

# Open Lines

Ontario South Assembly Newsletter

<http://al-anon.alateen.on.ca/>

December 2020

Volume 42 Issue 3

## Statement of Purpose

Open Lines is published three times a year by Ontario South Assembly. This newsletter presents service related news and information to Al-Anon groups in Ontario South to help keep them informed. Personal sharings of recovery should be sent to the Forum.

### Subscription Rates:

If you wish to receive a copy in the mail, subscription rates for copies mailed in Canada are \$4.50 (1 year) and \$8.00 (2 years). Please send a request for NEW SUBSCRIPTIONS / RENEWALS to: [openlinesosa@gmail.com](mailto:openlinesosa@gmail.com).

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## Quick Links for Ontario South

[Group Records Change Form](#)

The donation form is currently unavailable. If you wish to make a donation, make cheques payable to Ontario South Assembly and send to P.O. box 1151, Guelph, ON, N1H 6N3

[Form C for SAMS](#)

[Literature Order Forms](#) - To access the two versions of the Literature Order Form (Literature Order Form printable or Literature Order Form fillable) please go to <http://al-anon.alateen.on.ca/literature/> and use the side bar or go to the bottom of the page for the links.

## Al-Anon Declaration

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.*

## Districts in Ontario South

District 1.....	Muskoka
District 2.....	Georgian Bay
District 3.....	Bruce County
<a href="#">District 4</a> .....	Waterloo Region
District 5.....	Huron Perth
<a href="#">District 6</a> .....	London Region
District 7.....	Sarnia Region
<a href="#">District 8</a> .....	Windsor/Essex
District 9.....	Chatham Region
District 10.....	Elgin Region
District 11.....	Brantford
District 12.....	Niagara Region
District 13.....	St. Catharines
<a href="#">District 14</a> .....	Hamilton
District 16.....	Mississauga, Oakville
District 17.....	Upper Peel-Halton
District 18.....	Dufferin, York, Simcoe
District 19.....	Toronto North
District 20.....	Toronto West
District 21.....	Toronto Central
District 22.....	Scarborough
District 23.....	Lakeshore
District 24.....	Kawartha
District 25.....	Quinte
District 26.....	St. Lawrence Region
District 27.....	Seaway Valley
<a href="#">District 28</a> .....	Ottawa
District 30.....	Upper Ottawa Valley
District 31.....	Loyalist
District 32.....	Kawartha South

[Ontario South Website](#)

## Ontario South Delegate Report November 2020

I want to take this opportunity to say how grateful I am to have been able to represent Ontario South Assembly these past 3 years.

It has truly been a growing experience for me.

Thank you to all those who have been of service to Ontario South Assembly. You have helped to create a strong and vital Area.

By now many of you have taken on new service positions. Congratulations.

If you are still looking for a service position, you may wish to consider the role of Coordinator at the Area level. Information on those roles can be found in the Ontario South Assembly Manual (section 2B)

My responsibilities as Delegate:

### WORLD SERVICE OFFICE (WSO) RELATED

- Preparing for the Canadian Delegate meeting on November 21, which will include our Incoming Delegate.
- Participated in the Regional Committee on Trustees
- Continued to monitor my Communities on AFG Connects
- Connected with my Trustee to discuss the July Chairperson of the Board (COB) letter
- Beginning to prepare and submit to World Service Conference (WSC) the Chosen Agenda Items for 2021 WSC
- Continuing to participate with the Literature Committee, reviewing submissions for Al-Anon's new daily reader and attending meetings via Zoom
- Communicated with WSO regarding various questions I received from Ontario South members
- Participated in a WEBEX meeting, by sharing my 3 minute talk, (which outgoing Delegates normally share at WSC) at a special online opportunity created by WSO

### ONTARIO SOUTH RELATED

- Received and responded to District Minutes
- Responded to Ontario South members emails
- Shared various emails with Alternate Delegate
- Began handover process with Incoming Delegate
- Participated in decision making process regarding 2020 Virtual Assembly and transfer of hotel contract to 2023
- Attended 2020 Virtual Assembly
  - WSC Delegate's Report power point presentation
  - Created hand-out highlighting WSC report
  - Power point presentation for "Road Trip You and Your Board Connect" Discussion Item
- Participated in site selection of 2021 Area Assembly
- Attended Literature Distribution Committee Zoom meetings
- Passed on non-member requests for Al-Anon meeting information to Alternate Delegate
- Collected "success and concerns" from members, groups, and districts to use for Area Highlights at 2021 WSC
- Submitting report for December Open Lines
- Communicated various information from WSO to AWSC Members
- Missed the opportunity to acquire a "Town Hall" meeting for Ontario South (AWSC members will be notified of the up-coming Zoom "Town Hall" meetings in the future)
- Brought member's Item for Consideration to Executive

During our Virtual 2020 Assembly various questions were presented.

I will attempt to answer some of the questions that were not answered that weekend.

1. Who translates and produces Conference Approved Literature (CAL) in counties other than Canada, USA, Puerto Rico and Bermuda?

\*In the October Forum there is a sharing by Kerri K. Associate Director – International, that will answer that question.

2. How can a “Group” make a donation online to WSO?

\*Group contributions can be made online at [www.al-anon.org](http://www.al-anon.org) (click on Al-Anon Store and then Contribution)

3. How can more men be attracted to Al-Anon?

\*One way might be to send in sharings to the Forum from men already in Al-Anon.

