

56th Annual WSC

Realizing Our
Spiritual Potential

Reconociendo nuestro potencial espiritual

Reconnaître notre potentiel spirituel



World Service Conference **2016**

2016

World Service Conference Summary

AL-ANON FAMILY GROUPS 2016 WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE

Pre-Conference Activities

Selected Committees, Work Groups, Thought Forces, Task Forces.....	3
Announcement to the Conference.....	6
Sharing Area Highlights.....	6
Opening Dinner.....	7

General Sessions

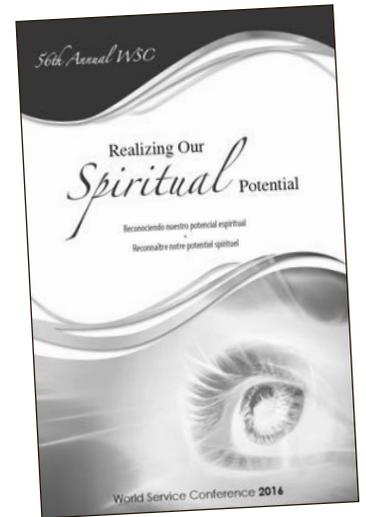
Conference Theme and Opening Remarks.....	8
Welcome from the Board of Trustees.....	9
Orientation.....	10
AFG, the Fellowship, and AFG, Inc., the Organization.....	17
Approvals.....	18
2015 Auditor's Report.....	18
2016 Finance Committee Report.....	20
2015 Annual Report.....	24

Reports

<i>Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism</i>	29
Alateen Survey.....	30
<i>Forum</i> Editorial Advisory Committee.....	33
International Conventions.....	35
2018 Al-Anon International.....	35
2023 Al-Anon International Convention Bid Process.....	35
“Meet the Board” Event.....	36
Selection of Trustees.....	38
2016 Regional Trustee Nominating Process.....	38
Conference Committee on Trustees.....	39
Nominating Committee and Trustee Affirmation.....	40
TEAM Events.....	41
Trips.....	42
Central American Zonal Meeting.....	42
European Zonal Meeting.....	44
Ibero-American Zonal Meeting.....	46
World Service Conference Site (2017).....	47

Discussions, Presentations, and Workshops

Board of Trustees—Descriptive Text for Concept Eleven.....	48
Chosen Agenda Item.....	50
Finance Committee Presentation.....	54
Literature Committee Recommendation.....	57



“Our World Service Conference (WSC) is the active voice and the effective group conscience of our society in world affairs.”

2014-2017 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual (P-24/27) page 184

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Concept Two

The Al-Anon Family Groups have delegated complete administrative and operational authority to their Conference and its service arms.

**Al-Anon
Family Group
Headquarters, Inc.**

Board Vision Statement:

All people affected by someone else's drinking will find help and recovery in every community.

Board Mission Statement:

Anticipate the future and Al-Anon's place in it and ensure that the necessary resources are available.

Policy Discussions..... 61
 Memorial Contributions..... 61
 Conventions and Other Events 62
 Public Service Announcements 65
 Task Forces 65
 Task Force: Acceptance of Communities, Cultures, and Beliefs 65
 Task Force: Communication and Strengthening the Links of Service 68
 Task Force: Meeting Types 69
 Task Force: Technology and Anonymity 70
 WSC Agenda Items 73

Sharing Ourselves

Delegates (Panel 54) 78
 International Representative..... 86
 Opening Dinner Speaker 87
 Spiritual Speakers 89

In Closing We Would Like to Say...

Closing Session..... 93
 Floor Discussion..... 94
 2016 World Service Conference Motions..... 95

2015 Annual Report 99

2016 Conference Attendees..... 119

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SELECTED COMMITTEES, WORK GROUPS, THOUGHT FORCES, AND TASK FORCES

The day before the 2016 Conference convened, the Chairperson of the Board reviewed the roles of members of Committees, Work Groups, Thought Forces, and Task Forces with all Conference members. The intent of the session was to clarify the role of Conference members as it pertains to participation in these groups.

Paula B.
Trustee, Chairperson of the Board

The Chairperson of the Board noted the definitions of these four units:

- A Committee is formed by the Board of Trustees and responds to an ongoing need of Al-Anon Family Groups. While it does not manage or conduct the active affairs of the service department (such as Public Outreach, Literature, etc.), it may make recommendations about any work it is doing or considering. It is often thought to be a permanent part of an organization. It can be an originating body and a Thought Force or Task Force may evolve from a Committee.
- A Work Group is a unit of people established to meet an ongoing need of the originating body. It can be considered a permanent part of the organization that formed it. It can be an originating body and a Thought Force or Task Force may evolve from a Work Group. The objective is to complete its activity and present it to the originating body to move forward.
- A Thought Force is a temporary unit of people established to brainstorm ideas and to develop strategies on a single defined task or activity. It uses the resources available, such as perspective of the members of the Thought Force and staff knowledge. For example, a problem identified could be a lack of clarity regarding roles. Strategies that are suggested might include writing job descriptions (the idea, not the actual job description); identifying components of a guideline; or adding text to a portion of the *Service Manual* to clarify. The objective is to identify the potential idea, not to write the actual text itself. The Thought Force is not expected to have all the answers or to provide the final solutions. If there are facts that are unknown, they can be flagged in the Knowledge-Based Decision-Making (KBDM) question, “Things we don’t know but wish we did.” A Thought Force may lay the foundation for the work of a Task Force. Sometimes they offer recommendations resulting from their findings. A Thought Force presents its information to the originating body so it can move forward. “They are thinkers, not doers.”
- A Task Force is a temporary unit of people established to work on a single defined task or activity. It uses available resources, such as perspective of members of the Task Force and staff knowledge. For example, a task could be to choose one of the suggested strategies from the Thought Force. If the Task Force chooses writing job descriptions, for example, then it would write the job descriptions. The objective is to complete the job descriptions and present them to the originating body. A Task Force may fulfill the recommendations made by a Thought Force. Task Forces are the “doers.”

Again, these groups are not decision-making bodies, as they only make recommendations. Each body’s objective is to complete its activity and present it to the originating body.

The Chairperson of the Board then described the roles:

- All are participating members of the Committee with staff and Trustees each bringing a different perspective.
- Everyone’s role is the same with the exception of the Chairperson and Recorder who have additional responsibilities.
 - ✓ Chairperson:
 - ◆ Builds the agenda—a plan of action.
 - ◆ Reviews the agenda with the group and asks them to agree to follow it.
 - ◆ Sets ground rules for discussion.
 - ◆ Has the group agree on the outcome.



- ◆ Sets up meeting times, dates, methods of communication, and the tentative purpose of each meeting.
- ◆ Helps the group maintain a sense of unity.
- ◆ Gives everyone a voice.
- ◆ Allows a few minutes for venting if needed.
- ◆ Overall sees that the job is done correctly.
- ✓ Recorder (member selected within the group):
 - ◆ Writes down key ideas and other information.
 - ◆ Asks for clarity, when needed.

The Chairperson of the Board continued by noting the responsibilities:

- Be sure that the assignment or charge is understood:
 - ✓ Why has this task been assigned?
 - ✓ What are we meant to accomplish?
 - ✓ What information do we need?
- Ask questions and get clarity in the beginning.
- Brainstorm.
- At any time if you don't understand something, ask for clarity.
- Stay on course and do not impose your own interpretation of the charge, in other words, "what *you* think it should be."
- If the conversations get off topic, simply say, "I think we're off track."
- Be prepared to work on your charge from the moment it is assigned.
- Be willing to volunteer for specific activities related to the fulfillment of the charge.
- Respond to the Chairperson in a timely manner and if unable to complete a task or to be available on a given date, let the Chairperson know.
- Be able to accept constructive criticism when the project is reviewed.
- Share your work with each other.

2016 ASSIGNMENTS FOR SELECTED COMMITTEES, WORK GROUPS, THOUGHT FORCES, AND TASK FORCES

Delegates, Trustees, Executive Committee members, and World Service Conference staff members comprise the Selected Committees, Task Forces, Thought Forces, and Work Groups. Below are the Delegate assignments for this year's Conference.

Assignment	Panel 54 (2014-2016)	Panel 55 (2015-2017)	Panel 56 (2016-2018)
Conference Committee on Trustees	Patrick M., Chair, UT Jennifer B., SK Ann B., CT Virginia B., IA	Elizabeth K., Chair Elect, CA(S) Tarcila F., TN Phyllis H., RI Brenda L., IN Wendy R., FL(N)	Don B., WIUPMI Laura D., OK Richard McC., MA Ann Marie Z., NJ
Literature Committee	Kathleen A., SD Sandy F., ME Jud L., NM/EP Lyri M., IL(S)	Dana Rae H., HI Debbie H., MB/NWO Patricia K., FL(S) Betty R., KS Joyce Y., TX(E)	Eloy M., CO
Public Outreach Committee	Janice B., NV Sherry H., WY Nancy Jo W., ID Pat W., NH	Chris C., TX(W) Connie C., MD/DC Yvonne de G., CA(N)	Rachelle C., MN(N) Duane F., VA Norma F., AB/NWT
Task Force: Spirituality in Group Money Discussions	Diane B., ON(N) Karen L., MO	Mary H., Chair, MN(S) Ginny C., OH Lori H., KY Pat M., DE	Gaston A., QC(E) Ken R., VT Carol T., ND
Task Force: Spirituality in District Money Discussions	Maxine D., NL Jan R., NE	Sandy W., Chair, IL(N) Diane C., NY(N) Barbara G., PA	Janis A., BC/YT Elaine D., MT Valentina H., NC/BDA Barbara L., AZ Renelle M., GA
Task Force: Spirituality in Area Money Discussions	Angela A., LA Liesel B., AK Michele R., NY(S) Jinkie R., AR	Michael D., Chair, MI Debbie P., ON(S)	Cindy E., OR Julie P., WA Angie R., MS Tony S., MP

ANNOUNCEMENT TO THE CONFERENCE

Paula B.

Trustee, Chairperson of the Board

The Chairperson of the Board announced to Conference members that Ric B. is no longer associated with the World Service Office (WSO). The WSO, under his leadership was an era of moving from New York, blending New York and local talent, creating a strong, skilled, and diverse workforce. Members can send expressions of gratitude for his service through the WSO. They will be forwarded to him.

The Chairperson continued, “We are poised to move forward into the WSO’s next exciting chapter. The first step is to change the WSO organizational structure to increase communication between departments and streamline activities. To improve communication and coordination between departments, an Administrative Team was formed and has been meeting daily.

“The Board, in its legal authority, considered several names of past Trustees with backgrounds suitable for the position of an interim Executive Director. These names were then provided to the WSO Transition Team for consideration and recommendation. The Board of Trustees selected Mary G., a Past Delegate and Past Trustee, as an interim Executive Director during this transition period to spearhead the dynamic changes that are in progress.

“Mary will serve as the interim Executive Director for a period of time to ensure the new office structure is functioning well. The Board will post the Executive Director position description and qualifications to all members in the fellowship when appropriate.

“Since this new structure does not affect the provision of services to the fellowship, interactions with the WSO staff remain the same in that e-mails from members go to wso@al-anon.org.

“The Board and staff are excited about the new changes as we ‘Anticipate the future and Al-Anon’s place in it and ensure that the necessary resources are available.’”

SHARING AREA HIGHLIGHTS

Prior to the opening of the 2016 World Service Conference (WSC), a session was held by the Delegates to share their Areas’ successes and challenges. This year, the session format was expanded. Chairperson Lyri M., Panel 54, Illinois South, and Recorder Maxine D., Panel 54, Newfoundland/Labrador opened the session reminding participants that this was a beginning for a new format and was still a work in progress.

All other Conference members were invited to attend as guests with no voice.

The Delegates had submitted their written summary to the Recorder in advance. Copies of each Area’s full summary were available for all attendees.

During the session, Delegates met in small groups to share and discuss several topics and then report highlights of the discussions to the whole group. The topics were meant to initiate discussion.

Delegate Reports

Delegates have a wide range of time allotted to give their reports to their Areas. This necessitates different techniques and strategies to maximize their time and the information of interest to their Area. Most Delegates use the information in the Conference Notebook, AFG Connects, the Chairperson of the Board letters, and the *Conference Summary* to prepare their reports. Some Delegates ask Area Committees and Coordinators to present information. Use of photos relating to the topic, PowerPoint presentations, and skits presented at the Conference were also noted. Some Delegates travel to their districts to present their report.

Delegates also shared how they sorted and prioritized information before and during the Conference, along with strategies they used to avoid information overload.

Some small groups discussed the Delegate’s role. Some would like more open communication. Others expressed a need to know that their voice is heard at the Conference. Strategies suggested were including webinars and more conference calls in order to be better informed.

Strategies Delegates use to encourage participation in their Areas included:

- Time commitment for service.
- When there is no Alternate, we lose the “we.”

- Workshops to train leaders.
- Conference calls.
- “Walkabouts” at Assembly.
- Food, fun, prizes, cheap admission.
- Don’t call it service “work.” Instead, call it a “Joy Fair.”
- Have a separate basket for service arm collections to budget for workshops.
- Move meetings to remote areas.
- Use shared leadership in reporting at Assembly. You don’t have to do it alone.
- Invite Past Delegates to explain the links of service to Group Representatives.
- Involve members in skits.

Strategies to encourage groups in an inactive district:

- Ask the Group Services Coordinator to be in charge of groups that do not have a District Representative.
- Reach out and visit the groups.
- Stress that service is part of recovery.

Before the session ended, Wendy R., Panel 55, Florida North, was elected to serve as Chairperson for Sharing Area Highlights in 2017, and, Tarcila F., Panel 55, Tennessee, was elected to serve as Recorder for the 2017 session.

OPENING DINNER

Prior to the official opening of the Conference, the Conference members, an International Representative, and staff necessary to support the Conference attended the Opening Dinner. The Co-Chairperson of the 2016 World Service Conference welcomed the dinner attendees and opened with the theme:

Realizing Our Spiritual Potential

The Co-Chairperson continued, “How will we recognize the spiritual potential in ourselves as we set out to do the work of Al-Anon? When I came to Al-Anon, I didn’t believe that I had the same spiritual potential as others. I now believe that it is this potential that I saw in others that has allowed me to be aware of my spiritual potential. It is contagious!”

She asked Conference members to keep the spiritual principles in mind as they worked together for the unity and good of Al-Anon as a whole by asking:

- What will you hear to change your mind about something?
- What will you take back to your Areas?
- What will make you laugh?

She continued, “This week we will be celebrating 56 years of the World Service Conference. As we socialize with one another, renew old friendships, and make new ones, let us think about our spiritual potential and how this awareness might assist us as we move forward to a new time in the future of Al-Anon Family Groups.”

The Chairperson of the Board welcomed new Conference members and introduced the Board of Trustees and Executive Committee. The Executive Director introduced the World Service Office staff in attendance.

Following dinner, the Conference Chairperson invited the Conference Mentors to “pin” the new Panel 56 Delegates and new Conference members with their WSC pin.

Connie H., member of the Board of Trustees, was the opening dinner speaker; she shared experiences from her three years as Delegate. (See page 87 for Connie’s talk).

After thanking the speaker, the Conference Co-Chair noted, “All of you are Al-Anon leaders who have been elected by your Areas to be a link in Al-Anon service. The spiritual principles of open-mindedness, trust, kindness, mutual respect, and tolerance are just some of the principles that will guide our discussions over the coming days.”

Before leaving the dining room, all attendees closed with the Al-Anon Declaration.

Karen W-P.

Trustee, Conference Co-Chairperson

CONFERENCE THEME AND OPENING REMARKS

Tina B.
Trustee, Conference Chairperson

Karen W-P.
Trustee, Conference Co-Chairperson

Suzanne M.
Associate Director of
Member Services—Conference

The 2016 Conference theme, “Realizing Our Spiritual Potential,” laid the foundation for the spiritual tone of this year’s World Service Conference (WSC). It encouraged members to use the Legacies of the Al-Anon program to empower members to success in service. The idea led to thoughtful discussions, creative thinking, and focused decision-making throughout the 56th WSC held at the Wyndham Virginia Beach Oceanfront Hotel in Virginia Beach, Virginia, April 11 – 15, 2016. This year’s Conference was opened by the Conference Chairperson with a moment of silence followed by the Serenity Prayer. The Conference Chairperson continued her greeting:

“Our 2016 World Service Conference theme is filled with limitless possibilities for all of us here today and for the future of worldwide Al-Anon. As we say in our 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.***

“You have each made a profound commitment to be present and to participate in a large part of guaranteeing that very Declaration—to truly, let it begin with you; with all of us here. If this seems like a daunting task, let me remind you that all we need to do is bring our best selves and invite our Higher Power into our decisions and we will have done our best work.

