to face at Saint James at 8:00 p.m. There is a meeting on Zoom at the same time.

The following meetings have been suspended due to Pandemic: Thursday morning; Hand in Hand Friday.

The following meetings are on Zoom:

Adult Children Growing through AFG, Wednesday at noon

Thursday night 12 Step AFG at 7:00

Mansfield meetings are all on Zoom

NEW Year 2021: NEW Thoughts on Newcomers

By Sydney P. District 47

Last month I made a commitment to myself to attend 30 meetings in 30 days. During the visits to multiple meetings, I was struck again by the wide variety of differences in how newcomers are welcomed within Al-Anon groups.

So . . . I prepared a list of essential information for newcomers, and then had a discussion with my homegroup asking the following 4 questions: (Note: this is an “instant meeting”!)

1. What topics did you hear discussed in your first couple of Al-Anon meetings that really helped?
2. What feelings did you have in your first couple of Al-Anon meetings that kept you coming back?
3. What do you wish you would have heard in the first couple of Al-Anon meetings that you did not hear until later?
4. What do you think about having a group conscience about our home group giving a consistent message to newcomers?

Then, I updated my list and here it is:

In a newcomer's meeting (or meetings) the following topics are suggested:

1. **The purpose of Al-Anon** is to help families and friends who have been affected by someone else's drinking. Anyone can be a member, for free, with no strings attached.
2. **Al-Anon is an anonymous group** – what is said in the meetings and person to person is not discussed outside of the meeting. This provides safety for both the newcomers and the Al-Anon members to be able to participate without gossip and without fear.
3. **Alcoholism is a disease**, not a moral choice. Those persons around the disease are affected as well, and thus we call alcoholism **a family disease**. We can choose to hate the disease and still love the alcoholic.
4. **The 3 C's** – I am not the cause of the alcoholism; I cannot cure the alcoholic or the alcoholism; I cannot control the alcoholic.
5. **Al-Anon keeps the focus on us** (not the alcoholic); we try to address: how we can become healthier and/or better able to cope with someone else's drinking (whether the drinking is currently in our lives or has directly affected our life in the past)? Often this involves our becoming kinder to ourselves, more loving, and more accepting.
6. **In Al-Anon we learn about tools** and we practice using these tools to live our lives:
 - a. *Slogans* like "one day at a time" . . . or "live and let live".
 - b. *Al-Anon Literature* like daily readers or the book How Al-Anon Works.
 - c. *The 12 steps* (12 traditions and 12 concepts) (We often study one per month throughout the year.) Starting with step 1, January, (we are powerless), step 2 ...
 - d. *Sponsorship* (a relationship with a more experienced Al-Anon member; not for advice but for a sounding board and/or mentor).
 - e. *Topics* like detachment, gratitude, take what you like and leave the rest.
 - f. *A power greater than ourselves*. Al-Anon is a spiritual program but not associated with any specific religion or set of religious beliefs.
 - g. *The Serenity Prayer*: praying to a higher power for serenity, acceptance, courage, change, wisdom, knowledge.
 - h. *Meetings* where we can hear the experience, strength, and hope of Al-Anon members who choose to share.
7. Last but not least: Ask the newcomer if they have any questions and/or if they want to share anything.

Welcome the newcomer with good listening skills and empathy; think back to when you were a newcomer.

Some of the feelings shared at my home group meeting (in response to question 2 above) included an overwhelming acceptance, validation, kindness, relief, hope, respect, and a sincere genuine welcome.

So . . . that is my list (with the help of my home group). I have a few other thoughts to share.

Often, each newcomer can be given a “newcomer’s packet” or be encouraged to contact the WSO at www.al-anon.org/welcome which will send them a “newcomer’s packet” (hard copy). Most groups, who meet in person, have a variety of pamphlets available for newcomers for free. Some groups give a hard copy list of meetings in the area. My home group gives the book How Al-Anon Works to newcomers. It was suggested that a welcoming gift of one of the daily readers could be given, and/or where to obtain other Al-Anon pamphlets and literature (particularly in the age of “zoom” meetings).

Some groups have “formal” newcomer meetings before or after the regular meeting; they might discuss the topics (above) over 4-6 weeks. Many groups informally meet with the newcomers after the meeting. Each Al-Anon group (using the traditions and concepts of service) finds the path that is “right” for their autonomous group.

Writing these thoughts down has given my home group food for thought. I hope it does the same for yours.

2021 Dates to Remember (this list will be updated!)

Spring AWSC and Spring Assembly will both be in a Zoom platform. More information will be sent out in the new year

AWSC Saturday March 20th

Spring Assembly May 15th

Delegates Day of Sharing- this date will be announced later.