\*Men already in Al-Anon, could also send in sharings to Tom Coffey, Associate Director – Literature, as he may use them in literature such as Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism.

\* Men already in Al-Anon could attend Public Outreach meetings to make sure their message is getting out to men.

4. Is the Canadian Thanksgiving taken into consideration when scheduling the October Board of Trustees (BOT) meeting?

\*As there are BOT members living in Canada, I would suggest that WSO would take our Thanksgiving into consideration.

Some members asked questions of me on Chat at Assembly and I may not have seen them.

If you chatted me a question and I have not responded please contact me at:

[ontariosouthdelegate@hotmail.com](mailto:ontariosouthdelegate@hotmail.com)

Blessings,

Sue G

Ontario South Delegate

(Signing off)

## FORUM / ALT. DELEGATE REPORT

This is my final report as the form coordinator to Ontario South Assembly.

I first want to thank everyone who participated in our first ever virtual Assembly. It was exciting to make history with all of you who attended. My hope is that we will all be together in person again sooner rather than later. Aside from responding to emails and questions and following AFG Connects it has been quiet. I made a challenge to the membership to hold writing workshops and send submissions to WSO to be printed in the Forum. You took on the challenge and sent in your sharings of experience, strength and hope.

As the Alternate delegate I had the privilege to attend Assembly and to be witness to Al-Anon Service in action. As an Executive we met a few times in preparation for the Assembly. I love this program and the people in it. Thank you for allowing me to serve and encouraging me throughout this term.

Lastly, I want to invite anyone interested in being a Coordinator to please reach out to me. Maybe you know someone you think would be great as a coordinator, please encourage them to reach out. We are still looking for members willing to serve Ontario South.

Thank you again for all you do to keep the doors of Al-Anon open and for being there “when anyone anywhere reaches out for help”. I wish you all a safe and peaceful journey as we walk through the last days of 2020 together.

Gwen D

Forum Coordinator & Alternate Delegate OSA

Ontario South Literature Office Committee (LOC) Report for Open Lines

**Literature Office Committee Update October 2020**

- Office continues to be open each Wednesday 10:00am to 1:00pm.
- New Price List adjusted October 2020. New order form available on Ontario South website and through District Representatives.
- 2020 Winter Closure-----The office will close for two Wednesdays, December 30<sup>th</sup> 2020 and January 6<sup>th</sup> 2021.  
(Last day office open December 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2020 & Reopens January 13<sup>th</sup>, 2021)
- Phone and email available 24/7 however only answered during business hours. email: [os.literature.distribution@gmail.com](mailto:os.literature.distribution@gmail.com) Phone: 613-283-1249
- 2021 AWSC meeting pre-order cut-off date yet to be determined on status of AWSC
- Any further updates will be made available through our links of service forwarded through our Area secretary and posted on our Ontario South Website.

As reported at our 2020 Assembly the October 2020 updated literature order form shows reduced pricing on our most ordered books and many of our pamphlets including our Newcomer Package.

Please make sure you use the most recently updated forms found on our Ontario South Website. There are two forms, a printable one and a fillable one. Dated October 2020.

<http://al-anon.alateen.on.ca/literature/>

I would like to share my personal debt of gratitude to our Ontario South Literature Distribution Manager (LDC) Linda P., who with her continued dedication has served us with such commitment and devotion. We are honoured and privileged for her service

The Ontario South members who have served on the Literature Office Committee this term (2018-19-20) have brought their experience, dedication, flexibility, and passion to support Ontario South during these unusual times in the best interest of our fellowship. Our Ontario South Members Jane H. (Preceding past Delegate), Sue G. (Current Delegate) Marg K. (Ontario South Treasurer) Mary Ellen B. (Literature Coordinator) Jim M. (elected DR) served through some definitely unusual circumstances. Their service has been sincerely appreciated.

It has been an honour to serve Ontario South Al-Anon as Chairperson of the Literature Office Committee and I look forward to 2021 when our new Committee embarks on the continued journey of serving Ontario South Al-Anon.

*With gratitude*

*Debbie P.*

*Ontario South*

*Literature Office Committee Chairperson*

[debbieturnitover@hotmail.com](mailto:debbieturnitover@hotmail.com)

## PUBLIC OUTREACH REPORT NOVEMBER 2020

### Information about the PSA's from WSO:

We have received many requests for the PSA distribution and airplay lists. Historically, at the launch of a new PSA campaign, WSO provided the lists to members and asked for their help to deliver the Al-Anon message of hope to their local TV and radio stations. This year, we have held off in publishing these lists because of recent information from our new PSA vendor that required a discussion among the Public Outreach Committee.

First, it is important to note that our previous contracts for distribution were limited to 1,000 TV and 2,770 radio stations, as costs associated with producing and physically mailing copies impacted the number of stations we could contact. Our current vendor's contract is for electronic distribution to all Nielsen-tracked TV and radio stations in US and Canada. Previously, it was necessary for members to reach out to stations that were not on the distribution list to fill in the gap and encourage those stations to play our PSAs. Given the scope of our new contract, the gap no longer exists.

In fact, our efforts of cold-calling TV and radio station managers now could work against the efforts being made by our distribution vendor. Not only do they send the PSAs out electronically, but they also follow up with emails and phone calls to encourage stations to play our PSAs. Additionally, some stations have reached out requesting that we no longer send thank you notes, as opening the additional mail requires staff resources that could be used for other tasks important to the success of their station.