“One of my favorite stories is in *Many Voices, One Journey* (B-31) on page 263. Margaret O’B. relates a story about Lois to whom many of us have assigned larger than life attributes. Margaret shared that at the 1980 A.A. International Convention in New Orleans, Lois spoke at the Flag Ceremony. Even after deafening applause when she completed her talk, she asked Margaret, ‘Did I do all right?’ Have no fear, as I was told by a wonderful loving Al-Anon member, have courage and confidence—you will do your job brilliantly. You have the love and support of everyone here, as well as those back home who chose you to be here today.

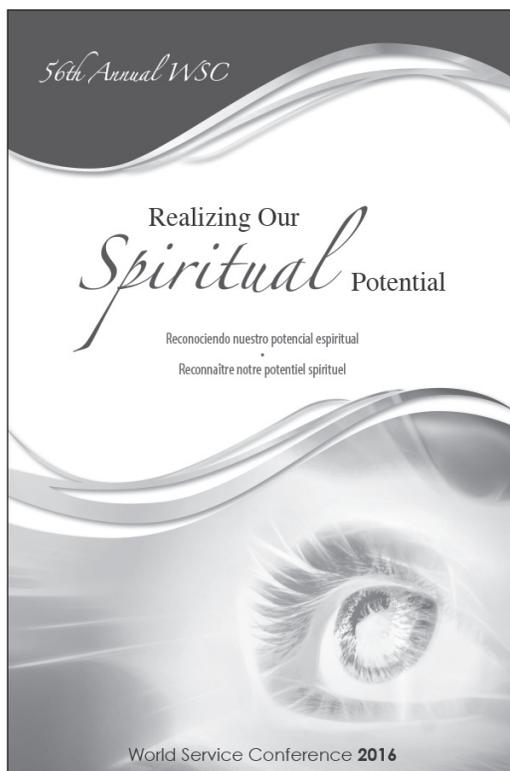
“What is the spiritual potential for this 56th World Service Conference? Of course, we cannot know what that is as we begin today. In fact, we may not see the full realization of the work we do today until long into the future. Those who pioneered our first trial Conference never imagined the things we will talk about this week—social media, technologies, and blogs. That did not stop them from dreaming of Al-Anon’s potential and how to create a World Service Conference that would grow both literally and spiritually.

“Did any of you plan on a spiritual journey when you walked through the doors of Al-Anon for the first time, hopeless and filled with despair? Like many of our newcomers, I was only looking for relief from the pain, frustration, and loneliness of loving an alcoholic. What I found were people who understood my despair and offered me the tools to reach for so much more than what I originally sought. Those same tools—our Steps, Traditions, and Concepts of Service—are available to thousands of members throughout the world today because of the work done by our pioneers and our World Service Conference members with our Higher Power’s guidance.

“The work of this 2016 World Service Conference, in fearlessly seeking to realize our *grandest* spiritual potential, will carry on that legacy and guarantee that Al-Anon will be here for ‘anyone, anywhere, who reaches out for help.’”

With a tap of the gavel, the Chairperson announced, “I now open the 2016 World Service Conference!”

After the official opening of the Conference, the first order of business was approval of a motion brought by the Conference Leadership Team (CLT) to seat certain individuals who could provide critical information to the Conference, a representative from another structure, and staff members who attended for a day or two as part of their ongoing training.



The following persons were seated:

With voice, but no vote:

David Zach

*Director of Business Services
Non-Al-Anon member*

Lourdes Maria C.

*International Representative—Mexico
Al-Anon member*

**With voice limited to the Alateen Survey presentation,
but no vote:**

Pamela Walters

*Marketing Information Analyst
Non-Al-Anon Member*

**With voice limited to Executive Committee for Real
Property Management (ECRPM) business,
but no vote:**

Carrie K.

*Chairperson, Executive Committee for Real Property Management
Al-Anon member*

That the following World Service Office staff members be seated as part of their ongoing training at the 2016 World Service Conference as designated, **with no voice and no vote:**

All days

Corrine O.

*Associate Director of Member Services—
Groups (in training)
Al-Anon member*

Colette Norman

*Language Services Coordinator
(French)
Non-Al-Anon member*

Tuesday, April 12, 2016

Sergio Z.

*Group Services Assistant II—
Alateen (Spanish)
Al-Anon member*

**Wednesday, April 13 and
Thursday, April 14, 2016**

Ken Pearl

*Controller
Non-Al-Anon member*

Wednesday, April 13, 2016

Joe T.

*Archives Coordinator
Al-Anon member*

Thursday, April 14, 2016

Sharon B.

*Group Services Assistant II
Al-Anon member*

Valerie Stump

*Group Records Coordinator (French)
Non-Al-Anon member*

The Motion carried by consensus. (See WSC Motion #1, page 95)

WELCOME FROM THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

“On behalf of your Board of Trustees of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc., it is my honor and privilege to welcome you to the 56th World Service Conference. Our theme, ‘Realizing Our Spiritual Potential,’ will provide our focus this week. The foundation of our discussions is the spiritual principles that guide us to fully realize our potential as leaders in service to the worldwide fellowship of Al-Anon and Alateen.

“As my journey in recovery has led me to this Conference and this amazing collection of leaders, I realize that I’ve never been alone. There has always been a Higher Power, a guide if you will, that knew my spiritual potential long before I came to recognize it. I was surrounded by people who encouraged and supported me because they had vision. In trusting them, I came to trust myself and move past my old feelings of inadequacy. That’s a gift of this program—realizing that we are part of this immense knowledge that provides the strength and courage to take the next step.

“This week, we will share conversations that challenge our preconceived opinions. We will support each other to keep an open mind until all sides are heard. We will connect with that greater wisdom to make decisions to shape our future.

“As we realize our spiritual potential, I encourage you to feel the unconditional love, joy, and grace our Higher Power extends to each Conference member as we demonstrate the strength and courage we bring to our vision of Al-Anon.”

The Chairperson of the Board concluded her welcoming remarks by reading the Twelve Traditions.

Paula B.

Trustee, Chairperson of the Board

TWELVE TRADITIONS

- 1 Our common welfare should come first; personal progress for the greatest number depends upon unity.
- 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.
- 3 The relatives of alcoholics, when gathered together for mutual aid, may call themselves an Al-Anon Family Group, provided that, as a group, they have no other affiliation. The only requirement for membership is that there be a problem of alcoholism in a relative or friend.
- 4 Each group should be autonomous, except in matters affecting another group or Al-Anon or AA as a whole.
- 5 Each Al-Anon Family Group has but one purpose: to help families of alcoholics. We do this by practicing the Twelve Steps of AA ourselves, by encouraging and understanding our alcoholic relatives, and by welcoming and giving comfort to families of alcoholics.
- 6 Our Family Groups ought never endorse, finance or lend our name to any outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary spiritual aim. Although a separate entity, we should always co-operate with Alcoholics Anonymous.
- 7 Every group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
- 8 Al-Anon Twelve Step work should remain forever non-professional, but our service centers may employ special workers.
- 9 Our groups, as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
- 10 The Al-Anon Family Groups have no opinion on outside issues; hence our name ought never be drawn into public controversy.
- 11 Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, films, and TV. We need guard with special care the anonymity of all AA members.
- 12 Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles above personalities.

ORIENTATION

Paula B.
Trustee, Chairperson of the Board

After reading the Twelve Traditions, the Chairperson of the Board presided over an Orientation session to provide Conference members with a common understanding for a successful Conference.

Board Goals for the Conference

Goal 1: Conference members will understand the purpose of the Conference, relationships within the structure, and be able to articulate Conference discussions and decisions.

Goal 2: The spiritual tone of the Conference will prevail by the demonstration of mutual respect and acceptable conduct by its members.

Goal 3: Knowing that our Higher Power is present in the expression of our group conscience, Conference members will presume goodwill.

Purpose of the World Service Conference

According to page 139 of the *2014/2017 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* in the “World Service Handbook” section:

“The World Service Conference makes the group conscience available and effective for all Al-Anon. It is the practical means by which the group conscience can speak; it is the voice of world Al-Anon and the guarantee that our world services shall continue to carry on under all conditions.

“The Conference protects Al-Anon and Alateen against a service breakdown; it makes for unity and enables our fellowship to *act as a whole* upon important matters. This makes it the principal guarantor of Al-Anon and Alateen’s harmony and survival.”

During the first ten years of Al-Anon Family Groups, the world services for Al-Anon were provided by the Clearing House in New York. This service structure was incorporated in 1954 when a Board of Directors began taking care of the business and policy matters with the help of an Advisory Board.

In 1961, Al-Anon held the first World Service Conference on a three-year trial basis. One goal was to obtain equal representation from all sections of the United States and Canada. Regions were drawn and Delegates were chosen coinciding with state and provincial boundaries. Delegates were successively added over the course of three years. This representation proved successful and the Conference was made permanent in 1963.

So, the original purpose of the Conference was to take the place of polling the groups on every issue on which the Clearing House needed direction. It was also the opportunity for the Board and the staff to bring the fellowship up to date on the Clearing House to review the budget, etc.

The primary reason for Conference discussions on a Chosen Agenda Item and decisions on Conference motions is to consider worldwide Al-Anon. This broader perspective is important for Delegates to take back to their Areas.

Conference members were asked to consider the positions that contribute to this broader perspective.

Relationships within the Structure

According to page 142 of the *2014/2017 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* in the *World Service Handbook* section:

“The World Service Conference (WSC) is composed of one elected Delegate from each Assembly Area, the Board of Trustees, the Executive Committee, volunteer Chairmen, and voting members of the World Service Office administrative staff. At the 1985 WSC it was voted to make the Conference member ratio two-thirds elected Delegates to one-third staff and volunteers.”

However, all have equal voice through one vote.

Goal 2 states, “The spiritual tone of the Conference will prevail by the demonstration of mutual respect and acceptable conduct by its members.”

Respect is defined as “a feeling of deep admiration for someone or something elicited by their abilities, qualities, or achievements.”

Goal 3 states, “Knowing that our Higher Power is present in the expression of our group conscience, Conference members will presume goodwill.”

In the descriptive text of Concept Three:

“Our entire Al-Anon program rests squarely on the principle of mutual trust. We trust God, we trust Al-Anon, and we trust one another. Therefore we cannot do less than trust our leaders in service. The Right of Decision we offer them is the practical means by which they may act and lead effectively; it also is the symbol of our implicit confidence.”

Understanding that an unseen member is present in every decision and knowing that our decisions are focused on the good of Al-Anon as a whole, I presume goodwill.

With a deeper understanding of these three goals, there was a consensus to accept the Conference goals.

Personal Goal

Conference members were then asked to take a moment to think about a personal goal that they would like to achieve at the Conference and share it with members sitting around them. The Chairperson shared that her Conference goal was, “To identify the spiritual principles found in all discussions and presentations, realize these principles are universal, and then base my decisions in light of what is best for Al-Anon Family Groups worldwide.”

Several Conference members shared their goals:

- Speak positively and proactively for Al-Anon worldwide when called on.
- Gain greater understanding of our fellowship.
- Engage in the World Service Conference process and take new ideas back to my Area.
- Open myself to the spiritual potential of myself and others.
- Help achieve a broader awareness of Al-Anon for those in need.

The Chairperson asked that Conference members keep their goals in mind as they go through the week doing the work of worldwide Al-Anon. She stated that she was going to review hers every morning before breakfast and before going to the Conference room to remind herself of why she was there.

Our Roles at Conference

Though Conference members have differing perspectives and responsibilities in their roles, they do have many tasks that are the same.

The Concepts of Service as related to the roles and responsibilities of Conference members was demonstrated using a “torch of leadership.” The Chairperson was joined on the dais by a Delegate, a member of the Executive Committee, and a WSO staff member. Each represented his/her role at the Conference.

Concept One

Holding the “torch of leadership,” the Chairperson began: “We each have very specific leadership roles to fulfill once delegated authority has been granted to us. At the World Service Conference, we are the guardians of both Al-Anon’s world services and its Twelve Traditions. This is the largest representative group conscience of our Structure. The decisions made here affect Al-Anon worldwide.

“We are a service body, not a government, and when making decisions we consider matters that are of interest to Al-Anon as a whole. We are mindful of the Right of Decision, Right of Participation, Right of Appeal, and Right of Petition that are defined in the ‘Introduction’ to ‘Al-Anon’s Twelve Concepts of Service’ as we perform our delegated authority.”

Accepting this great trust, the “torch of leadership” was passed to the Panel 54 Delegate from Saskatchewan representing the Delegates.

Concept Two

Holding the “torch of leadership” as a Delegate, she began, “The World Service Conference is the active voice and effective group conscience of Al-Anon in world affairs. This group conscience is an expression of the ultimate authority—a loving God.

“Groups in an Area choose a Delegate to serve them by sharing ideas and making decisions at the Conference for the good of Al-Anon Family Groups. This Concept puts into practice the qualities of trust, judgment, and responsibility.

Concept Three

“Mutual trust among and between all trusted servants is necessary for Delegates to exercise judgment and use their freedom and authority to make appropriate decisions for Al-Anon worldwide.

“Research and prayer assist Delegates to seek the counsel of others, research previous similar decisions in our literature and *Service Manual*, vote on matters, or postpone decisions by referring back to the groups/Areas to consult on or ask for specific directions. When we grant our trusted servants, including Delegates, the Right of Decision, we put faith in a Power greater than ourselves and trust in the integrity of others. We trust God, we trust Al-Anon, and we trust one another.



Concept Four

“In our service as Delegates, we are able to participate constructively in a harmonious working partnership with all Conference members. To do this, I need to read the essential information provided to contribute to the Conference discussion and to vote responsibly. I am being trusted, not only to do the work, but to decide what work is important and how to go about doing it.

“Respect for ourselves as equal Conference members, combined with full participation at the Conference, helps us to serve our worldwide Al-Anon family as trusted servants and assure harmony.

Concept Five

“This Concept builds strength, unity, and cooperation in our fellowship of democracy through consideration of everyone’s voice using Knowledge-Based Decision-Making for an informed group conscience. If I am a Conference member with a minority view, I have a duty to come to the microphone to present that view to the Conference when I believe that a wrong decision could seriously affect Al-Anon. The Right of Appeal reflects Al-Anon’s concern for the freedom and protection of individual perspectives as well as the unity of the whole.

Concept Six

“Just as the groups entrust responsibility for Al-Anon as a whole to the WSC, the traditional arm, the Conference depends on the Trustees, the business and legal arm, to guide and oversee the business of our fellowship throughout the year. Without a method of delegation and assignment of responsibility, the members and groups of Al-Anon would not be able to fulfill their primary spiritual purpose, to help families and friends of alcoholics.”

The “torch of leadership” was passed back to the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees who continued:

Concept Seven

“As Concept Six states, ‘The Conference acknowledges the primary administrative responsibility of the Trustees.’ Once the Conference has made a decision, the Trustees function like the directors of any large business corporation. We are given ample authority and trust to conduct Al-Anon’s business.

“This leads us to Concept Seven: ‘The Trustees have legal rights while the rights of the Conference are traditional.’

“At the Annual Meeting held the morning following the World Service Conference, the Trustees exercise our legal and fiduciary responsibility by approving all Conference motions. This makes the motions legally binding. However, if the Trustees later find that a decision the Conference approved is not financially feasible, has legal issues, or is not workable, we demonstrate mutual respect to the Conference by explaining why we are not implementing its decision.

Concept Eight

“Just as Conference members don’t have time to routinely manage the office, neither does the Board since it meets quarterly.” With this delegated authority, the “torch of leadership” was passed to the Chairperson of the Executive Committee.

