

Hilltoppers Online Meeting

This document is meant as an introduction to the Hilltoppers Al-Anon Family Group's website Online Meeting. For the actual Online Meeting, or more information, please go to www.io.com/~thehill/ .

How the online meeting works

Appearance

The appearance of this Online Meeting (hereafter called Bulletin Board, or Board) is in the form of a Bulletin Board Forum. For the detailed manual of how this application works, please visit the manufacturer's website at www.phpbb.com. The intent of this document is to give the user a functional set of guidelines in basic use of the Bulletin Board. This set of instructions should get you familiar with the interface, and ready to post to the Bulletin Board, in a short amount of time.

Across the top of the Bulletin Board are several links to different functions of the Board. The links will appear differently depending on your status (logged in or not.) Your status will change if you are registered or not, and if you are logged in or not. Register will take you to the initial registration form, details below. The Profile link allows you to manage your personal information. You can choose how much/little you want displayed. The Private Messages section holds any private communications that you have received from other members until you login and retrieve them. The FAQ section has more details about the operation of the Bulletin Board. The FAQ document is in a question and answer format, and is somewhat similar to this document. If you want very good information about how to use this Bulletin Board, read the FAQ. The Memberlist shows who the members of this Bulletin Board system are. Please see more about Anonymity, below. Search allows you to find topics, keywords, or posts by certain members. Usergroups are collections of individuals who have access or privileges for different aspects of the Bulletin Board. The Forum Index lists all the Meetings & Topics.

You will see statistics that show how many people are online, and their status. Registered users are ones who have gone through the registration process, and chosen to have their presence shown. Hidden users have registered, and their presence is 'cloaked', their identity is not shown. In other words, the general public knows they're there, but their identity is not displayed. You can set this parameter when you register, or any time after,

in the Profile section. Guests are those who are viewing the Bulletin Boards, but Guests are not allowed to post to the Board until they register and login.

Registering

Users are required to register in order to use the Bulletin Board. Registering in this Bulletin Board allows the Board Administrators to exercise a certain amount of control over the users of the Board, as well as keep random and indiscriminate users from posting unwanted replies to the Board. By registering, you must enter a Username and an Email Address. These are the only bits of information that are required. The suggested method of registering is to use a name that is cryptic, and a public, not personal Email Address. A cryptic name would be something like a nickname, or a handle that you would use for this board, but would protect your true identity from most other users. A name like 'barkin bob', 'wild bill', or 'parakeet' would be sufficient. A public Email Address would be something like 'you@yahoo.com', or 'you@hotmail.com'. When you register, you can set your Preferences. You can change them later from the Profile links. Here you can choose as much or as little information about yourself to enter as you're comfortable with. You can then choose whether you want your email address shown, your online status known, and other parameters. These are the ways that you can remain anonymous, and not be seen online.

When you go through the registration process for the first time, the procedure involves clicking a legal disclaimer. This part is required by law. This is the first page that you come to when you click the Register link. Once you click the 'I Agree' button, you are taken to a page where you will create your user profile. The Register form is exactly like the Profile Update form. Here is where you choose how little or how much information about yourself that you want displayed to the other users of the Bulletin Board. Again, the only required information is a username and email address.

Logging In

Once you have created your user profile by Registering (see above), you are ready to login to the Bulletin Board. This is the process of entering your username and password in the boxes that are displayed. If you forget your password, you can click the 'forgot password' link, and you'll have a chance to receive another password. Don't lose or forget your username or email address. These are important. These are the only required bits of information. Your password is encrypted using a one-way algorithm, and we cannot retrieve it. In fact, once it's encrypted, it can never be retrieved. If you click the 'forgot password' link, you'll be sent a temporary password that

will allow you to login. Once you've logged in this way, you can change your password by clicking the 'Profile' link.

Posting to the Board

The status of this Bulletin Board is that you must be Registered in order to post. Once you're registered, then logged in, you are in a position to view the online Topics, and Reply to them. Please keep in mind that the Bulletin Board is composed of four levels of information. These are Categories, Forums, Topics, and Replies. Categories are pre-determined by the Administration, and consist of Open Meetings, Closed Meetings, etc. Forums are the listings of Meetings within a category such as General Open Meeting, Men's Meeting, etc. A Topic will be the particular meeting that you are interested in. As a Registered User, you can post a Reply to the Topic (particular meeting) that interests you.

About the Online Meetings

These online meetings are held in the true spirit of Al-Anon and the Traditions that hold this organization together on a world-wide basis. As stated in the Al-Anon Preamble:

"The Al-Anon Family Groups are a fellowship of relatives and friends of alcoholics who share their experience, strength, and hope, in order to solve their common problems. We believe alcoholism is a family illness, and that changed attitudes can aid recovery.

"Al-Anon is not allied with any sect, denomination, political entity, organization, or institution; does not engage in any controversy, neither endorses nor opposes any cause. There are no dues for membership. Al-Anon is self-supporting through its own voluntary contributions.

"Al-Anon has but one purpose: to help families of alcoholics. We do this by practicing the Twelve Steps, by welcoming and giving comfort to families of alcoholics, and by giving understanding and encouragement to the alcoholic."

More about Anonymity

From the Traditions, "Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles above personalities." Any

user of this Bulletin Board Online Meeting may remain as anonymous as they choose. The configuration settings in the Profile portion of the Bulletin Board are entirely a matter of personal user preference. You are given total configuration control over how much personal information is displayed about you in your profile and your posts. By registering to use this Bulletin Board, you have placed a certain degree of trust in Al-Anon as a whole, as well as the Moderators & Administrators of this Online Meeting. Reciprocally, all the members who use this Bulletin Board for their Online Meeting and Recovery are placing a certain degree of trust in you. In the spirit of the Anonymity of 12 Step Programs worldwide, "Who you see here, what you read here, let it stay here." Thanks for your understanding.

Thanks for your interest in the Online Meeting of the Hilltoppers Al-Anon Family Groups.