The early results from the first 55 days have shown significant improvement, with 12,473 airplays, compared to just 5,403 a year ago, including airplays in all of the top ten designated market areas (DMAs) which include: New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Philadelphia, Dallas, San Francisco, Atlanta, Houston, Washington D.C., and Boston. For comparison, last year's campaign was not aired in any of the top ten DMAs. DMAs are ranked based on the population. Even in an election year, we are seeing record number of airplays and broad reach to include 74% of the top 100 DMAs in North America.

*Based on this information, the PO Committee recommended and the Executive Committee approved members' involvement in the PSA Public Outreach Project to be limited to maintaining existing media relationships and outreach to other non-media outlets such as movie theaters, schools, and institutions, or sharing the PSAs with their social media networks.*

Please help by sharing this information to members in your Area. This message will be posted to the AFG Announcements community later this week and will be included in In The Loop on December 4, 2020.

If you have members who already have commitments from stations to play our PSAs have them email us at [media@al-anon.org](mailto:media@al-anon.org) and we'll make sure our vendor connects with them to ensure they are able to access the spots.

My question to WSO

Good morning Scot,

Could you please share how the fellowship can post the PSA's on their social media, as suggested for members involvement in the PSA Public Outreach Project. I am not sure if there is a way to share on social media without breaking my anonymity? If this is possible could you please share how this could be accomplished?

Thank you for your service

Be well, Trust God

Kristine

Outgoing PO Coordinator for Ontario South

The reply

Kristine,

That is a great question, and it's a question many members have.

Our organization is mission-driven to provide help and hope to families of alcoholics. By comparison the American Diabetes Association is a mission-driven organization to educate the public about diabetes and to help those affected by it through funding research to manage, cure and prevent diabetes. Now I am very active in social media, I 'like' both of these organization's Facebook pages. I have not revealed anything more

than these are two organizations I happen to feel are important. If I share a piece of their content; a picture, a post, a video - I only reveal that I find something interesting enough to share with my social network. I have not revealed anything about my AI-Anon membership or my health for that matter. You can make any assumptions about me you like, but I have not expressed any information that would break my anonymity.

We are accustomed to speaking from our own point of view in meetings, but in public outreach the best way to speak without breaking our anonymity is to speak in the 3rd person, with factual statements - things anyone could find freely on our website. AI-Anon offers help to people affected by someone's drinking.

A way to share the video and provide a little context might look something like this.

"The holidays can be a hard time from some. I'm sharing this video about families of alcoholics. Feel free to pass it on, so anyone who might need them can see this and get help."

I was able to share the content, provide a possible action for them to take without breaking my anonymity.

I hope this helps.

Scot P

Associate Director -- Digital Strategy

Another Coordinator's reply

Hello Kristine,

I recall Scot P. writing about this last year and unless it's changed or been added to, here's what I have:

"Members would not be posting the PSA. But members who follow the WSO social media pages, are welcome to hit the share button and share the WSO post.

This does a couple things:

1. This increases the reach of our PSAs as members share and people within the members networks share again.
2. Sharing content is harmless, think about all the content providers out in Social Media - sharing their content is just showing you found something you liked and wanted to pass it along.

Otherwise if the member uploads it themselves - the content (PSAs) now comes directly from them and not from AI-Anon; this would be a violation of Tradition Eleven.

I just want to remind you there is a significant difference in the words "sharing" and "posting".

Posting is someone adding **new** content to the social media ecosystem. Such as uploading a photo, video or text for their followers.

Sharing is sharing **someone else's** post by hitting the share button -- this is the start of things going "viral".

The more shares we get, the more people are exposed to our message.

The issue regarding Tradition 11 is when a member posts new content, such as the PSA, which would only come from people with some level of access would thereby make it easier for someone to make the connection.

However, if a service arm Facebook page, were to make a post, this would not break anonymity as the post would come from the Service Arm and not from an individual member. With that said, it would be great if our PSAs went viral!"

So I read this as we members can directly SHARE the PSAs from the WSO website directly, but NOT DOWNLOAD and POST ourselves.

This would break our anonymity. It would also break our anonymity if we shared the PSA from WSO and added that we are a member.

Instead just sharing the PSA lets others know what AI-Anon is and what AI-Anon does. (which outreach is about: attracting not promoting).

MY QUESTION TO WSO  
GOOD AFTERNOON SCOT,

THANK YOU FOR THE REPLIES. SOMETHING DOESN'T FEEL RIGHT, I AM NOT SURE WHAT BUT I HAVE LEARNED IN AL-ANON TO TALK TO EACH OTHER REASON THINGS OUT, WHICH I AM DOING. MORE QUESTIONS MAY ARISE.

COULD YOU GUIDE ME AS TO HOW THE INFORMATION WITH ABOUT THE PSA'S TRANSLATES TO ONTARIO SOUTH?

BE WELL, TRUST GOD

KRISTINE

OUTGOING PO FOR ONTARIO SOUTH

I SHALL SEND THE REPLY TO THE DR'S  
YOURS IN SERVICE OF AL-ANON/ALATEEN  
BE WELL TRUST GOD  
KRISTINE B

### Literature Coordinator's Report

Hello All,

I received an update from WSO Tom Coffeey with a *new link for newcomers during the pandemic.*

**Please see this new information below & adjust your records accordingly.**

Greetings from your World Service Office. Thanks for your question regarding electronic newcomers' information. Please inform newcomers to use this vanity URL to sign up to receive the welcome information: [al-anon.org/welcome](http://al-anon.org/welcome)

The member will be prompted to enter a personal email address to where the digital information will be immediately delivered. Please share this in your meetings and include it in your meeting formats when welcoming new members.