“You heard in Concept Two the qualities of trust, judgment, and responsibility are put into practice. These same principles apply in Concept Eight as the Board trusts the oversight of routine operations of the World Service Office to the Executive Committee.

“A few of our responsibilities include reviewing World Service Conference presentations, résumés of At-Large members, and approving the Finance Committee report. The Executive Committee also receives a monthly update of staff activities.

“We possess the right to make legal decisions for the Board in its absence, as needed, and we are members of the World Service Conference with voice and vote.

“Concept Eight is about harmonious relations that are friendly and efficient, so we can let go and trust others.

“As an ex-officio member of the Board of Trustees, I pass the ‘torch of leadership’ back to the Board of Trustees at its Quarterly meeting.”

The Chairperson of the Board continued, “Board members receive the minutes from the monthly Executive Committee meetings. At the Quarterly Board of Trustees meeting, Trustees review the interim actions of the Executive Committee and can require further discussion before making the legally-binding decisions. This is autonomy blended with balance.

Concept Nine

“Leaders are willing to consult widely, keep an open mind during discussions, and make decisions based on spiritual principles to achieve the higher good for the organization. Leaders do not make decisions to avoid conflict or achieve conformity. Leaders don’t have to force solutions, convince, or correct anyone. They need to be prepared to face criticism before moving forward.

“Letting go and living one day at a time is a spiritual principle, but the Board of Trustees must perform the duties of our legal role in the business world of the organization.

Concept Ten

“When the Conference gives direction to the Board through a motion or consensus, the Board is responsible for ensuring follow-through. We keep the Conference informed through the quarterly Chairperson of the Board letter and Annual Report. When the Board delegates authority to the Executive Committee, we carefully define the parameters and ensure understanding. We respect the boundaries to avoid double-headed management. The Executive Committee reports all its actions to the Board.”

The Chairpersons of the Board and Executive Committee then held the “torch of leadership” together, “This is cooperation and trust.”

Without controlling the outcomes on the implementation, the “torch of leadership” was passed to the Executive Director representing the World Service Office staff.

Concept Eleven

The Executive Director began, “The staff members, along with the Trustees and members of the Executive Committee, participate at the Conference with full voice and vote. Staff listens to the discussions and adds additional information from the broadest perspective based on its interaction with members throughout the World Service Conference Structure and Al-Anon worldwide. Staff also brings the voices of the Committees through the Trustee liaisons and the assigned staff. In this way, all parts of the fellowship have an opportunity to be heard and the final decisions of the Conference are implemented according to the group conscience of the full Conference.

Concept Twelve

“The Warranties are part of the Conference Charter.

Warranties

“The Warranties remind us of the core spiritual principles that we, as Conference members, want to uphold in all of our thoughts and interactions.

Warranty One

“Our dreams can be possible by thinking abundantly as we consider our ample Reserve.

Warranty Two

“No one voice is more important than another.

Warranty Three

“That during this week as we make decisions and any other actions, we strive for unanimity.

Warranty Four

“. . . and restrain us from seeking to punish those with whom we don’t agree.

Warranty Five

“And while the Conference is the largest group conscience, it is bound by the same principles of a loving God as discussed in Tradition Two.

“As we each keep these principles in mind, we will always do the best for Al-Anon Family Groups that has entrusted each of us with responsibility and clear thinking.”

The “torch of leadership” was passed back to the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees.

She concluded, “We hope this presentation on the Concepts of Service based on the service positions represented here has provided the framework for the work we are about to accomplish at this 56th Annual World Service Conference and as we realize our spiritual potential.”

Roles

The Chairperson talked about the different roles the Conference members have as they attend the Conference. As their roles were called out, members stood to demonstrate the 2/3 ratio of Delegates.

- Delegates
- Trustees
- Executive Committee
- Voting Staff
- Other Workers



Delegates

- Bring viewpoint of their Areas on matters affecting the entire fellowship.
- Listen and participate in discussions on matters affecting Al-Anon as a whole.
- Vote on matters affecting Al-Anon as a whole.
- Return to their Areas to share a broader perspective of Al-Anon worldwide.

Trustees

- Are the chief service arm of the Conference.
- Listen and participate in discussions on matters affecting Al-Anon as a whole.
- Vote on matters affecting Al-Anon as a whole.
- Ensure the goals and directions of the WSC are carried out.

Executive Committee Members

- Listen and participate in discussions on matters affecting Al-Anon as a whole.
- Vote on matters affecting Al-Anon as a whole.
- Ensure the goals and directions of the WSC are carried out.

Voting Staff

- Listen and participate in discussions on matters affecting Al-Anon as a whole.
- Vote on matters affecting Al-Anon as a whole.
- Are responsible for carrying out the goals and directions of the WSC.

International Visitors

- Listen and participate in discussions on matters affecting Al-Anon as a whole.
- Gain information regarding Conference procedures and policies.

Executive Committee for Real Property Management (ECRPM) Chairperson

- Ensures that the spirit and letter of the resolution to create the ECRPM to handle the management of the property is upheld. This is why they are given voice at Conference.

Non-Voting Staff

- Support the work of all the members of the Conference in numerous ways.

The Chairperson continued, “We have reviewed all of the types of Conference members. There are a few activities in which the majority of Conference members—Delegates, Trustees, Executive Committee, and Voting Staff—participate.”

Similarity in Roles

Two roles that are similar for all Conference members:

- Listen and participate in discussions on matters affecting Al-Anon as a whole.
- Vote on matters affecting Al-Anon as a whole.

“Being aware of this, each of us, in our particular role, has the responsibility to share thoughts and opinions, as well as to vote our conscience based on what is best for Al-Anon as a whole.”

Differences in Roles

Conference members bring different:

- Perspectives:
 - ✓ Delegates bring Area viewpoints.
 - ✓ Trustees bring legal, financial, public outreach, worldwide viewpoints.
 - ✓ Executive Committee members bring legal, financial, public outreach, worldwide viewpoints.
 - ✓ Staff members bring experiences working with the fellowship.
- Responsibilities:
 - ✓ Delegates to their Areas and the Conference.
 - ✓ Trustees to the Al-Anon Organization, Conference, and the fellowship.
 - ✓ Executive Committee members to the Board of Trustees and the fellowship.
 - ✓ Staff to the Board of Trustees and the fellowship.

Voting staff is responsible to carry out the decisions of the Conference, but the rest of us ensure the work is carried out.

Path to Group Conscience through Delegated Authority

The Chairperson of the Board continued the Orientation, 'Now that we have clarity on our roles at Conference, I want to talk a little about the 'Path to Group Conscience through Delegated Authority.' In our role, we have been given the delegated authority to discuss and vote on the topics that come up at this Conference. When the Conference makes a decision, I trust the group conscience because, like all voting members here, I heard the conversation and had an opportunity to speak my truth before voting. Concept Three is about this delegated authority.

Members to Group Representative (GR)

"The first step to a group conscience is the member participating in the group. Group members share their thoughts and opinions on the topic at the business meeting. Then, a group conscience vote is taken. The GR, as the delegated authority, takes that discussion and decision when it involves an issue outside of the group and carries it forward to the district or Area. Today's discussion focuses on the path to group conscience from the group to the Area and finally to the World Service Conference. Please note that I am not forgetting about the link of service through the District Representatives. However, their representation is through the Area Delegate when the Delegate attends the Area World Service Committee meetings.

GR to Delegate

"The GR goes to the Area Assembly with his/her group's information, listens to opinions, and makes decisions for Area Al-Anon as a whole. The GR goes back to the group and reports the discussions—both sides—while supporting the Area's decision.

"The Delegate is the delegated authority that gathers the concerns, questions, and experience from all of the GRs and brings this information to the WSC.

Delegate to the World Service Conference (WSC)

"The descriptive text of Concept Two tells us, 'The group conscience of Al-Anon could not be heard unless properly chosen Conference members were fully trusted to speak for it in most world service matters. Hence the principle of delegated authority and responsibility to our trusted servants must be implicit from the top to the bottom of our active service structure.'

"The Delegate comes to Conference from the Area with all of its concerns, questions, and experience. The Delegate also listens to the ideas and opinions of other Delegates and Conference members and an informed group conscience decision is made that can be supported by all.

WSC to Trustees

"That completes the 'Path to a Group Conscience,' but there is still more to say about delegated authority. Once the Conference has done its work, the Board of Trustees has other responsibilities that must be addressed. Those responsibilities include financial, legal, worldwide public relations, as well as being the guardians of the Traditions.

"As stated in Concept Six, page 194, 'Since our Trustees must function like the directors of any large business corporation, they must have ample authority to manage and conduct Al-Anon's business.'



Trustees to Executive Committee

“Delegated authority continues as it states in Concept Eight, ‘The Board of Trustees delegates full authority for routine management of AI-Anon Headquarters to its executive committees.’ The Trustees delegate the administrative functions to the Executive Committee so that the Board can focus on strategic and forward-thinking ideas. This does not mean that the Executive Committee is working alone. They report their actions to the Board members who ask questions and voice concerns. Then the actions of the Executive Committee are approved by the Board of Trustees.”

Basic Flow Chart

The Chairperson introduced a flow chart illustrating the steps of delegated authority as related to the World Service Conference and the decisions that are made. Note that the Executive Committee often receives input from the World Service Office staff as it works with projects. The flowchart is on the back of the *Conference Summary*. It is based on the delegated authority as demonstrated at the World Service Conference.

The chart shows how both delegated authority and group conscience goes back through the same channels. Communication is what makes the process work.



Knowledge-Based Decision-Making

The Knowledge-Based Decision-Making (KBDM) process is what the Conference uses to reach an informed group conscience. Most Conference members have read about it in the *Conference Summaries* and the “Conference Procedures Booklet” and many have had the chance to work with it.

There is a KBDM presentation on AFG Connects that Delegates can download to present the process to their Areas.

Five Elements

There are five elements to KBDM:

- Open communication between leadership and membership.
- Dialogue before deliberation.
- Common access to full information for all decision makers.
- Existence in a culture of trust.
- Confidence in the competency of our partners.

Relationship of WSC Participants

The Chairperson of the Board concluded by saying, “As we use Knowledge-Based Decision-Making for reaching an informed group conscience, we know that all voting members of the Conference, regardless of our different perspectives and responsibilities, will listen to all ideas and opinions, so the vote will be based on an informed group conscience as shown by this graphic. If we don’t take seriously our responsibility to share all facts and opinions, then our group conscience will not be completely informed.”

Each Member...One Vote

“Once all World Service Conference members (Delegates, Trustees, Executive Committee members, and voting staff) hear the facts and opinions from all sides of the issue, then each member will vote according to his/her conscience believing that the decision is based on what is best for AI-Anon as a whole.”

AFG, THE FELLOWSHIP, AND AFG, INC., THE ORGANIZATION

The purpose of the presentation was to give Conference members some information about our history and how Al-Anon Family Groups and the World Service Office came to be. The presentation explained the relationship and differences of Al-Anon Family Groups, the Fellowship, and Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc., the Organization. Additionally, it was hoped that the presentation would help Conference members gain a better understanding of how each member of an Al-Anon Family Group is connected to Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. and our world services.

The Family Group idea is nearly as old as Alcoholics Anonymous (A.A.). In the pioneering days of A.A. from 1935 to 1941, close relatives of recovering alcoholics realized that to solve their personal problems they needed to apply the same principles that helped alcoholics with their recovery.

By 1948, numbers of Family Groups had applied to the A.A. General Service Office for listing in the A.A. Directory, and scores of relatives of alcoholics asked them for help. But as we know, A.A. was designed to aid alcoholics only.

By 1951, two wives, Lois W. and Anne B., formed a Clearing House Committee to get in touch with these 87 inquirers and to coordinate, unify, and serve them; 56 groups responded. As a result of questionnaires, the name Al-Anon Family Groups was chosen. The name is simply a derivative of the first syllables of “Alcoholics Anonymous.”

Soon, the movement came to public attention. New groups and individuals here and abroad wrote to the Clearing House about their problems. By 1954, a small paid staff became necessary.

In 1954, Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc., incorporated and was granted tax-exempt status in 1956 as a non-profit organization under section 501 (C)(3) of the U.S. Internal Revenue Code.

Tax-exempt status was similarly granted to Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters (Canada) Inc. in 1999 under paragraph 149(1) of the Income Tax Act of Canada.

We file tax returns annually in both countries and those returns are available for your information on our Members’ Web site.

As with any Corporation, a Board of Trustees was appointed. Originally, the Board was made up of close friends of Lois who resided in the New York City area.

Following the presentation, a skit was performed by the Chairperson of the Board and the North Carolina/Bermuda Delegate illustrating the differences between Al-Anon Family Groups: The Fellowship and traditional arm, and Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc.: The Organization and legal arm.

Al-Anon Family Groups, the fellowship

- Doesn’t exist in the eyes of the law.
- Doesn’t have tax-exempt status; contributions are not tax-deductible.
- Is the traditional arm—provides meetings and service structure.
- Provides support for individual members.
- Has a governance document, the World Service Conference Charter, which is amended by the World Service Conference.
- Recognizes the Board of Trustees as the chief service arm of the Conference.

Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc., the organization

- Exists in the eyes of the law—the Board of Trustees is legally responsible for AFG, Inc.
- Has tax-exempt status in the U.S. and Canada and can accept contributions that may be tax-deductible.
- Is the legal arm—protects our trademarks (our logo and name) and our copyrights.
- Conducts the business of Al-Anon.
- Has a governance document, the By-Laws of the corporation, which is amended by the Board of Trustees unless objected to by the Conference. (See Al-Anon World Service Conference Charter, 10 d, on page 174 of the *2014 – 2017 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*.)
- Recognizes the World Service Conference as the ultimate traditional authority (Concept Two).

Following the skit, the Chairperson ended the session saying, “You are the living embodiment of the Twelve Concepts.”

Paula B.

Trustee, Chairperson of the Board

Valentina H.

Panel 56, North Carolina/Bermuda

APPROVALS

Jennie McC.

Trustee, Treasurer

David Zach

Director of Business Services
(Non-member)

2015 Auditor's Report

Each year, the Director of Business Services explains the details of the audit, including its purpose. The financial records of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. are audited by an independent Certified Public Accounting firm. The auditors, after reviewing all the materials provided, found that the financial statements were in conformity with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP).

Prior to the Conference, a copy of the audit, including the opinion letter of the independent auditors, was posted for all Conference members to review. During the Conference, the Director of Business Services gave a page-by-page explanation of the audit. A copy of the 2015 audit can be found on the Members' Web site, al-anon.org/members.

Conference members had the following questions:

- What is the decision-making process for investments?

We have two investment managers. We meet with one twice a year, and sometimes have quarterly phone calls. We meet with the manager of the Bond portfolio once a year. We ask for information about the plans to get a feel for where we are going. Every five years, we review the managers. The Finance Committee looks at how the Standard & Poor's (S&P) has done and compares that performance to our investments. In the long run, we have done very well compared to the benchmark.

- What is included in the occupancy cost?

It includes what is needed to keep operating—security, repairs, pest control, site visits by the Executive Committee for Real Property Management (ECRPM), insurance, etc.

- Last year, we almost made the goal for contributions. What is the cost of the Appeal Letter and what is the benefit? How much does the WSO receive compared to what it costs to produce/send the letter?

Printing and postage is \$25,000 to \$30,000 per year. The Appeal contributions are about \$500,000 per year. That is a pretty good investment.

- What was the special project?

The consultant hired by the Board to interview WSO staff and prepare a report to the Board of Trustees.

- Why are we investing in the stock and bond markets? Who makes the decision on how much we can invest? I have trouble understanding who makes the decision on how much we spend investing in business outside of Al-Anon.

The Board of Trustees sets the amount at 60 percent. The money in the Reserve Fund and the money in the General Fund that is not needed for bills, is invested in the bond market. We paid off the mortgage on the building in 2010 with money from our investments. In the long run, we made substantially more in the stock market than in the bond market.

- If we sold stock and took a loss, who makes the decision about when to sell and why to sell at a loss?

The decision is made by the fund managers through our discussions with them. We limit any loss; the reason being that if something unexpected were to happen, we would want to cut the losses and invest in a stronger company.

- Do we receive dividends from these long-term investments?