This information is only available in English at this time but is in the process of being translated into Spanish and French. It will be announced once it is ready.

Thanks for all you do as a Literature Coordinator. Best wishes for continued peace and serenity in the Al-Anon program.

Yours in Service,  
Tom

On another note:

I am going to miss this role as Literature Coordinator. It has been a privilege to serve Ontario South in this capacity and I look forward to where my Higher Power leads me in further service & life opportunities.

Sincerely,

Mary Ellen B  
Area 86 Literature Coordinator

## **Report from the Area Alateen Process Person**

Hello. I am your current Area Alateen Process Person (AAPP). I use the word current as my three year term in this service position is coming to an end. Is it three years already? I truly was confused in the first year as I learned the AI-Anon World Service Office (WSO) program, the process, and responsibilities. I learned to be flexible and to learn on the job. And sure enough, things got done. Our Area met the annual deadline the last three years. I am proud of having a part in this.

What is next for the AAPP role? If anyone is considering applying for this coordinator position, please do give me a call. I am happy to tell you about the role. You need basic computer and email skills, be able to receive mail, be able to go to a post office every month or so. You need a few hours a month, more in the spring and summer. And more during the first six months to attend WSO webinars for training on their system. I am available for questions at any time. I am completing an itemized list of the process of the AAPP role.

The AAPP is invited to the Area World Service Conference (AWSC) each year as well as the Area Assembly. You are asked to provide reports at these events, for the Open Lines issues, and for the Area Executive meetings.

Right now, we have eleven Alateen groups and seventy-four Supportive AI-Anon Members (SAMs). These are AI-Anon members certified by WSO, through the AAPP, to assist Alateens in our Area. Before COVID-19 we had a few more groups and SAMs.

I am very grateful for the great learning experience I had as AAPP. We are never alone in AI-Anon. There is always a friendly, informed member ready to help. That was my experience. Thank you.

Sandy O  
Area Alateen Process Person, Area 86

## **Assembly Chairperson Report**

Dear fellow members in Ontario South,

What an incredible journey this term has been. Approaching the end of my time in service as your Chairperson, I continue to be humbled and filled with gratitude by the gift you gave me and the trust you placed in me, three years ago. Thank you.

Our Area's first virtual Assembly appears by all accounts to have been a success! We all had a steep learning curve, but thanks in large part to your Group Representatives' patience and willingness to learn new ways of conducting the business of the Area, we were able to approve a budget for 2021 and elect a new Executive, along with the other business on the agenda.

Your outgoing Executive is currently wrapping up the final few tasks of our term before we rotate out in January. These include organizing the handover meeting for your new Executive and Co-ordinators, preparing our documents and supplies for our successors, and responding to the Items for Consideration submitted at our Assembly.

If you don't currently have a service position or a place in our fellowship where you are helping our doors (either real or virtual) to remain open for those coming after us, I hope you'll consider finding a role or asking your fellow members how you can help. If nothing else, I'll enjoy continuing to see you active in service. :)

Thank you, again, for these past three years in service. I wish you health and happiness in 2021 and beyond.

Yours in Service,  
Jason W.,  
Ontario South Assembly Chairperson

## ASSEMBLY 2020 ASK IT BASKET

### QUESTION 1

Seeing as we are in uncharted territory with the impact of covid on meetings, I'm looking for guidance regarding a specific issue within our meeting. The church has deemed Alanon meetings as an essential service and has opened its doors for members to attend face to face again. Some members feel strongly that we need to return to in person meetings, while others prefer to remain on zoom. We had a group conscience vote and the majority of the members voted to remain on zoom 9 / 5. One member of our meeting declared that they are returning to the church to be there for newcomers and members without zoom capabilities. There was then a discussion about which meeting would have the actual name of our meeting on the Ontario South website - how we can't have two separate meetings with the same name - that the treasury funds go back to the face to face meeting - that the zoom meeting would need to be a completely separate meeting...

-Is it true that we aren't able to have our meeting split into two meetings with the same name; one virtual, one in person?

-How do specifics about the meeting get decided?

-Does the face to face meeting take priority over the electronic meeting?

-What does a meeting do if a unanimous group conscious vote is disregarded?

We do not have the option of the face to face meeting being a hybrid, as there is no internet access at the church.

### RESPONSE

Group decisions are guided by the Traditions and Concepts. Please refer to Traditions 1, 2 and 4. Please refer to the following information update published by the World Service Office regarding COVID 19 and the meeting of All Family Groups. <https://al-anon.org/pdf/covid19-info.pdf>

### QUESTION 2

How much does the WSO spend on each group and what does this cover? My group would like to know how WSO helps every group and the cost per group so that we may contribute the correct amount to WSO.

### RESPONSE

The information is available in the World Service 2020 Conference Summary (included in the Treasurer's Report). It is also available at the back of the quarterly appeal letter. A copy of this is on the WSO website.

### QUESTION 3

A newcomer had attended 3 online meetings in the fall and volunteered to be the groups treasurer. She was the only person to volunteer. Some members expressed concerns that this person was too new to be burdened with a responsible position that involved finances, citing that AA insists someone have 3 months recovery before taking on the role of treasurer. We were unable to find an AI Anon reference to any limitations on service. Please advise-with thanks.