Yes, some are. We invest in well-known companies. The last couple of years, stocks related to the energy industry have not done well and this year, some foreign stock has not done so well. No one knew oil prices would drop as they did. So far it has worked out. Our market is gaining faster than overseas markets.

- In my opinion, I disagree totally with us investing in the stock market with this money. Are the people who are managing the money Al-Anon members?

We hire managers based on their skills and references and who have more than 20 years' experience. We are comfortable and have worked with them for a long time. We are aware of our mission and do not invest in alcohol-related stocks. We are not aware if these managers are Al-Anon members.

- In view of the proposed deficit for 2016, I would like more information about travel expenses. Why not use other media to communicate instead of travel?

We do use "GoToMeeting" video conferencing and conference calls. The Finance and Executive Committees do not travel to the WSO monthly. We continue looking at ways to reduce expenses and as technology improves, we will find other ways to save money.

- Is it typical to get a bump in income during years when there's an International Convention?

We made money in Vancouver. Pittsburgh was not as profitable.

- It looks like 60 percent of the budget goes to staffing. Is that typical of a non-profit?

Yes, it is typical.

- Several staff positions are unfilled. Had they not been filled, would it have caused payroll to decrease?

We have several positions not yet filled. When staff members leave, they have accrued vacation, benefits, etc. that have not been used so there is an increase in expense.

- Was the consultant hired to help with restructuring of the WSO?

Yes. The October Chairperson of the Board letter included information about the consultant hired by the Board to look at the organizational chart to make sure the culture of the WSO is helping to move the mission of the Board forward in its goals. Every five years, we hire a compensation consultant to make sure we are paying staff a fair wage in comparison to other non-profits in this area. During the last Conference, we talked about hiring an Event/Project Manager and we also added an Employee Resource Manager, mid-year, that also includes a training aspect. The Finance Committee, when talking with an investment broker, often asks, "Do you own this stock?" It lets us know if the stock is something popular or something they are passionate about and believe in.

- Are there any changes to our process for checking in with the investment managers? Can I report anything new to my Area regarding the procedures?

The procedures have not changed. We have talked with them about equity handling and we have sold some things, and rebalanced the portfolio in order to get into an investment structure we believe will be more profitable going forward. The process is the same. We talked more often because of the current market situation.

- General Administration and Office Expenses are the top two expenses. What do they include?

Computer consultants, organizational management consultants, training for staff, updates and maintenance of our computer systems, and AFG Connects.

- Do we pay the Executive Director the top salary of \$216,000, when the comparable top salary is \$206,000?

We aren't necessarily paying in the highest range in each category. Salaries are in a range for those doing comparable work in the Hampton Roads area.

- Post-retirement health benefits are higher than most of us could imagine. How did this come about and become established?

It was established in New York. The Finance Committee is looking at all benefits, which is part of its purview. It was very popular years ago and the Finance Committee will look at adjustments.

The Conference Chairperson thanked Conference members for their thoughtful questions and the Finance Committee for its presentation.

A Motion to approve the 2015 Audited Financial Report was made, seconded, and carried. (See Motion #3, page 98).

Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc.

SCHEDULE 1

	2016 Budget	2015 Actual
<u>Operating Expenses</u>		
Salaries	2,949,000	2,815,421
Payroll Taxes	223,000	205,011
Employee Benefits	448,000	481,993
Total Labor Costs	3,620,000	3,502,425
Building Occupancy	297,000	300,380
Packing & Shipping (Net)	(70,000)	(72,849)
Postage	197,000	313,117
Telephone	57,000	56,343
Stationery & Office Supplies	75,000	88,504
Outreach Activities	6,000	3,556
Office Services & Expenses	208,000	263,655
Repairs & Maintenance	9,000	7,554
Travel & Meetings	145,000	153,701
Direct Conference Costs (Net) Schedule 2	62,000	64,762
Legal & Audit	60,000	48,324
Printing	106,000	140,698
Canadian Office	2,000	1,297
General services meeting	30,000	
In-Office Volunteers	2,000	1,440
Membership Survey		11,289
PSA Campaign	85,000	82,857
Miscellaneous	46,000	34,103
Postretirement Health Benefits	65,000	56,052
Total Operating Expense	5,002,000	5,057,208
Depreciation (Exc. Bldg.)	55,000	58,083
Total Expense	5,057,000	5,115,291
<u>Estimated Revenue</u>		
Literature Sales less cost of printing	2,600,000	2,822,801
Contributions	1,800,000	1,649,337
Forum Subscriptions	250,000	230,714
Investment Income/Transfer from Reserve Fund	<u>223,000</u>	51,415
Total Estimated Revenue	4,873,000	4,754,267
Net increase (decrease)	(184,000)	(361,024)

2016 Finance Committee Report

The 2016 Budget was presented to the Conference members by the Treasurer of the Board of Trustees of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. The 2016 Budget shows expenses are expected to be \$184,000 more than revenue for the year. We are estimating expenses to be \$5,057,000 and revenues to be \$ 4,873,000.

Jennie McC.
Trustee, Treasurer

David Zach
Director of Business Services
(Non-member)

Projected Expenses

Overall expense is budgeted to decrease by \$58,000 from last year's actual expenses. Labor costs are expected to increase \$118,000 due to cost of living and merit increases.

Estimated Income

Estimated income from literature sales is estimated to be about \$123,000 less than last year and *Forum* subscription income to be slightly higher. Contributions are budgeted to be \$1,800,000, which is about 9% more than last year's actual. Beginning in 2008, it was agreed to transfer up to 4% of the fair value of the Reserve Fund to the General Fund. Since the increase in the value of the Reserve Fund is lower than in the past, we reduced the transfer amount for 2015 to about 1.1 %. For 2016, we have agreed on a transfer of 4%.

It was also noted that we have gone from an excess in the Preliminary Budget to a deficit in this Budget. We know we can't alter expenses because there are minimum services that members require. The information was taken to the Board of Trustees.

Following the presentation of the Budget, the Treasurer said, "I'd like to tell you a little bit about the budget process and where we are today:

"The Preliminary Budget was prepared by staff and the Finance Committee in November and December for approval by the Board of Trustees in January. That preliminary budget was posted for your information.

"That Budget is updated in April by the Finance Committee and presented to the Board of Trustees in April. The changes incorporate more current and accurate information based on actual activity in the first quarter.

"That updated Budget is the Budget you have before you. I would like to highlight and explain the changes from the Preliminary Budget to this Proposed Budget. Keep in mind that a budget is simply a plan to guide us in some decision-making and planning and to give us a measure as to how we are doing through the year.

"The first three lines of the Budget cover personnel expenses, which are salaries, payroll taxes, and employee benefits. The change in numbers accounts for a more accurate calculation of salaries based on recent changes in staffing and plans to implement the restructuring of the WSO that the Chairperson of the Board discussed, including filling the new positions of Director of Programs and e-Platform Manager.

"You will notice a \$10,000 increase in Office Supplies and Expense. This is to cover some consulting fees to aid in the reorganization of the office. There is a small increase in Miscellaneous related to hiring costs, and an increase in post-retirement health costs to more closely reflect the costs associated with newly retired staff.

"You will notice that we have not changed revenue projections—we hope that our literature sales projection is low and that our contribution projection is low also—we are hoping for an incredible outpouring of abundant and grateful expression this year, building on last year's momentum.

"As we read in the Concept Eleven text earlier this Conference, we may be compelled to risk temporary deficits. We would rather not, and it is our responsibility as a Finance Committee to 'keep a watchful eye on expenditures' and to 'make revisions when necessary' to the Budget. During the year, we will look for ways to decrease expenditures where possible, just as we did with the suspension of the complimentary copies of *The Forum*. We will make every effort to retain all the services you have come to expect and enjoy."

The following were questions and comments from the Conference floor:

- Could you break down expenses for Meet the Board? Maybe this could be cut down.

The Board has to travel somewhere for Board Week. For some, the distance to the Meet the Board venue is shorter and less expensive.

Scheduling quarterly Board meetings also includes building in time for Committees and if, during Board week, those face-to-face meetings are eliminated, it would shorten the number of days.

We look at the number of people who have to come in earlier and stay later; everyone is here for the Policy Committee meeting. Some Committees meet before the Policy Committee. When planning Board week, we have to be mindful of all of these things.

- How was the budget affected when we stopped mailing *Forums* to each group?
That shows up in the printing and mailing costs.
- The transfer from the Reserve Fund is up from 2015. Why the increase, and what is it?
In 2015, we didn't want to take as much from the Reserve Fund to cover expenses. We are allowed to take a transfer of up to four percent. In an effort to conserve the Reserve, we opted to take less to see if we could make it up in contributions, and we asked the Conference to help increase contributions. This year, we might have to transfer more (maximum) from the Reserve.
- Travel overseas to assure growth of Al-Anon is important. Using the Reserve is fine. It seems that literature and contributions are not going to cover the deficit. Is it the Board's assessment that it will?
We hope contributions and literature sales will increase and investments will show a gain this year. We are trying to be realistic and that an increase in contributions will show a big jump. This may be another year of temporary deficits.
- With literature sales dropping, we need to look at ways to improve. How does electronic literature affect sales? Is there a profit from electronic literature and how does it compare to printed? Can we send in ideas to help?
We are stumped about the decline of literature. The membership is steady, so we are baffled. We would welcome ideas and other deficit reducing ideas would be welcomed too. Electronic literature is always the first place we look, but members are just not buying in quantities that would have an impact on printed materials. We are not sure if electronic literature is popular. If there were a lot of sales, it would be profitable though.
- I am impressed with the transparency. Investment income is a concern going into the year with a budget overspending by \$400,000. We are taking \$200,000 out of the Reserve and there is still a deficit. It makes me feel uncomfortable if the strategy is hoping contributions and literature will increase. How long would we continue to do this? Overspending would put us in trouble. How do we get out of this situation?
We take this very seriously and discuss it a lot. We are always looking at the costs versus the benefits. Before cutting staff or services, we want to exhaust every avenue.
- Outreach activity is a low figure. What is included?
Flyers.
- We have full libraries in our Area and encourage new members to purchase books. Buying a book versus making a contribution is different on the bottom line. A \$12 book does not equal a \$12 contribution.
- Under the "Salary" line, a one percent increase seems small. Does this equate to reductions in services or staff to keep this number low?
We had two Directors resign, and they will be replaced by a Director of Programs. This will reduce salaries. The number was anticipating staff reductions. We have to dig deep again this year.
- I am proud of how well the money is managed. I think no expense is wasted without undoing the mission we are trying to accomplish. Cutting expenses won't get us out of the problem. Contributions are all of our jobs. Only we can support the WSO. The WSO can't get money from anyone else. I was asked what the average literature sales per group is. Could that be reported?
We can calculate it by group. That would not include LDC sales or purchases by individuals.
- I will communicate with the groups that we need to stop putting a dollar in the basket and start putting in five dollars (the cost of a coffee) and tell them, "Here's what it will take for us to stop deficit spending in the next three years."
- Can we cut post-retirement health benefits? Would it be only for new employees?
The Finance Committee is looking at employee benefits.

- What is the level of urgency to get new literature into the pipeline and out to the membership?
Literature comes from the members. Members have submitted more than 600 sharings for our new books. This means that if every sharing is perfect, we would have two to choose from for each page. We need 1,200 sharings to put together a daily reader. For the Parents and Grandparents pamphlet: We need to hear how parents are working the Steps, the challenges of each Step, and the rewards. We are not hearing from parents and grandparents. It is more important to have the quality for a piece of literature rather than just meeting a deadline.
- For \$11, we can buy a subscription to *The Forum*.
The number of subscriptions to The Forum has increased by 40% since suspending the complimentary copy for the groups.
- Packing and shipping—is that gross or net?
It represents income from shipping costs. We are using a service for shipping that is saving us money.
- In accordance with page 96 in the *Service Manual*, I can set up a donation in my will. One time up to 10% of revenue or \$503,000. As a member, I keep soft cover copies of *How Al-Anon Works* (B-32) in my car trunk. As a member, I can give another member a book if I want to. There will be three Task Forces next year that have, as part of their strategies, talking about ways to look at money as an expression of gratitude. On my taxes, I make it a point to see if I increased my personal contributions from the previous year. If I am feeling more grateful, I need to increase my contribution.
- How do you substantiate the increase for *Forum* subscriptions?
We suspended the free subscriptions to groups, and they started buying subscriptions. Subscriptions are up 40 percent.
- Page 21 in the “Groups at Work” section of the *Service Manual*, “Passing the Basket” section, could we have a page letting the membership know what \$1 put in the basket in 1951 and what it is worth today? We can officially read it out of the book. At Anniversary and Birthday meetings members send in a check to the WSO for the celebrant.
- *Groups at Work* (P-24) costs \$1.00. We try to have six to 12 copies at our groups. Have a jar at every meeting and let members know the money goes directly to the WSO.
- If literature sales are so low and only new people buy it, do we have a literature problem or a growth problem? The cost of services to the group is the floor, not the ceiling; however, we should also look beyond the cost of services per group to our own responsibility for providing world services.
- Instead of love gifts this year, we put jars on the tables at the groups for change. We brought a \$3,600 donation instead of love gifts.

A motion to approve the 2016 Finance Committee Report was made, seconded, and carried. (See Motion #5, page 98).

2015 ANNUAL REPORT

Paula B.

Trustee, Chairperson of the Board

Judy K.

Trustee, Policy Committee
Chairperson

Terry F.

Trustee, Strategic Plan Oversight
Work Group Chairperson

Bev A.

Executive Committee Chairperson

The 2015 Annual Report was sent to the Delegates prior to the Conference. The Report included updates from various Board Committees, as well as World Service Office (WSO) departments. Delegates had the opportunity to review the Annual Report and submit questions in advance to be sure they were clear before coming to the World Service Conference (WSC). Questions were answered and distributed before the Conference began.

Since the report was provided in advance, the floor was opened for additional questions.

Conference members had the following questions:

- The WSO mails one copy of the *Conference Summary* to Past Delegates, Past Trustees, and Past WSO Conference Staff. Now that these members have a community in AFG Connects, could we ask those members with e-mail addresses if they still want a hard copy, or if they would prefer an electronic copy, as it could save shipping? How many copies do we currently send?

Around 550 copies.

- Do you look at how many Past Delegates, Past Trustees, and Past WSO Conference Staff are no longer active in AI-Anon?

Sometimes we hear from members who tell us that they no longer want to receive mail, and we place them on the “no mail” list even though we have contact information for them. If someone doesn’t want mail, but doesn’t tell us, then we don’t have up-to-date information. Please ask members to let us know.

- The Report stated that the WSO explored the possibility of members making contributions using their cell phones. What did they find?

We looked at the cost and it was prohibitive.

- There is an unsubscribe button at the bottom of *Group e-News*. A Group Representative (GR) is forwarding the newsletter and someone on the e-mail list is unsubscribing. Then the GR doesn’t receive *Group e-News* any longer. Can that unsubscribe button be removed?

We can’t remove it from the vendor’s template, but our Group Records Coordinator receives a list of those who unsubscribed and she contacts the members to see if they truly want to unsubscribe. It is good to have the conversation in the group before the CMA forwards Group e-News to the group members.

- I noted that Japan reported that some Conference Approved Literature (CAL) has been translated to Japanese. There are members in California who would love to read that translated CAL. How can members here buy it?

The WSO only translates material into Spanish and French because our Structure is trilingual and the WSO cannot house a lot of literature. We do have the “Translations of Conference Approved Literature” (S-13) order form in the online store that lists the four pieces of Japanese literature available. The Japanese translations are done in Japan. Customer Service would have to order the literature on the member’s behalf and the member would be responsible for the shipping costs.



The Associate Director of Communications—Professionals updated the Conference on the following topics:

April Alcohol Awareness Month

This event is a significant opportunity for members to get involved in public outreach activities, since it is focused exclusively on alcohol. Al-Anon and Alateen groups were encouraged in *Group-e-News* to engage in local public outreach activities, such as publicizing group meeting information in print and on-line community calendars and distributing *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism* magazines to offices of professionals and public places. Public Outreach Coordinators also received a WSO news release addressing alcoholism and its effects on the family as a noteworthy health concern. Al-Anon and Alateen groups, along with the WSO's contact information, continue to be included in the U.S. Navy's Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention and Control's April Alcohol Awareness announcement to the Navy, Marines, and Coast Guard joint fleets throughout the world.

National Recovery Month

The WSO continues to cooperate with the U.S. Government's National Recovery Month held annually in September. This year's theme, "Our Families, Our Stories, Our Recovery," supports Al-Anon's efforts to attract newcomers to our program through information and Al-Anon sharings. U.S. Area Public Outreach Coordinators received notification of events taking place during Recovery Month in the U.S. and Recovery Day in Canada in September, which could be outreach opportunities. Many of these activities are celebrations of recovery inclusive of the family as well as alcoholics. Local Al-Anon service arms can have fun making information available about Al-Anon and Alateen at event information tables such as barbeques, art and music festivals, walks and runs, and picnics. Al-Anon service arms can also host special open meetings or conduct public outreach activities in September. It is an excellent opportunity for public outreach when people return from summer vacations and schools reopen.



Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism Magazine

Professional awareness of and referrals to Al-Anon and Alateen play a major role in influencing families of alcoholics to attend our program. The articles by professionals in the *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism* magazine cite the improvements and benefits experienced by their patients, clients, and consumers. This can be a major factor in motivating individuals unfamiliar with our program and/or questioning whether or not they are affected by someone's drinking to contact Al-Anon. The WSO Communications Section is always seeking assistance from members to help obtain submissions of articles or quotes by professionals for inclusion in the annual magazine, *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism*. Their endorsements of Al-Anon are also useful in our news releases. Copies of the *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism* Writer's Guide for Professionals are available. Delegates were asked to encourage their Area Public Outreach Coordinators to ask for members' participation when they report to their Areas.

The Associate Director of Communications—Literature updated the Conference on the following topics:

2017 Calendar Quotations

For the last four years, on a trial basis, the WSO has provided 20 Conference Approved Literature (CAL) quotations that could be used by service arms that were creating fundraising calendars without seeking written permission. This was an alternative to what had become a time-consuming process of approving each of the numerous reprint permission requests we had received in previous years. The quotations were provided in English, French, and Spanish.

Last year, the Executive Committee ended the trial period, and the project now continues on an ongoing basis. In February, the WSO posted 20 new quotations for use in 2017 calendars on the WSC Structure Announcements community on AFG Connects. As in the previous four years, if service arms submit reprint permission requests for use in calendars, they will be asked to select from the 20 quotations instead.

Intimacy piece and parents/grandparents pamphlet

We continue to seek members' sharings for both INTIMACY IN ALCOHOLIC RELATIONSHIPS (working title), and PARENTS & GRANDPARENTS OF YOUNG PROBLEM DRINKERS (working title). At this point, we've received over 1,179 sharings for the intimacy piece, and over 190 sharings for the parents/grandparents pamphlet. Thank you to everyone who has sent in sharings, as well as those who have encouraged others to do so.

Staff continues to review the 40 proposals received from freelance writers/editors for the intimacy piece, and 18 proposals for the parents/grandparents pamphlet. Due to some staffing changes, a realignment of responsibilities, and pressing deadlines for other projects, no selection has been made yet. Thank you to everyone who submitted proposals or encouraged others to do so.

NEW DAILY READER (working title)

The WSO has received approximately 680 sharings. Many more sharings are needed to reflect a wide variety of members in our fellowship, if the book is to be ready by the Al-Anon International Convention in 2018, which was the original goal.

To clarify, this is not intended to be a daily reader *about* diversity. Like all our daily readers, it will be a collection of single-page meditations (between 200-300 words each), that focus on applying an Al-Anon principle to a real-life problem or challenge. In addition, the book needs to convey, through the rich diversity of personal experience, how universally the Al-Anon program works, regardless of our differences.

Electronic CAL

Last year, it was announced that an Area with access to professional recording equipment was planning to record one of Al-Anon's books at its Convention. The book was recorded and is awaiting some final touches before the Area submits the recording to the WSO for possible development as an audiobook.

Conference report to the groups

Because groups no longer receive a complimentary copy of *The Forum* magazine, which for the last ten years had included a four-page section about the Conference in the July and August issues, the "News from the 2016 World Service Conference" report will be posted on the Members' Web site by June, with a link in the June *Group e-News*, and a full-page ad for the report in the July issue of *The Forum*. This will allow more time and care to be spent in writing the report, and it will get to the fellowship considerably sooner than it has in the past. It will also precede the full *Conference Summary*, which is usually posted electronically in July and available in hard copy in August.

The Associate Director Member Services—Conference updated the Conference on the following topics:

2015 World Service Conference (WSC) Motion #8

The 2015 World Service Conference (WSC) Motion #8 states: "The World Service Conference requests that the WSO send out the AFG Connects announcements, as soon as technically possible, to any Al-Anon member who subscribes." (See *2015 Conference Summary*, page 102).

In researching the technical requirements related to using the current "Announcements—WSC Structure" community on AFG Connects for individual subscribers, the WSO concluded that using AFG Connects to communicate with individual members was not feasible as envisioned.

The WSO has recently decided on a solution for carrying out the motion, which will include utilizing a separate communication system to deliver news from the WSO. This system is currently being used to distribute *Group e-News* to groups.

When individual members subscribe to receive announcements from the WSO, an e-mail distribution list will be created for the members who are interested in receiving news from the WSO.

The members in service who currently receive information through the "Announcements—WSC Structure" community on AFG Connects will continue to receive announcements as they have been receiving them.

This new communication tool is planned to be launched in late spring/early summer 2016.

Links of Service (S-28) and Joy of Service (S-57)

Links of Service (S-28) and *Joy of Service* (S-57) have been revised. These service tools are available electronically on the Members' Web site. They are also available for sale as service tools through local Literature Distribution Centers (LDC). The WSO will notify Delegates via AFG Connects when they are available in French and Spanish.

The Associate Director of Member Services—International updated the Conference on the following topics:

AI-Anon/Alateen Guidelines

Almost all of the AI-Anon/Alateen guidelines have been updated since 2014 and are posted with the new masthead on the Members' Web site. Several Public Outreach Guidelines and a few miscellaneous topics are currently being revised and will be posted on the Members' site this year. All of the guidelines revised since 2014 are being translated into French and Spanish.

Phone and On-line AI-Anon Meetings

The AI-Anon phone meetings are now listed in an on-line search on the Public Outreach Web sites—English-speaking meetings on the English Web site and Spanish-speaking meetings on the Spanish Web site. At this time, there are no French-speaking phone meetings listed with the WSO.

The On-line AI-Anon Meeting Lists have been revised and are posted on the respective language's Web site in PDF lists: French meetings are posted on the French Members' Web site; Spanish meetings are posted on the Spanish Members' Web site; and International meetings (languages other than English, French, and Spanish) are posted on the "Find an International Meeting" tab.

Group Records Update

The Group Records Department has received an increasing number of complaints from members who were added as phone contacts for a group without their consent. This issue is not specific to just a few Areas. The members who contacted the WSO were deeply concerned that their contact information was provided to strangers and would jeopardize their anonymity if a family member answered the phone and, most importantly that a member of the group would take it upon him or herself to list them as a contact without their permission.

Members were referred to the *Service Manual* and encouraged to have a discussion at the group and district level. The WSO is taking steps to address this ongoing matter by reminding groups of the role of the group phone contact through ads in *Group e-News* and upcoming articles in *The Forum*.

The Associate Director of Communications—Media updated the Conference on the following topics:

Public Outreach

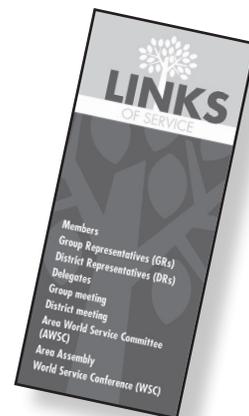
This year, Public Outreach really is a combination of the AI-Anon Declaration, "Let It Begin with Me," and the World Service Conference theme, "Realizing Our Spiritual Potential." It takes many people to carry AI-Anon's message of recovery to families and friends of alcoholics, including:

- The Public Outreach Committee.
- All of the departments at the WSO.
- All of the members of the World Service Conference.
- All of the Public Outreach Coordinators and local volunteers throughout the U.S. and Canada.

AI-Anon Faces Alcoholism magazine

The magazine goes to press twice each year. The first printing takes place in time for National Recovery Month in September, and the second printing takes place in time for Alcohol Awareness Month in April. The September issue always has next year's date on the cover, so it looks like it's four months early when it first arrives, and it continues to look up to date and timely for a full 16 months.

This year the fellowship ordered and received 150,000 copies of the second printing of the *AI-Anon Faces Alcoholism 2016* magazine in time for April Alcohol Awareness Month. The fellowship ordered a total of 370,000 copies of *AI-Anon Faces Alcoholism 2016* for the two combined printings, compared to 356,000 copies of *AFA 2015* that they ordered last year.



Professionals have been thanking Al-Anon for the magazines that go to their clients due to the efforts of local Al-Anon volunteers who leave the magazines in their waiting rooms. Professionals are also requesting more copies of the *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism* magazine when the initial supplies run out. Please encourage volunteers, to leave contact information for professionals to request more copies, or at least check the location occasionally to see if they need more copies.

Volunteers realize some of the spiritual benefits from their Public Outreach service when they find out people have been using and taking the magazines that they delivered. Another way to experience a spiritual benefit from this kind of service is to ask newcomers how they learned about Al-Anon.

The Television Public Service Announcement vendor notified the WSO that Al-Anon will receive a special award. Al-Anon's TV PSA ranked in the top one percent of all public service announcements broadcast in the U.S. during 2015, according to Nielsen Media Research. The top one percent status is based on the number of times TV stations actually played the Al-Anon PSAs during 2015.

In January, the Public Outreach Department sent Area Public Outreach Coordinators a list of all the TV stations in their Areas that played the PSAs during 2015. The TV stations on these lists provide Coordinators and volunteers with the most important PSA information for their local area. The TV stations that played the Al-Anon PSAs are the stations to which local members can send thank-you messages—whether they are phone calls, e-mails, or personal visits. As a result, the stations that hear from their customers are likely to play the PSAs more frequently this year.

Already this year, TV stations have played the Al-Anon PSAs over 8,500 times for an estimated audience of over 89,000,000.

Visitors to the Al-Anon WSO Facebook page have registered over 35,000 “likes” so far in 2016 in response to 147 posts. The total reach for the WSO posts on Facebook since January 1, 2016 has been over 1,100,000.

Please extend our gratitude to all of the members in your Area who are helping to carry the Al-Anon message of recovery to more families and friends of alcoholics. And please invite more members to experience the spiritual benefits that come from Step Twelve service.

A Motion to approve the 2015 Annual Report was made, seconded, and carried. (See WSC Motion #6, page 98) The complete report can be found on pages 99-118.

AL-ANON FACES ALCOHOLISM

What is *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism*? It is a comprehensive public outreach tool designed to reflect the benefits of recovery in the Al-Anon program—offering help, hope, understanding, and compassion. In 2015, the fellowship distributed 387,425 copies of *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism*.

Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism was created in 2001. It began as a special edition of *The Forum*. When members distribute *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism* in their communities, it creates a winning situation offering benefits to members doing the “foot work” and for those who need help.

The cover of the 2017 *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism* magazine reflects an effort to attract minorities, different cultures, and people from diverse backgrounds, to help them feel welcome in Al-Anon.

The Associate Director of Communications—Professionals thanked the Conference members for all they are doing to distribute the publication. She asked them to go back to their Areas to thank the members who put this public outreach project into action.

She concluded her presentation by saying, “Celebrate our success and keep *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism* going!”

Conference members were asked, “How can you encourage members and service arms to distribute *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism*? What more can we do?”

Conference members shared:

- We distribute them to a nun working in a women’s jail; we also give old *Forums* to distribute to the inmates. But *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism* seems geared more toward professionals. Can these be distributed to inmates?

The audience of Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism is the reader who knows nothing about our program. The Forum is for people who are usually already in the program. Yes, if Al-Anon meets in a correctional facility, Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism can be a tool to attract the inmates. Forum-like sharings provide insight to members already working the program. Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism sharings are about overcoming obstacles and resistance to Al-Anon or about how Al-Anon is helping members. Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism is a vehicle for the professional community to reach clients and to persuade them to contact us.

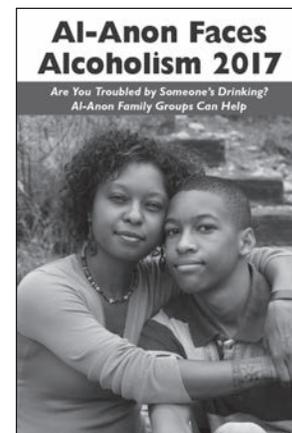
- My home group buys a bunch and when they are gone, we have to wait another six months to get more. We could continually be giving them out. Can I order throughout the year or only twice a year?

We suggest that members buy enough copies to cover six months and return frequently to distribute them. Professionals want patient/client educational material. If you have leftover copies, members can go to more places.

- Our Public Outreach Coordinator brings them to the Assembly to give to District Representatives as well as Group Representatives who don’t have an organized district. We put a sticker on old issues. It is a concern because if the new issue is out, we feel they won’t take the old ones. We keep leftovers to distribute.
- We give it out with a Newcomer Packet (K-10). Our distribution has improved in getting it to schools, treatment facilities, and police forces. Distribution is increasing in our rural Area, so hopefully it will lead to an increase our groups.
- We created a database of high schools, police departments, treatment facilities, and libraries. We buy 200 copies, more in Spanish, and distribute them with a five-fold business card that has a list of meetings in the district. It is a way to get more professionals more information.
- We had no inquiries from professionals for additional copies. We distribute them at health fairs and state fairs. It is a good joint effort with A.A. We also take them to domestic violence intervention centers and children’s health centers.
- Every quarter, we address envelopes in my home group for letters to lawyers, the judicial system, churches, hospitals, and treatment facilities. We put in a card for the Al-Anon Information Service (AIS) office and urge the professionals to contact us with questions. We notify our AIS the day we do that so they can look for an increase in calls. We also put *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism* in the newcomer packet. We have received a good response.
- We have a district with 15 meetings. At a Public Outreach Board meeting, we composed a list of appropriate professionals and facilities. We showed up with 15 packets for each meeting. Each group was given packets to distribute in each area of the district and the work was delegated.
- We have 20 groups in a district with an enthusiastic Public Outreach Coordinator who orders 400-500 copies and brings them to district meetings for group members to “forget to take them” from a taxi, community center, park bench, etc. We include a meeting list and contact information. This project provides a way to introduce new members to public outreach and encourage them to help with distribution.

Claire R.

Associate Director of
Communications—Professionals



ALATEEN SURVEY

J. P. M.

Executive Committee
Alateen Work Group
Chairperson

Donna E.

Trustee, Alateen Work Group
Co-Chairperson

At the 2015 World Service Conference (WSC), one of the Chosen Agenda Items was:

Is the current model of Alateen the best model for the future of both Al-Anon and Alateen?

The topic was introduced in the context of Bill W.'s "Essay on Leadership" and that we review past decisions to see if they are still appropriate. The discussion also mentioned the lack of Alateen attendance at both face-to-face meetings and chat meetings. One conclusion was that the Al-Anon adults have created the current Alateen model without input from the Alateens (*2015 Conference Summary*, pages 45-48).

The results of that discussion led to the following:

- Ask the teens what they think is/is not working.
- It was proposed that a survey be created to ask the Alateens what they would like to see as the Alateen model. Two Delegates collected questions from the Areas and volunteered to create a first draft of survey questionnaire.

Conduct an Alateen survey before the 2016 WSC and report the results.

While many of the questions submitted from the Areas addressed questions for Al-Anon members, rather than Alateens, the input was used by the Alateen Work Group and World Service Office (WSO) staff to create an Alateen survey. The survey was conducted in March of this year.

Continue the discussion.

A survey was conducted for Alateen members to provide input on their views of Alateen. This survey was conducted from March 1 through March 20, 2016. There were 170 Alateen members 21 years of age or younger who completed the Survey.