### RESPONSE

Each AI-Anon group may decide if there is a minimum service requirement for service positions. Please check your Group's minutes of business meetings. Check the WSO manual page 59, Group Service Positions. Please consider Traditions 2 and 10.

### QUESTION 4

How much is the WSO prudent reserve? How much are we into this? 10%, 20%?

### RESPONSE

Please refer to the 2019 Audit page 17 - which is part of the Financial information on the AI-anon WSO.org website for information about the reserve amount.

### **QUESTION 5**

How do we, as a group, deal with a newcomer who has attended several zoom meetings while driving (with video on) without compromising the 3 obstacles and engaging in either gossip or directing and managing? Several members were upset, as the GR I stated that I would try to avoid giving advice and speak to the attendee in private and share my concern for her safety. She proceeded to join the next meeting in the same way.

### **RESPONSE**

The traditions are a good source of guidance for how to solve group problems. "2. For our group purpose there is but one authority- a loving God as He may express himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants - they do not govern." "5. Each Al-anon family group has but one purpose: to help families of alcoholics." A group conscience which includes a respectful conversation will help your group come to a good approach. To avoid gossip, the group can focus on how this behaviour affects the functioning of the group.

### **QUESTION 6**

Does our area have voted on policies and specifically financial policies?

If not, perhaps we could vote on and/or form a committee to draft some policies.

If so, who and when are these policies voted on (GRs/DRs/just executives)? Where can we find these policies?

Thank you!

### **RESPONSE**

Ontario South has a policy manual. It can be accessed at: [Area Policy Manual – Al-Anon Alateen – Ontario South](#). Specifically, motions about finances can be found in sections 6A and 6B. Section 8 is about Finances.

### **QUESTION 7**

My group voted for me to donate specifically to the assembly committee in lieu of the registrations you're missing out on. Could you please let me know how to do that?

### **RESPONSE**

Information can be found on the Ontario South website (<http://al-anon.alateen.on.ca>) and reference the Ontario South Assembly Policy and Guidelines Manual. Section 10- Form D. (Donation Form). If you do not have access to electronic forms, please ask your District Rep.

## **Open Lines Report**

I would like to thank you all for your patience, your encouragement, your guidance and your support over the past three years. It has been a pleasure to have been of service to Ontario South and to all Al-Anon members who read this newsletter.

In order to make the transition easier, I encourage all incoming GRs to make changes through Group Records as quickly as possible. There will be some glitches as there were during this term but it helps if information for each group is accurate. I understand that some people will wish to continue receiving Open Lines through the mail. Again it will help if information for each group is accurate. It cost \$3.00 on average to mail out a paper copy. When I first started sending out paper copies, I had ten that were returned to sender for a variety of reasons. Accurate information will eliminate these costs. Thank you.

Yours in service,  
Colleen K, Open Lines Coordinator



I was very pleased to attend my very first Assembly last month - from the comfort of my own home no less, which to me is one of the perks of Covid-19: I happened to be sick in that weekend (not Covid!) and would not have been able to attend it, had it been a normal, face-to-face Assembly. Of course I would have loved to truly meet 'in the flesh' everyone I communicate with as the Website Coordinator, but this will now be something to look forward for next year, if not sooner. This first Assembly also marked my first year in this position. I was asked to take the position after the previous trusted servant had to step down. So, now there is a new beginning of my first official 3-year rotation of service in this position... I thank all of you for your support!

### **What does a Website Coordinator do?**

This time I want to talk less about analytics and a bit more about the work that is part of this service position, as I experience it.

#### [Keeping meetings, events and other webpages updated](#)

When I started out in 2019, the primary focus was on getting our lists of meetings and events updated. At the same time I worked on a facelift of the website, after the original had been running for 21 years, using outdated website technology. This meant educating myself about how Wordpress works and getting into the world of websites. I learned so many new skills thanks to Al-Anon! Keeping meetings and events updated is still a major part of my daily website work - sometimes there are no notifications, sometimes there are multiple. The other pages are pretty static and stable, and most frequent changes come from others in service: our Delegate reports about her activities, the Literature Distribution Office updates their information and so forth.

#### [Processing information received via emails and online forms](#)

Email is still the main vehicle used by many members to notify me about group/meeting changes and general Al-Anon news. Fortunately, more and more of you also use the available online forms, which makes sending adjustments to the website and to the Group Records Coordinator a lot more time-efficient for all of us. The online forms we currently have for the website are:

- Request a change to my listing (on your meeting's details webpage)
- Group Records Registration and Changes form (a button on several of the webpages, where relevant)
- Upload a new event (with or without flyer)

#### [Technical assistance](#)

The Website Coordinator position naturally requires some affinity with technology and software. This is why one of my tasks, not directly website-related, is technical assistance during Area events such as AWSC and Assembly.

This year we created 4 Assembly-related online forms:

- Registration for Assembly
- Ask-it-basket
- Items for consideration
- Evaluation of Assembly

Creating these forms has now become an integral part of the Website Coordinator-toolkit and I feel lucky to have found such an easy platform to do this in the third party tool that WSO uses as well: Jotform. Many of these forms will be re-usable for years to come with just minor adjustments.