Preliminary results of significance:

- The average age of the teens was 14.26, including 17 who were under the age of ten.
- Over 50% of the teens considered Al-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service (AMIAS) sponsorship, AMIAS availability, Alateen literature, Alateen events, working the Steps, parental support, and the meeting format to each be "very important" in terms of their impact on the success of the Alateen program.
- Of the 14 choices available to rate, the fewest teens rated technology as "very important."
- The average lower age allowed in Alateen meetings was 10.25 years. The average upper age allowed 18.74. Eighty-two percent agreed with the age range allowed by their group.
- Only 19% of the teens had an Alateen personal Sponsor. If they had a Sponsor, 84% said the sponsorship helped them. If they were a personal Sponsor, 85% said this sponsorship helped them.
- Sixty-five percent support their group through service, and 58% contribute financially to their group.
- Seventy percent of the teens heard about Alateen from their parents; only 10% from professionals (teachers, medical personnel, and counselors).
- Eighty-seven percent of all the respondents attend face-to-face meetings and like this type of meeting format.
- Eighty percent of the respondents do not attend Alateen Chat meetings, but of them, 55% would be interested in this type of meeting.
- More than half of all the respondents (56%) would be interested in participating in Alateen Chat meetings with "smart" phone/tablet access. While at the same time, in the text analysis of respondents' answers to the question, "What is your favorite thing about Alateen?" "people" was the most frequently used word—which is something that may be lost/diminished in the electronic-type meeting format, and which may be a reason for the current low attendance in Chat meetings.

Most rewarding and encouraging, beyond the numbers, the following are among the comments received on respondents' favorite things about Alateen, from the approximately 170 responses:

- Being able to talk to people I can trust.
- That we can talk about things that have happened in our households.
- The people.
- I am not alone.
- I have a group of teens who understand what I'm going through who I can talk to when times are

tough. It's hard to talk to people who don't know what I'm going through—they don't get it.

- I can share stories and people won't judge me.
- The people are so understanding, caring, kind, and welcoming.
- That we all relate.
- The love and camaraderie.
- The support and friendship.

There will be more survey feedback made available in the June *Group e-News*, in *The Forum* in July, August, and September, in Spanish (*Al-Anon y Alateen en acción*) and French (*Le lien*) newsletters, in the Fall *Alateen Talk*, and in *Area Highlights*. Results will also be posted on the "Surveys for Members" page of the Members' Web site.

The Chairperson asked Conference members to keep the following points in mind during the discussion:

- The minimum Alateen Safety Requirements are a legal statement from the Board of Trustees. Concept Seven reminds us that it is not the prerogative of the Conference to change them. However, consideration of the ways Areas have expanded these Minimum Requirements is an appropriate item for discussion.
- Each Area has, through its autonomy, a definition of the Alateen structure, which is consistent with our Legacies, the Minimum Safety Requirements and the "Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies." In some of your sharings, it may be necessary to clarify your Area's definition.

The floor was opened for discussion:

- Will I get a chance to see the survey questions that Alateens answered? I don't know what my Alateens were asked.

Yes, we will post the questionnaire on AFG Connects today.

- Were there any questions specifically about literature—how do the Alateens feel about it?

Respondents were asked to rate the importance of several factors in terms of their impact on the success of the Alateen program, and one choice was literature. Sixty-one percent rated Alateen literature as "very important" in terms of its impact on the success of the Alateen program.

- At my Assembly last year, we had a special session with Alateen Group Representatives. What they came back with reflects what is reported here. Technology is great, but it is about the people and how they want to connect in that way.
- Was there a question about growing Alateen?

Respondents were asked to rate the importance of several factors in terms of their impact on the success of the Alateen program, and one choice was public outreach. Forty-three percent rated public outreach as "very important" in terms of its impact on the success of the Alateen program

- Was there a question about Alateen at school?

When asked if there are other types of Alateen meetings you wish were available besides face-to-face and chat, 20% said yes, and a plurality of them said meetings in school or after school.

- Are we consulting with Alateen on the wording of the questions, i.e., how best to receive questions in their age group?

No, due to time constraints for the Survey, we took questions from the Areas and a Work Group, and WSO staff reviewed the questions taking into account how teens take surveys.

- It is interesting that parents are the primary impetus to get teens to participate. We want to talk to parents at Assemblies, A.A. meetings, etc. Also, teens are teens. They will come if they want to do so. I appreciate the WSO efforts.
- How is a lower age limit set in an Alateen meeting?

It is up to group autonomy.

- Every Area should review its Minimum Safety Requirements to see if the Area is protecting the kids or the adults. My Area was willing to put rules in place regarding how Alateens behave, but it should be about how we make sure Alateens are safe in their meetings—that was the WSO Requirement. What Areas choose beyond that is a matter of Area autonomy and could be reviewed by the Area.
- As a Past Alateen Coordinator, I am hearing comments that Alateen members would like to see Alateen literature updated from older scenarios.

- This is a great beginning effort toward helping future Conferences understand how Alateen can grow and develop alongside Al-Anon. There is still a tremendous opportunity to gather information from Alateens on how they want Alateen to look. The Conference needs to keep this issue on the burner.
- The Survey results show the influential role of parents. It supports years of previous Alateen surveys that identified the parent as the most critical factor. Referrals from professionals traditionally run about 10%. Unless a teen has a parent in recovery, those kids living in active alcoholism are very unlikely to get help and attend Alateen. There are 18 million children living in active alcoholism. The table tent card is an important tool to display in meetings. Lois in her memoir, *Lois Remembers* (B-8), identified the greatest conflict a teen can have is with the non-drinking parent. They don't get our behavior as the non-drinker, their role, and the role of alcoholism. Perhaps they are fearful of talking about it.
- We have a good Alateen program. We polled the teens and the Area Coordinator and Delegate compiled the responses. Most Alateens in my Area were brought in by a parent in A.A. because the Al-Anon parent was embarrassed.
- We believe our safety standards are stronger than the WSO's. We formed a Thought Force to look at if the strictness of our standards is preventing Alateen growth.
- Alateen literature might consider a model that could work with younger members' experiences and reading levels.
- As an Alateen Group Sponsor, I get asked by parents, "Should I make my kid come to Alateen?" I respond, "Do you make him go to the doctor, dentist, and encourage him to eat? You're the adult, do it. Let them try six meetings, and if they don't want it, get off their back."
- There is frustration getting teens in the door. Were the survey questions put out by the Areas who crafted survey questions?

The Areas submitted questions and the Alateen Work Group, with the WSO staff, tried to word the questions in the best way to get answers. Every question has a base in what the Area asked. We needed responses that were measurable and understandable.

- What are the different Area requirements? I would like a compilation and an idea of how other Areas are doing this.
- It sounds like parents and adults are trying to understand teens. I wish we had an Alateen Delegate. Kids are able to speak for themselves.
- Do we still have an Alateen Advisory Committee?

With the old model (Alateen Advisory Committee), getting kids to commit to being there almost never worked. Three of the five were usually able to make it. Today, the Alateen Work Group takes questions to Area events that include Alateens using an ad hoc process.

- My opinion is that Alateen is part of Al-Anon. We are all together. We do not have Alateen but would welcome young people.
- Preliminary information tells me we are not doing everything wrong or right. There is not an overwhelming cry for more technology. There is a significant voice for face-to-face meetings. We need to be cautious about simple answers. Each community in an Area has a different opportunity to provide the right mix for potential Alateens. It is interesting to watch the Alateens feel a part of the program. We have to keep up electronically, but remember the importance of face-to-face communications. *Alateen Talk* is the most underutilized service tool that exists.
- As an AMIAS, I believe I am bringing the voice of teens.

As Chairperson of the Work Group, I am bringing the voice of Alateen. Alateen is not separate.

- Make sure when writing Alateen Safety Requirements, to use the wording "strongly require" versus "recommended."
- My Area had huge discussions about whether or not you can have an Alateen meeting with one Sponsor. Make sure to use the words "required" and "certified." This is impacting Alateen at this time.
- One teen is looking forward to using a tablet or iPhone for Chat meetings. Many can't get to a computer during the chat times.
- Our Alateen Coordinator created an Alateen Web site to get the word out about Alateen.

Later in the Conference, members had the opportunity to discuss Alateen in a WSC Agenda Item workshop. (See page 73).

FORUM EDITORIAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

There has been a 45 percent increase in subscriptions since the World Service Office (WSO) stopped sending *The Forum* free to all groups. It is presumed that the majority are still group subscriptions. However, the figures do not reflect members' love of *The Forum*. We have gone from a high of 64,000 subscriptions in 1989 to 18,000 today.

In the earliest days, Lois sent out a letter to the groups. The newsletter created a connection between the Clearing House, the groups, and members worldwide. It slowly evolved into the magazine we have today.

The Forum shares information and recovery stories from and with members worldwide, opening communication, lessening isolation, and building a sense of unity throughout the fellowship.

Through the years, *The Forum* became a vital part of recovery, as reflected by the large number of subscriptions. There were almost 64,000 subscriptions in 1989. Until 1978, groups received a complimentary copy each month.

The Forum shares stories from members at all stages of recovery and all walks of life. It also keeps us informed about new literature, policy changes, valuable resources for carrying our message, and ideas for keeping our groups strong and thriving. The *Talk to Each Other* section is a way for members to receive feedback from other members regarding topics that concern them.

The Forum provides approximately 70 percent of the content on our Facebook pages so it's very valuable in terms of our public outreach efforts. Additionally, three *Forum* sharings are posted on Al-Anon's Public Outreach Web site each month to attract newcomers.

The *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*, page 104 states, "*The Forum* can be used, and is encouraged to be used, by all members and groups for meetings. *The Forum*, as a concept, is Conference Approved, . . ."

The Forum does not generate any revenue for the WSO. The subscriptions only cover the cost of printing and postage, which makes it revenue-neutral. The subscriptions do not cover staff costs of processing 1,200 submissions per year, editing, proofing, and design.

Readers responding to WSO surveys continue to state that *The Forum* is a vital part of their recovery. Yet subscriptions have decreased by 6,000 since 2010. With only just over 18,000 subscriptions, less than 10 percent of the fellowship reads *The Forum*.

Conference members were asked the following questions:

- How do we ensure that *The Forum* continues to be a vital part of Al-Anon recovery?
- What does *The Forum* mean to you?
- How can *The Forum* attract more subscribers and will this presentation help you to encourage members in your Area to subscribe?

Members responded:

- Our literature box at meetings has stacks of magazines members can take and read. When they are done, they are encouraged to "leave it behind." Is there something timely that comes out each month that would encourage members to purchase a subscription?

Yes, there are Legacy stories in The Forum that correspond to each month of the year, so subscribers can always expect to see the Step, Tradition, and Concept of the month in every issue of the magazine. They can also expect to see an instant meeting format that is ready to use for group meetings, meetings with your Sponsor, or on those occasions when you can't get to your home group meeting. You can also look forward to checking every month to see if anyone from your Area has a published story in the current issue. The diverse experiences, strengths, and hopes of the Al-Anon fellowship always arrive every month with your personal subscription to The Forum magazine. My group uses it for the first meeting of the month. It is a convenient, fresh, up-to-date way to introduce The Forum.

- An idea to ensure *The Forum* continues is to have group members write their names on slips of paper and pass around a can to collect change. When the group gets \$11, select a name out of the can for a subscription to *The Forum*. Continue this process until every member has a subscription. If someone's name is selected who has a *Forum* subscription, that member can extend his/her current subscription or give a new subscription to someone else.

Donna E.

Forum Editorial Advisory
Committee Trustee Liaison

Tom C.

Associate Director
of Communications—Literature



- Visibility of *The Forum* at a home group meeting is a key. At Assemblies, we do a workshop on how to use *The Forum* as a meeting topic. We tried a writing workshop, but found it is easier to send a picture, and when we see that a picture is published from our Area, it is awesome.
- When the free subscriptions were cancelled, all my groups purchased subscriptions.
- With the e-*Forum*, do we prompt people to subscribe when someone clicks on a *Forum* article on Facebook?

They can click on articles, but there is no pop-up order form.

- We did a workshop on what to do with old issues. We sell subscriptions at Assembly. We have sold 45-50 every year. We put a box on a table and give copies to newcomers.
- We do four or five raffles at our Area Assembly. Old copies are given to the Al-Anon Information Service (AIS) office and used as handouts for public outreach. When we sell literature at meetings, we put them out for something free to pick up.
- Is there a point (subscriptions dropping to a certain point) where we say we can't produce *The Forum* anymore?

That would be a Finance Committee decision.

- I loved the humor page. We could encourage someone with a sense of humor to write something to bring humor back.
- We give one free subscription for our anniversary. We meet in the town hall. As part of the Seventh Tradition, we provide copies of *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism* and *The Forum* in the lobby.
- I was asked as Delegate to lead a meeting on the Concepts. I went to my 25-year collection of *Forums* and picked out one for each month. I read the title of the Concept and one sentence, and then opened it up to sharing.
- The first thing I do is open it to see how many sharings from members in my Area were published. I would like to challenge every Area to see how many members each Area gets to send something in to the *Forum*.
- At Thanksgiving and New Year's meetings, we do raffles and give out *Forums*. Leftover copies are put in boxes to give to newcomers with their Newcomer Packets (K-10).
- When I was a Group Representative (GR), I encouraged members to write sharings for and to purchase subscriptions to *The Forum*, as one of my GR duties. A couple of times a year, I took a piece of paper, held it up, and asked if anyone would like to subscribe, and then passed it around. I got the name, address, and money, then I filled out the forms and sent them in. Most were single subscriptions. As Delegate, I asked the Forum Coordinator to let the District Representatives and Group Representatives know it is a group effort to get groups and members to subscribe.
- Do you get enough personal photos from members? My group purchased subscriptions and each month we put them in a basket and sell copies for a dollar. This pays for itself and makes it possible for those who can't afford subscriptions.

We always welcome photos as there is no such thing as too many photos.

- I had a family emergency and needed a meeting. I was told there was one in the basement at the hospital. When I got to it, a man got up and handed me a *Forum* and said, "This is your meeting while you are here." We need to take responsibility and see that all hospitals have *Forums*.
- This was a lifeline I carried around in my early days in Al-Anon. Working full-time and needing time out, I could have *The Forum* and a cup of coffee just for me. It got me out of my distress. I give it to newcomers and tell them to bring it back hoping they will return to share it with other newcomers. My group also has women who take out the staples and sew copies with thread to use at Institutional meetings.
- Is it possible to get subscription numbers for the last few years broken out by Area?

There is an issue when there is more than one Area in a state. We can send subscription numbers by zip codes for you to sort.

- My Area gives old copies to a women's institution. We also encourage kids to write for *Alateen Talk*.

INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS

2018 Al-Anon International Convention

Holding up a placard, the Coordinator asked, “How long before we have the Convention?” Conference members shouted, “Two years, two months, and 21 days.”

Now is the time to start planning a budget to attend the 2018 Al-Anon International Convention taking place from July 5-8, 2018 in Baltimore, Maryland. That is “Two years, two months, and 21 days” from today.

An Al-Anon International Convention is a great way to celebrate recovery. There will be members from the U.S., Canada, and other countries present at the Convention. Members are reminded to register early for the best prices. Hotel registration will begin in the fall of 2017 through the Al-Anon International Convention page, which is accessible from the Members’ Web site and the Public Outreach Web site.

The Coordinator concluded, “Remember, you’ve got ‘Two years, two months, and 21 days’ until we see you in Baltimore!”

2023 Al-Anon International Convention Bid Process

Al-Anon has participated with Alcoholics Anonymous (A.A.) in International Conventions since 1960. This participation meant that Al-Anon was limited to daytime meetings and workshops so that members were free to attend the A.A. events in the evening.

In 1985, the first Al-Anon side-by-side convention with A.A. took place in Montreal, Quebec, Canada. In 1990, the second side-by-side convention was held in Seattle, Washington. In 1989, during the planning stages of the side-by-side convention with A.A. for the 1995 convention in San Diego, California, it was determined that the site chosen was not adequate to hold two conventions simultaneously. When this matter was addressed at the 1989 World Service Conference (WSC), it was decided that, rather than hold a convention separate from A.A., Al-Anon would participate in A.A.’s convention.

In 1991, the Board of Trustees looked to the future and recommended to the World Service Conference that Al-Anon hold its own convention at a separate time and place from A.A., and invite A.A. to participate. The date recommended was July 1998.