- Write-up and share (projected or screen-shared) motions
- Another task of the same type, not website-related, is to project / screen-share motions that come up during an Area-event. I use Microsoft Word for that after the motion is chatted to me during virtual meetings. In a face-to-face meeting I would probably be entering the motion from a handwritten note. Using Microsoft Word works well because it can be easily shared with the event-secretary for their files and reports.

### Writing reports

As coordinator at Area-level I am regularly required to write reports. What is in those reports serves multiple purposes. It narrates how I experience the pros and cons of the position, it gives an overview of how the budget is spent and, in my case, it gives some analytics about how the website is faring. As such it is an important instrument of accountability and clarification about 'the job'. Reporting is done for:

- the Area Executive (4-6 x per year)
- Assembly (1 x per year in writing and once in person during Assembly)
- AWSC (1 x per year and once in person during AWSC)
- Open Lines (3 x per year)

### Website maintenance

At the core of my position is regular website maintenance - even if there are no content changes there is always something to monitor. This requires scheduled time at regular intervals. I easily spend 1-5 hours on the website per week. It is built with the Wordpress platform. This is a bare-bones tool that requires a learning curve but is not technologically complex. It is a good place to start and to get the structure of the pages in place. But when the site needs to do something more elaborate, there are additional tools, often free, that I use. They are called plug-ins: you download them and 'plug them into the website' and you are ready to roll.

Some of the things I keep an eye on:

- Keep all technical tools (plug-ins, Wordpress version, etc) updated. The majority of updates have to do with either security or new features and need to be installed as quickly as possible.
- Guard against website attacks, e.g. with a dedicated plugin-tool called Wordfence. This tool warns me when we are under attack or when robot machines try to break our access credentials. It also alerts me when there are updates I need to install for plug-ins, the website theme and for Wordpress. I am using the free version.
- Monitor site performance, e.g. with Google Analytics and GoDaddy Support (the latter is our host provider). There is a bit of a learning curve here, but once you have a general understanding keeping up to date is not complex
- Monitor GoDaddy web-tools to blacklist the IP addresses that are linked to robot machines, involved in mass attacks and that kind of stuff \*
- Participate in Wordpress blogs as needed
- Participate in GitHub developer blogs (this is where the development team is for the meeting pages of our TSML-plugin)
- Keep my own set of skills updated for
  - a) New Word-press features
  - b) New plug-in features
- Read, participate in and contribute to AFG Connects, a service platform for questions and information, that I have access to as Website Coordinator. It is a great place to exchange knowledge and get answers to specific issues from others in the same service positions. It is also a great place to read more about WSO.
- Regularly double-check my meeting files against what is published online. I mostly update the pages AND the files separately and it is important to make sure they are all in sync. This double-checking is best done regularly because going through the complete list of posted meetings (311 at this time) using the Wordpress interface can take 3-4 hours. I make it a habit of doing regular checks when I adjust a meeting listing but every so often I export the meetings so that I can make a comparison on my own computer.

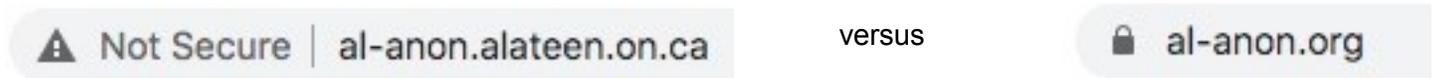
### \*A note about website attacks

The AI-Anon website is not a typical target for robot machines or individuals with malicious intentions. We do not offer anything for sale (no e-commerce), we do not allow comments, and, most importantly: we do not show any private details of any person. So why do we still get attacked? Today's target of attacks is focused on getting control of a website, blocking the owner(s) and then asking for ransom in bitcoins or money, for the owner regain control. Sometimes this is done by torpedoing a website with fake visitors, so that it crashes and it is taken off-line by the overwhelmed hosting provider. This is no joke. I personally know of several company websites this has happened to and much money and time and clientele were lost.

To protect Ontario South's website, we use credentials that are random and not easy to crack and we also apply 2-factor authentication. This means that when I access any layer of the website environment, a code is sent to a specific phone number, without which access is impossible. This gets a lot of the attackers off our backs.

- An additional note about SSL certificates and sites showing 'not secure' in the web address

A member recently asked me why our site address shows the term 'Not secure', as opposed to 'Secure'. Let me explain about that. When websites show 'secure' with the icon of a padlock, it means they are using a so-called SSL certificate.



SSL-certificates provide security for online communications by encrypting connections between the website visitor and the entity that hosts the website. It also authenticates the identity of the website so that the website visitor that the website is who they say they are. As explained above, our website does not participate in direct communication with individuals of any kind and does not store nor ask for sensitive personal details.

A comparison: the website of our World Service Organisation (WSO) as seen in the picture above. There is E-commerce on this website, as well as registration of personal details and also, it simply is a more visible, substantial and known website that could easily become a target without proper protection tools. It would not do to run that website without an SSL certificate.

But at this time the very nature of our much less complex Ontario Website does not make having a certificate (that can easily double the annual website budget) essential at this time.

### Working my AI-Anon program

It may seem that taking care of the website is an all-technical thing. But although that is true for the majority of the work, I also get to work my AI-Anon program. The more years I add in recovery, the more true this is. A couple of examples:

- Responding to enquiries from newcomers: these may simply be asking for a meeting location, but sometimes I find myself communicating with desperate newcomers in distress (a very gratifying part of my work). I always try to find some members in service to follow-up with these newcomers and as such this is real 12-Step work.
- Responding to member enquiries (with the Service Manual and WSO Guideline in hand)
- Opening up a conversation when a proposed website article might not be in accordance with our Traditions and Guidelines or the general spirit of AI-Anon.