Al-Anon held its Third International Convention in Salt Lake City, Utah, July 3-5, 1998. This was Al-Anon’s first convention independent of A.A., and A.A. elected to participate. As a result of the hard work done by the host committee, all of the volunteers, and the WSO staff, those who attended the 1998 Convention found it exciting, renewing, and a wonderful celebration of recovery.

Because the 1998 Convention was a success, the Board of Trustees recommended to the 1999 WSC that a separate International Convention be held every five years, beginning in July 2008. A motion was made and carried at that Conference.

At the 2002 Conference, the bid process for the 2008 International Convention was presented. Immediately following the 2003 Conference, the Delegates whose Areas submitted a bid, presented their bids.

Similarly, the bid process for the 2013 International Convention was presented in 2006, and the bid process for the 2018 International Convention was presented in 2011.

Conference members were informed that the World Service Office (WSO) has begun preparations for Al-Anon’s Seventh International Convention in 2023. The dates for the Seventh International Convention being considered are June 30 – July 2, 2023 or July 7 – 9, 2023.

The Convention Coordinator reviewed the bid form, including the minimum requirements to hold Al-Anon’s Seventh International Convention and the process for submitting a bid.

A Convention Site Selection Committee will be selected from among the 2017 Area Delegates who do not submit a bid from their Area along with certain Trustees and WSO Administrative staff members. After the 2017 Conference ends, Area Delegates will be asked to present their bid to the Convention Site Selection Committee. Delegates were encouraged to ask the Convention and Visitors Bureau to send a representative, at the Bureau’s expense, to this meeting to answer questions. Costs for A/V equipment rental related to the presentation are the Area’s responsibility. After the bid presentations, the Convention Site Selection Committee will decide on its top three choices.

Following the 2017 Conference, the Board of Trustees will appoint a subcommittee to make an inspection trip to the three recommended cities. Based on the findings of the Site Selection Committee, a choice will be recommended to the Board at its October 2017 or January 2018 meeting.

Marsha W.

*2018 Coordinator
Associate Director of
Member Services—International*

Suzanne M.

*2023 Coordinator
Associate Director of
Member Services – Conference*

“MEET THE BOARD” EVENT

Debbie G.

Trustee, Task Force Chairperson

The purpose of a “Meet the Board” Event is to take the Board of Trustees and Executive Committee members to a local Area, hold its “Board Week” there, and then on one day of that week meet with local members. The Board meetings are attended by Board members only, but the extra day for “Meet the Board” is an opportunity for the World Service Office (WSO) volunteers and Area members to share a day of connection. Through talks and various discussion groups, members learn how the Board of Trustees and Executive Committee serve our worldwide fellowship.

The second “Meet the Board” event was held Saturday, July 25, 2015 at the Nisku Conference Center, near Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. Twenty-two Trustees and Executive Committee members traveled to Edmonton for the week.

- Of the 43 local members who attended, the majority had ten or more years in Al-Anon. Only eight had fewer than five years.
- This event did not attract newcomers. Everyone attending was involved in some type of service—13 at the Area level and 34 at the group or district level.
- Members were overwhelmingly positive about the day, but many expressed regret that the attendance was so low for their Area.

The agenda was planned from 8:00 am to 4:30 pm. Everyone pre-registered.

- The program began with a welcome message from the Chairperson of the Board followed by a Trustee who shared about serving on the Board.
- Ten-minute “snapshots” provided glimpses into the Finance Committee, Executive Committee, Thought Forces, Task Forces, and Work Groups.
- Other presentations included International structures, TEAM events, and Area visits.
- Round-table discussions focused on new members, remote groups, and Al-Anon’s Legacies and spiritual principles.
- A “Gallery Walk” featured eight different tables for members to rotate among and learn about the work of different WSO Committees.
- Members had time for questions in these small groups.

Attendees provided detailed feedback via a written survey at the end of the event. Key themes were that members:

- Had a greater understanding of the work of the WSO.
- Became much more aware of the Board’s role and its dedication to world service.
- Appreciated what we had in common as members, and recognized how everyone can grow through service.
- Were grateful for a day of connection and happy to learn Trustees are available to visit Areas.
- Said local members who didn’t attend missed a rare opportunity to learn so much more about how Al-Anon works.
- Loved the “intimacy, energy, and enthusiasm” of the event, as well as time for questions and answers.

Members also offered specific suggestions:

- The overwhelming response was to work toward better attendance—get more members to register and participate.
- The members wanted to know what Areas the Trustees and Executive Committee members are from—there is a mistaken idea that all volunteers live in Virginia Beach. The members suggested introducing everyone at the beginning and having name tags with identifying information.

The feedback revealed that we achieved our goal of personalizing the WSO.

The Area hosting the 2016 event is Arkansas. It will be held in Fayetteville on Saturday, October 22, 2016 at the Chancellor Hotel. This year’s event will be held in October because July is the first Board meeting for new Trustees. It is important that they travel to the WSO for orientation and introductions to staff. Otherwise, they would not connect with the WSO until October.

The “Meet the Board” Event has been on a three-year trial: 2014, 2015, and 2016. Since this is the third year, the Board carefully evaluated all factors and feedback, seeking answers to the following questions:

- Did we meet our goal and accomplish the purpose of the event?
- Did members, as well as the Board, benefit from it?
- Is the event financially feasible to continue in the future?
- Does the event further our mission and vision for Al-Anon Family Groups?

Based on its information, the Board voted to extend the trial for another three years, from 2017 to 2019. Another trial period will allow room to build upon what has worked well and what can be modified to have a better event.

Conference members asked:

- Do Areas who have previously had an event qualify to bid for the next trial period?

No.

- It seems as though we are making requests for hotel space so far in advance. Do we have to wait until December to find out which Area will hold the event? It is a long time for the hotel to hold space waiting to find out if they are chosen.

When the Board draws names out of the hat, it selects three Areas for contingency. In one instance, the first Area drawn had no hotel available so the Board went to the second Area drawn, which took longer. The information in the invitation will greatly assist in informing hotels of our needs.

Next Steps for the event are:

- Re-name the event.
- Use the expertise of the WSO Event/Project Manager in redesigning flyers and other communication that goes out to the fellowship.
- Encourage attendance through more effective communication, including AFG Connects.
- Enlist the help of the WSO Event/Project Manager to help with advance arrangements, ensuring that the event has an accessible, spacious location, plus snacks at breaks.
- Consider the flexibility of having the event either attached to Board week or free-standing. This is the advantage of a trial.

The Chairperson noted, “Feedback revealed that the name ‘Meet the Board’ was not attractive or inviting. One of the recurring suggestions has been to rename the event to attract more members.

Conference members were asked to submit suggestions for renaming the event—keeping in mind the purpose of the event and the connection the Board hopes to make with the fellowship—through-out Conference. As a way to spark additional ideas, a few of the suggestions were read each day. The report closed with Delegates receiving invitations for the 2017 “Meet the Board” Event.



SELECTION OF TRUSTEES

Joyce B.
Trustee, Chairperson

Leona W.
Trustee

2016 RCT Out-of-Region Delegate Selection

The Trustee explained the Regional Trustee Selection Process and deadlines. Each Regional Committee on Trustees consists of the current Delegates serving the Areas of the Region, as well as Out-of-Region Delegates, drawn by lot.

The Out-of-Region Delegates selected:

REGION	VOTING	ALTERNATE
US South Central	Pat M., DE, Panel 55 Eloy M., CO, Panel 56 Renelle M., GA, Panel 56	Diane B., ON(N), Panel 54 Ann Marie Z., NJ, Panel 56
US Southwest	Ginny C., OH, Panel 55 Ann B., CT, Panel 55 Janis A., BC/YT, Panel 56	Joyce Y., TX(E), Panel 55 Phyllis H., RI, Panel 55
US Northwest	Rachelle C., MN(N), Panel 56 Elizabeth K., CA(S), Panel 55 Wendy R., FL(N), Panel 55	Michael D., MI, Panel 55 Angie R., MS, Panel 56

RT Training/ RT Caucus

Following the selection of the Out-of-Region Delegates for the RCTs, each RCT caucused to select a Chairperson (from the Region's Delegates) who was willing to serve and perform the duties within the designated time. Also selected was an Alternate Chairperson from the Region's Delegates, who would assume the duties of the RCT Chairperson, if he or she cannot fulfill his or her duties as required.

The following Chairpersons and Alternates were elected:

REGION	CHAIRPERSON	ALTERNATE
US South Central	Laura D., OK, Panel 56	Betty R., KS, Panel 55
US Southwest	Yvonne de G., CA(N), Panel 55	Dana Rae H., HI, Panel 55
US Northwest	Carol T., ND, Panel 56	Nancy Jo W., ID, Panel 54

Conference Committee on Trustees (CCT)

Patrick M.

Chairperson, Panel 54, Utah

“Fellow members of Al-Anon’s 56th World Service Conference, it is my pleasure, as Chairperson of the Conference Committee on Trustees (CCT), to report to you the work of this year’s Committee.

“The CCT is composed of World Service Conference Delegates and elects its own Chairperson each year. Résumés for Trustee at Large (TAL) and Executive Committee for Real Property Management (ECRPM) are submitted to the World Service Office in August of each year. The CCT members review the résumés submitted and score each one based on skill sets, understanding of current needs of the Board, and the ability of each candidate to effectively answer the résumé questions. Each CCT member also writes comments related to his or her scoring decisions. When completed, the scoring sheets and accompanying comments are sent to the CCT Chairperson. The CCT Chairperson reviews the comments and rankings that were submitted by each CCT member, summarizes the material, and forwards the compilation of rankings and comments to the World Service Office in early October.

“The Nominating Committee meets during the October Board meeting. Using the information submitted by the CCT and knowledge it has about the current Board needs, the Nominating Committee scores each résumé for TAL and ECRPM. The Nominating Committee then notifies the CCT of the potential candidates it has selected. CCT members have the opportunity to file an objection to a potential candidate by December. The final selection of the candidates is decided by the Board of Trustees at its January meeting. At the World Service Conference, the Trustee at Large and ECRPM candidates are given Traditional Approval by the Conference, and are elected by the Board at the Annual Board meeting following the World Service Conference.

“In September 2015, the CCT received TAL résumés from nine members of our fellowship. Initially, no résumés were submitted for the open ECRPM position. The ten members of the CCT worked diligently with open minds and humble hearts to fulfill their responsibility. All work was completed in a timely manner and all deadlines were met.

“The Board of Trustees, recognizing the need to fill the vacant ECRPM position, reopened the invitation to submit résumés, and in December the CCT reviewed six résumés from members of the fellowship willing to serve on the ECRPM. The résumés were reviewed, rated, ranked, and submitted in accordance with the Committees procedures.

“The CCT members responded to the request to review the second group of résumés with enthusiasm and dedication. The entire work of our Committee was performed with open hearts and minds and a clear understanding of the important work of this Committee.

“I believe I can speak for the entire Committee in saying that the opportunity to serve our fellowship in this manner has given each of us the chance to realize our spiritual potential. The work of this Committee contributes to the future of Al-Anon. Although a small part of the overall process, our work directly impacts the composition of the Board of Trustees and the ECRPM. We are grateful for the help of a Power greater than ourselves in our work.

“I’d like to sincerely thank the members of the CCT and World Service Office support staff for their commitment to this process. And, congratulations to those TAL and ECRPM trusted servants who have been put forth as recommended candidates. We trust that your service will provide continuing opportunities for everyone in the fellowship to realize their spiritual potential.”

Joan S.
Trustee, Chairperson

Nominating Committee and Trustee Affirmation

Before beginning the affirmation process, the Chairperson spent a few minutes explaining the purpose of the session.

“In 1961, the first trial Conference was formed. Lois and the Directors tried to find a way to link the groups through the Conference with the Board and the organization, as you heard earlier this week. Ultimately, as the Concepts of Service developed, the process of the Conference affirming the nominees to fill the vacancies arose. In the mid ‘60s, a plan to add regional participation on the Board was developed, and the first Regional Trustee selection process began. In 1986, the Conference Committee on Trustees was created to provide input from Conference members to the Nominating Committee as it nominated the at Large Trustees. In 2010, the Conference gave approval to revise the Regional Trustee Plan, ending the three-year trial. Since then, the Regional Committees on Trustees have provided input to the Nominating Committee for nominating Regional Trustees. Today, we will continue that tradition of affirmation, which gives the traditional concurrence of the whole Conference to the various nominees and officers. Friday, the Board may elect those nominees who have received the traditional affirmation. As a result of this process, the voice of the fellowship through the Conference is heard, as the Board elects these Trustees to serve the organization, AFG Inc., and Al-Anon the fellowship, as a whole.”

The Nominating Committee Chairperson then thanked the members of the Conference Committee on Trustees (CCT), the Regional Committees on Trustees (RCTs), and the Nominating Committee for their hard work over the last year. “Using the résumés and additional question responses, they worked conscientiously to rate the candidates and return the information to the WSO in time for the October Board meeting. We have fielded another excellent slate of candidates to serve the fellowship. The Nominating Committee has also proposed an excellent slate of Board Officers.

“Trustee at Large résumés are solicited from the fellowship after the WSC. Delegates receive a letter from the Executive Director in January and in June. Attached to that letter are a list of openings, deadlines for submission, and copies of all of the résumés including Trustee, ECRPM, and Committee résumés. Trustee and ECRPM résumés are submitted to the WSO by August 15 of the year prior to possible election. Résumés and additional written question responses are sent to the CCT and Nominating Committees for review and ranking. The CCT Chairperson tallies the scores and rankings from the CCT and sends a report to the WSO. At its October meeting, the Nominating Committee uses the CCT input and its own rankings to select a slate of up to six people to be invited to the January Board dinner for introduction to the Board. Each candidate gives a ten-minute talk about their Al-Anon recovery and service experience. Following dinner, groups of Trustees ask them questions. Using the information and observations from these interviews, the Board nominates up to three candidates at its Quarterly Meeting. Today, you will be asked to give traditional approval for the three proposed nominees for a three-year term. All of the nominees receiving traditional approval may be elected at the Board’s Annual Meeting.

“Candidates for Regional Trustee (RT) are selected by their Areas which then forward their résumés to the WSO via the Delegate. This year, the US North Central, US Northeast, and US Southeast Regional Committees on Trustees each consisted of the Regions’ Delegates and three Delegates and the alternates chosen by lot. The RCT independently reviewed résumés and the additional written question. The scoring, comments, and feedback from Delegates serving on these Regional Committees were submitted to the Nominating Committee. The Nominating Committee, with their own independent review of the résumés and considering the input from the RCT, selected up to two nominees per Region for presentation to the Board. The Board met with Regional Trustee candidates over lunch in January prior to nomination, using a process identical to that used for Trustee at Large candidates. The Board then nominated one candidate each for the US North Central, US Southeast, and US Northwest Regions.

“The Executive Committee for Real Property Management (ECRPM) was created by Motion 5 of the 1995 WSC in a trial amendment to the By-Laws—Article XII which was finalized as an amendment to the By-Laws—Article XII by the Board in 2012. This Committee consists of the Al-Anon Family Groups, Inc. Treasurer, the Director of Business Services, and three At-Large members, is designed to keep management of our headquarters building separate from the spiritual program of Al-Anon. Each at-large member serves a three-year term, and the Chairperson is seated at the WSC with voice only in matters related to real property management. The nominating process is the same as that for Trustee at Large except there is no written question. Résumés are due by August 15 and sent to the CCT and Nominating Committees for review and ranking.

“Today, you are being asked to give traditional approval or affirmation for the proposed nominees for, Trustee at Large, Regional Trustee, and the Board’s officers. A candidate must receive a two-thirds majority in order to be affirmed. Each Conference member has the responsibility to ask questions or state any facts relevant to the candidacy of the person under consideration. Affirmation under the Right of Decision requires that each of us take our responsibility seriously. The fact that one is nominated is not the sole reason for affirmation. Likewise, the By-Laws of the Corporation articulate the Right of Decision given to the Board to elect or not elect an affirmed nominee.”

The voting process was explained. Conference members were given the opportunity to discuss all candidates; any nominee present in the room was asked to leave during discussion of his/her candidacy.