When in doubt, I ask help from my direct contact in the Area-Executive's team and in this way I actively work my program quite intensely. It is not always easy, but it certainly is a growing experience and one of the rewards of my position.

In closing: here are the most recent website analytics:

Date-range >	17 July to 17 November 2020	15 March to 17 July 2020	15 January to 15 March 2020
Total visits	18,000	14,000	4,700
Unique sessions	9,300	7,100	3,200
Total pageviews	54,000	46,801	18,500
Unique pageviews	41,552	34,617	13,642
Time spent on website	3min5s	3min20s	3min22s

Since the launch of the new website in January 2020 we have logged 120,461 page hits (unique: 90,586)! We had 19,000 users with 37,000 sessions and an average time spent on the website of 3min13s. We are doing well!

Yours in service,  
Nicky D  
Ontario South Website Coordinator

### District 5 Report

In District 5 we have 10 groups. Seven groups are reopened with in-person meetings, two are doing Zoom and one is a hybrid meeting. The hybrid meeting is a Zoom meeting with physical attendance in the church. We use the church's Wi-Fi so we can see and hear all the people on the computer. It has been so nice to have AI-Anon members from different places join us and keep coming back.

Our Public Outreach is doing a Zoom meeting for the first time. A group has offered their Zoom account so they can decide how to proceed with Public Outreach.

At the church, where AI-Anon and A.A. meetings are held, they are suspending their in-person services. All of their other groups will be not meeting at the church. They are letting AI-Anon and A.A. meet there because we are deemed essential. What a blessing. It has been wonderful to give some of our members a chance to get back to in-person meetings, since we have not seen them as of March.

It has been an interesting last year, as a DR. Covid has put hurdles in our way but all of the groups have found a way to jump over the hurdles to keep the groups united. I have turned to my Higher Power many times for help.

I have grown so much from this service position. My new motto is We Can Do This. I have had the honour and privilege to work with people in the district who I admire and respect. We made a wonderful team. I love them all.

I know without a doubt that the next DR will do an awesome job.

With love and gratitude,  
Sonia, DR

## ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

In an effort to improve communication and transparency, your Executive Committee decided earlier this year to begin publishing responses to Items for Consideration, with the submitter's consent, in Open Lines. Below are the Items for Consideration from the 2020 Assembly, where the submitter gave consent for the item and the response to be published. -Jason W., Ontario South Assembly Chairperson

### **Frank C., District 18:**

- 1. Has the executive thought if there is an opportunity to create zoom accounts by district and share the cost among the groups?*
- 2. How can groups still collect the 7th when our meetings are still virtual and will be so for quite some time?*

In short, no, the Executive has not considered having the Districts create Zoom accounts and share that cost among their groups, as we feel this is a matter of Group and District autonomy and not the role of the Executive to tell Districts how to conduct their business.

Some Districts have created a single Zoom account for all of their groups and meetings; you may find it helpful to ask your District Representative to contact other District Representatives to ask what they do. Your District Representative also has access to an online message board of other District Representatives across North America, called AFG Connects. There will likely be some experience there that may be helpful in this instance.

Regarding groups collecting Seventh Tradition donations from members, this too is a matter of group autonomy. Some groups have set up their group's bank account to collect donations by e-transfer, if their group's Treasurer is comfortable with that. My home group uses e-transfers but also suggests members save their usual weekly contribution in an envelope or coffee can, etc., to be brought in to the group once in-person meetings resume. Some Group Treasurers also arrange with members to collect donations by contactless drop-off, if both parties are comfortable. You may find it helpful to ask other Group Representatives in your District how they have solved this problem.

### **Joan T., District 27:**

*Because of the costs for members to travel, accommodations and meals, the most expensive place is Toronto area be an item for consideration? Maybe we need to shift our attention to a little outside of Toronto.*

While finances are an important consideration, it's not the only issue at play here. Concept Four tells us that participation is the key to harmony, and election year Assemblies are held in the central part of our Area in order to maximize participation and reduce travel for the greatest number of members.

An existing Assembly motion, passed in October 1987 (See Ontario South Policy & Guidelines Manual, Section 6A) says that Assembly will be held in the central part of the Area in election years. It is difficult to find hotels in the central part of our Area that are large enough for an election-year Assembly, but are not in the Greater Toronto Area. That said, the Executive would consider a bid that met requirements if it was from a District in the central part of our Area, but outside of the GTA.

### **Diana M., District 23:**

*In today's day of e-books and virtual meetings, could the Forum be made available electronically as well as in physical print, to allow for online viewing and subscriptions? Some members, for the sake of confidentiality or environmental impact, would prefer not to receive a physical copy to their address, but would benefit from the ability to access the sharing, experience and hope of the Forum articles from the safety of their computers and mobile devices.*

The Forum, and several other pieces of Conference-Approved Literature are already available for sale through online retailers. The Forum is available by subscription through Barnes & Noble, and individual issues can be purchased for Amazon readers, Apple Books and Kobo.

You can find more information on purchasing electronic literature on the World Service Office's website ([https://ecomm.ai-anon.org/iCommerce/Store/StoreLayouts/Category\\_BP\\_Results.aspx?InitialText=Category-Electronic%20Literature](https://ecomm.ai-anon.org/iCommerce/Store/StoreLayouts/Category_BP_Results.aspx?InitialText=Category-Electronic%20Literature)).

**Marianne E., District 4:**

*I would like the Executive to consider having some ie: 1 or more Executive Meetings as virtual rather than in person. I realize that meeting in person is beneficial, however, with the technology in the 20th century, I would like the Executive to consider having at least 1 Exec. mtg virtually to save the Area 86 money. They could also add an additional meeting virtually if they needed it. Thanks for your consideration and hard work.*

Since the beginning of the pandemic in March, the Executive has met once by teleconference and multiple times by Zoom. The Executive has used a free teleconference service several times over the past three terms to discuss urgent issues that arise between meetings.

Our upcoming handover meeting in January will be held over Zoom, and we currently have no plans to meet in person for the rest of this term, due to COVID-19 restrictions. Restrictions had been eased enough this summer that we could have met in-person in July but chose not to, due to both the costs and Executive members' discomfort with an in-person meeting.

Any decisions about permanent changes to the Executive meeting schedule will be determined by the incoming Executive, who will have a conversation about meeting dates and locations after they take office in January. Your Item for Consideration will be among the items I forward to the incoming Chairperson.

**Kerrie P., District 12:**

*Please take the following under consideration: That CAL literature including the 12 Steps be revised to be less patriarchal/masculine (e.g. replacing God and Him with higher power) as this is a barrier for many people of all ages and gender.*

In short, this is a matter that is beyond the Area's autonomy. The approval process for Conference-Approved Literature is detailed on page 110 of the of the AI-Anon/Alateen Service Manual 2018-2021, but major revisions to our literature must be reviewed by the Literature Committee at the WSO, as well as the Executive Director, the Chairperson of the Policy Committee and four other members of that Committee. Minor revisions are approved by the Board of Trustees, through the Executive Director.

As for changing the wording in our Legacies (the Steps, Traditions and Concepts, including the General Warranties), this is a much more complicated task. Section 3d of the World Service Conference Charter (found on page 226 of the AI-Anon/Alateen Service Manual 2018-2021) says: "No changes are to be made in the AI-Anon or Alateen Traditions, the Steps, the Concepts of Service (except the descriptive text) or the General Warranties of the Conference Charter (Item 12) without written consent of three-quarters of the AI-Anon Family Groups."

Your concern has been passed on to the incoming Delegate as a potential submission for a chosen agenda item at the World Service Conference, but any member can directly contact the World Service Office with Items for Consideration that affect our broader fellowship.

**Louise G., District 2:**

*Considering it is highly likely that there will be a financial surplus at Ontario South of at least \$10,000 at the end of 2020, can the executive discuss the idea of sending the surplus this year to the WSO rather than add it to the prudent reserve. As per the Area Manual...section 8 item 5 gives the Executive the right to make this decision. Also, as per the AI-Anon Serv manual pg.105, the Area can contribute to the WSO without limit. Justification: the prudent reserve currently sits at \$31,000 and while the Annual Expenses of OS in 2019 were approx \$40,000, \$12,500 of this was for live AWSC and \$12,500 was for live Assembly.*

As of November 9, the Area's net income was \$12,032.07. As you pointed out in your submission, most of our expenses in a typical year are due to in-person AWSC meetings and Assemblies, neither of which happened in 2020.

While news of apparently successful vaccine candidates is cause for optimism that restrictions on in-person meetings may be lifted some time next year, part of the Executive's discussion on this item included the fact that we don't know how long restrictions will remain in place into 2021, nor when group donations to the Area will return to normal levels. Group donations to Ontario South are down by approximately \$5,000 from last year, as of November 9.

As a result, the Executive has decided to send \$6,000 of the Area's surplus to the World Service Office, with the remainder of the final net income being added to Ontario South's prudent reserve.

**Jen W., District 4:**

*Can future events be held online to save funds? Particularly in times when revenue is down? I think this Assembly was very affective with the Zoom format. It would be nice if Jason would be willing to return as a host as he did an amazing job today.*

Events like AI-Anon Days and Roundups are matters of group or District autonomy. As for Area functions like Assembly and AWSC or Executive meetings, while finances are important they are not the only issue considered in decision-making.

Your outgoing Executive Committee has been meeting virtually since March, and has previously used teleconferencing between in-person meetings. There are currently no plans to meet in-person because of COVID-19 restrictions and members' comfort level.

Even though many members have done electronic meetings long before COVID-19, the current Executive's experience is that there is less spiritual connection with other members in electronic meetings, as opposed to in person. For example, it is difficult to have one-on-one conversations with other members during breaks and meal times in a Zoom meeting.

While I appreciate the compliment, my term as Chairperson is ending and as a result I will not chair nor host any future Assembly.

Some of the ways your Executive Committee, Area World Service Committee and the Assembly operate during normal times are governed by Assembly motions (See Section 6A, Area Policy & Guidelines Manual) and permanent changes to those aspects would require Assembly approval.



Day of Recovery  
with 12 Speakers  
from AA, Al-Anon  
and Alateen

# ZOOM INTO RECOVERY

Celebrating Recovery  
Through the 12 Steps

Saturday, February 6,  
2021  
9:00 am to 3:00 pm  
Meeting room opens at  
8:30 am

For further information or  
7th tradition please email:  
[crtts17@gmail.com](mailto:crtts17@gmail.com)

Zoom meeting ID: 894 8104 7569  
Zoom meeting password: 953 644