The following Trustees and Board Officers were affirmed by the 2016 WSC:

Trustees at Large:

Judy K., second three-year term
Elizabeth (Jennie) McC., second three-year term
Rosie M., first three-year term

Regional Trustees:

Joan S., US Northeast, second three-year term
Debbie G., US North Central, second three-year term
Bruce F., US Southeast, first three-year term

Board Officers:

Debbie G., Chairperson
Joan S., Vice Chairperson
Jennie McC., Treasurer

Executive Committee for Real Property Management (ECRPM):

Tom B., First year of three-year term

The Board announced Executive Committee appointments for 2016-2017

Bev A., Chairperson, third one-year term
Paula B., first one-year term
Connie H., first one-year term
Marsha W., WSO staff, first year of a two-year term

The Board announced the appointment of Jeffrey K. as the ECRPM Chairperson for 2016-2017.

TEAM EVENTS

A TEAM (Together Empowering Al-Anon Members) Event is a dynamic and flexible event customized to the interests of local members. A TEAM event is a partnership between one or more Areas and the World Service Office (WSO) with the goal of providing an opportunity for Al-Anon and Alateen members to learn more about service and the Al-Anon program (see *2014/2017 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*, page 73).

TEAM Events are designed to energize a member’s spiritual quest, activate a member’s creativity, and expand a member’s understanding of the Al-Anon program. The events provide an opportunity to meet World Service Office staff and Trustees. TEAM events are not intended as fundraising events.

During the Conference, the conversation about shared leadership, clarification of the mandatory WSO topics, and the roles of the WSO and Area TEAM members continued. The points were demonstrated in a game with a Delegate from each section of the General Session room who had been chosen to be a “contestant.” The game “host” asked each of the “contestants” true/false questions pertaining to the TEAM Event. Conference members in the “contestant’s” section of the room helped their “contestant” answer the question.

Communication between the WSO and Area TEAM members ensures that everyone understands their roles in the planning of the event. The WSO Task Force is responsible for three presentations. The Area(s) and the WSO Task Force work together to plan additional workshops and presentations that address the Area’s needs.

Terry F.

Trustee, Task Force Chairperson



Together Empowering Al-Anon Members
Juntos fortalecemos a los miembros de Al-Anon
Ensemble, fortifions les membres Al-Anon

A TEAM Event agenda includes:

- WSO “Giving—Our Spiritual Links to Gratitude: Al-Anon world services in action” presentation.
- WSO “Trustee Search” presentation.
- WSO Task Force members’ personal stories.
- Area topics presentation or workshops on Area interests or concerns.

Once the topics are selected, the Area Host Committee Chairperson works with the WSO Task Force in a shared leadership role to finalize the presentations and workshops. Six months of planning time is needed between when the WSO receives the TEAM Event Request Form and the actual TEAM Event. Delegates each received a TEAM Event request form.

Two Delegates shared how their TEAM Event had a positive impact in their Areas:

The Texas West Delegate shared that her Area used the opportunity to have time available for Knowledge-Based Decision-Making (KBDM). Committee members selected topics and worked hard. “It exposed me to Trustees, gave me a working knowledge of KBDM, and gave everyone an opportunity to practice KBDM. It was something new and members had an opportunity to learn that Trustees and WSO staff are real people.”

The Nebraska Delegate shared, “Members came together who hadn’t before, and I saw unity. Members who had not met the WSO staff were there. They talked about our literature and literature other than the daily readers. Members who had never been around the WSO before found they can get answers to any questions they have and that WSO Trustees and staff are ‘real.’”

Conference members had the following comments and questions:

- Is there a set time between how often an Area can have a TEAM Event?

An Area can have a TEAM Event once a year.

- What is the difference between a TEAM event and the Meet the Board event?

The WSO develops the agenda for the Meet the Board event.

- I understand that there will be no events in 2018 because of the International Convention. What is the cutoff month in 2017?

For the 2013 International Convention, the Board decided to decrease the number of TEAM events, not eliminate them. A decision about 2018 TEAM Events has not been made by the Board as yet.

- Some Areas are hosting their second TEAM Event. The WSO presentations are varied so they will not see the same presentation again.

TRIPS

Marilyn M.

*Trustee, International
Coordination Committee (ICC)
Co-Chairperson*

Central American Zonal Meeting

“The World Service Office (WSO) was invited to attend the Central American Zonal Meeting in Managua, Nicaragua in November 2015. Six structures attended: Nicaragua, El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala, Panama, and Costa Rica. Seventeen Delegates, were present, all of whom had voice, but with only one vote per structure. Messages were sent by Cuba and Dominican Republic that funds were not sufficient to allow attendance. The meeting was conducted in Spanish; translation was provided. The Director of Member Services attended as an ICC member.

“We were welcomed and quickly felt that familiar closeness that comes when we are around our fellow members. Ceremonies began with each structure parading into the meeting, holding the flags of their countries. The theme for the 2015 meeting was ‘Un Sol País,’ one single country. Delegates shared their initial thoughts:

- I come to fill myself with energy.
- Al-Anon was the salvation I was seeking.
- I am here, because of the Superior Being (Higher Power).
- I am in a ‘balm of love.’
- When we give each other a hand, life has meaning.

“The El Salvador Alateen members sent their love with a hand-drawn greeting card. Following dinner on the first night, we all had a laugh with a song called ‘The Children of the Corn.’ It sings of the many dishes that are made of corn that are enjoyed by the people of Nicaragua.

“The meeting began with each structure highlighting its history, challenges, and progress. The WSO explained the process for receiving permission for printing literature, introduced the AFG Connects communication platform, and answered questions. The Guatemala Delegate volunteered to host AFG Connects for the Latin American Zonal Community.

“In the next session, Delegates shared their concerns with each other and then the search for experience, strength, and hope began in earnest. Some had found solutions that were unique, and by sharing them, new options were revealed. This sharing promised hope for solving their common problems. Excitement for renewed commitment could be felt in the rooms. Respect and kindness were the overlying spiritual principles as they shared with each other. This continued to strike me over and over during the weekend.

“One of the problems they have, that we in North America rarely experience, is the safe shipment of literature. If literature orders are missing, we have a course of action to take. In most Central American countries, you have to accept that the goods are lost if they do not arrive. They can ill afford to lose their precious cargo of Conference Approved Literature.

“There were many useful sharings, such as:

- One country holds Group Representative (GR) training every Monday in order to help members become more familiar with the *Service Manual*. As more members use the *Service Manual*, hope is sparked for a new group of volunteers.
- Alateen Sponsor training is provided and the importance of this was discussed. I found it interesting that ‘God-Mother’ is the direct translation for Sponsor—once again demonstrating the difficulty of translation.
- One General Service Office (GSO) presents its work plan annually to its Conference for approval, and once approved no deviations are allowed.
- Ongoing gang wars in El Salvador have been an obstacle to growth, but these dedicated members hold steadfast to their goal of unity for the remaining groups. Members still venture out to carry the message in spite of the danger.
- Public outreach (radio) is a focus in some countries, with the result that many inquiries for meetings are received. They have difficulty starting meetings because of the danger in the countryside.
- A Delegate said that it is wrong to label group members as having ‘limited means.’ She said; ‘We must give them the dignity and the right to be self-supporting. Many of us have learned that where there is a Higher Power’s will, there is hope.’
- Another profound statement: ‘It is insulting to tell newcomers, “You won’t understand at first.” It is demeaning and does not give them credit.’

“I want to share with you, some of the quotes that really touched me from the Delegates:

- Costa Rica—thanks to the pioneers of Latin America, serving is how we all learn our Higher Power’s will.
- Guatemala—We are happy to see progress and growth. We see our need to work together.
- El Salvador—We can get on the right path with the help of the other structures. I understand that the WSO is our ‘Mother’ and we are all sisters. Thanks for AFG Connects to help us communicate.
- Nicaragua—Love is felt from all the Delegates and workshop members. I ask for wisdom to learn from mistakes. Thanks and good wishes to keep Al-Anon alive for all our children.

“We shared feelings of gratitude to be included as one of their family. We were impressed with their dedication and commitment to growing Al-Anon in Central America. It is encouraging that some of the more developed structures are actively sponsoring those who need guidance in their ‘growing up.’

“I need to share about their Chairperson who was a very young member. When I complimented her on the great job she was doing, she humbly shared with me, ‘I doubted I could do it, but the Al-Anon members trusted me, so I had to trust myself.’ This seems to sum up our collective experience as we grow in service.

“On a sad and frightening note, the Delegate from Honduras, who sat beside me, recounted to me that her cousin was shot and killed by a gang and her brother was shot in the back by carjackers while he was walking away from his car (he has recovered). Now we can appreciate first-hand how dangerous it is in parts of these Central American countries. Gangs and violence are part of everyday life for many of our members. Going out at night to do Public Outreach or just to attend a meeting can be dangerous. Yet, even with the obstacles they face, they humbly pleaded: Please ask the World Service Office to recognize that we are doing our best in very tough conditions both financially and with the violence that is ever-present. They asked that the WSO look at how the cost of books might be lowered so that all groups could have access to them. This experience gave us only a glimpse at the local situation.

“We had the opportunity to hear firsthand, the challenges members face in Central America and to be of support to them. In some ways, it is parallel to the development of our Structure in North America some 65 years ago. Though the challenges are greater no doubt, these dedicated members are determined to grow Al-Anon there.

“Their love was worn on their sleeves as a badge of gratitude. While they depend on each other and on the WSO for support and strength, I witnessed that each structure truly desires to be strong and independent, yet unified.

“They look to their Higher Power to keep Al-Anon Family Groups strong for the next generations—just as we do.”

Paula B.

Trustee, Chairperson of the Board

European Zonal Meeting

The 2015 European Zonal Meeting (EZM) took place in Saint Andrew’s Abbey, August 21-23, 2015. The theme was “Participation Is the Key to Harmony.” There were representatives from Austria, Belgium—French-speaking and Flemish-speaking (5), Finland (2), France (1), Germany (2), Poland (2), Russia (1), Slovenia (2), Spain (1), Switzerland—French-speaking (2), Sweden (1), UK and Eire (1), and Ukraine (1) for a total of 21 participants. Two guests from the World Service Office (WSO) also attended.

The meeting began with a welcome and introduction of the structures. This provided an opportunity to review the traditional functions of the structure. Following dinner, discussions on the framework of the EZM and a general session on Concept Four were held.

The EZM can best be described as being similar to the Regional Delegates’ meetings in that, the members do not set policy for other General Service Offices (GSOs).

Questions and concerns were submitted in advance by the participating structures.

Discussion topics included:

- **Modern Communication:** There was discussion about guidelines related to Facebook, chat rooms, LinkedIn, and social media in general. Representatives had numerous questions related to e-Communities. However, since AFG Connects was being introduced later in the meeting, many of these topics were tabled.
- **Service in the respective structures:** There was discussion related to declining membership resulting in the reduced numbers of service volunteers and contributions. Concern was expressed about service offices and paid staff to do the day-to-day operations. Some are now using answering machines more or volunteers on their helplines, but there are concerns about reliability.
- **Literature:** Participants discussed the cost of shipping and handling, the process for translation of literature, and Al-Anon members who are also members of Alcoholics Anonymous emphasizing use of the *Big Book* either in meetings or to work the Steps. The *2014-2017 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*, page 104 was referenced to clear up confusion about outside literature.
 - ✓ Pricing of literature not supporting the structure was a concern for some. There were questions about copyright conflicts. One of the jobs of the WSO is to protect its copyright around the world, because we rely on literature as a primary source of revenue. There is copyright information on pages 106-107 of the *Service Manual*. The WSO also monitors copyright in Europe. If a structure is not in the European Union (EU), representatives were told to verify whether they are registered in the Madrid Protocols; if they are, then there is no issue. The WSO will help to make sure structures are protected regarding translated CAL and will assist with copyright conflicts.

- **Alateen:** There was discussion about creating a separate Web site for Alateen only. However, the Alateens were not making the request.
- **Finance and Legislation:** Topics were related to helping evolving structures financially, receiving goods and services at a reduced cost due to non-profit status, and the process by which an Al-Anon Information Service (AIS) that meets the conditions for being a GSO can become a GSO.
 - ✓ **Members also made the following points:** Contributions are down and members still put one Euro in the basket. The WSO encouraged each structure to focus more on sending a Delegate to the International Al-Anon General Services Meeting (IAGSM) rather than contributing to the WSO.
- **Seminar Committees (RSS):** The Chairperson of the Board shared about TEAM events and the three WSO topics, which are part of each event, as well as participating with the Areas to decide on other topics.
- **Job description for the Chairperson of the EZM:** The questions were related to the responsibilities of the Chairperson and the process for collecting questions and following up on unanswered questions.
- **Future of EZM as a non-profit organization at the European level:** The purpose of the EZM and communication among the members was discussed. Ultimately it was decided that there is no need to incorporate.

During these discussions, the use of the *Service Manual* and references to the “Policy Digest” were impressive. The EZM members gained further insight into the practical application of the shared experience of our World Service Conference (WSC). When the *Service Manual* is translated, nuances become apparent that require clarification. The second part of Tradition Four provided a great point of discussion in terms of whether the decision of the group is affecting another group, Al-Anon, or A.A. The WSO demonstrated access to the Members’ Web site and all the resources available that have been translated into French, including guidelines. The *Service Manual* on the Chairperson of the Board’s iPad made it easy to find the citations that were used for reference.

The participants also shared concerns about repetitive topics coming before their Conference and issues of dominance. They wanted to know more about the process we use to bring topics to the WSC. We shared about our practice of only once per topic and each person being limited to two minutes. They also wanted to know how we handle minority appeals since the same issues are brought forward each year. We explained that the body that made the decision considers the minority appeal *when new information is brought forward* and not just because the minority didn’t like the outcome of the vote. We shared the *Conflict Resolution Using Our Traditions* (S-72) cards. We also referenced the descriptive text of Warrant Four in Concept Twelve.

The printing of literature is important to provide better understanding of the program and can be a means of funding the services of the GSO. Therefore, if selling the literature just above cost isn’t financially supporting the services of the GSO, then the GSO may need to consider having a conversation with the members about pricing. Discussion on this topic gave the WSO representatives an opportunity to share about the Finance Committee workshops at the WSC.

The 2014 IAGSM Delegates shared about their favorite session. The vast majority chose “Using our principles expressed in Concepts, Six, Seven, Ten, and Eleven—what is the relationship of the Board with the Conference and the Committees?”

In closing the presentation, the Chairperson of the Board shared, “We also discussed the items that we found interesting from the IAGSM General Sessions. I particularly enjoyed the one on using spiritual principles in conflict resolution. Some comments of note:

- Don’t attribute motives to another person.
- Change the conversation to find a common understanding.
- Take a break when it gets emotional, and say the Serenity Prayer.
- Focus on the good of Al-Anon as a whole. Sometimes we must agree to disagree.
- I am an equal participant at the World Service Conference and in my meeting. But when I chair the Annual Meeting, my role changes and I wear my legal hat.
- Spiritual principles build on each other and cannot be viewed in isolation to force a solution or justify a position.

“The next EZM in Germany and the Chairperson’s job description were discussed on the final day. We closed with personal highlights and reflections.”

Debbie G.

*Trustee, International
Coordination Committee
Chairperson (ICC)*

Marsha W.

*Associate Director Member
Services—International*

Ibero-American Zonal Meeting

The International Coordination Committee (ICC) Chairperson began the presentation, “The Ibero-American Zonal Meeting was held in Ascuncion, Paraguay November 14-15, 2015. The meeting was hosted by Paraguay. During the meeting, the World Service Office (WSO) representatives used the services of a paid translator.

“The following structures attended: Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay, Brazil, Peru, Mexico, Bolivia, and Ecuador.

“The host committee proudly displayed flags from participating structures, Conference Approved Literature, and Spanish Legacy banners front and center. The committee was available to ensure the comfort of all guests throughout the weekend. I was incredibly impressed with the members of the committee for their demonstration of enthusiasm, passion for their recovery, and the desire to learn more. Considerable time was given to the reading of the Zonal Meeting guidelines, as well as discussion related to the general format of the meeting. The smaller structures rely on the larger, more experienced structures for guidance and support. It was apparent throughout the weekend that the structures of Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay have served as leaders and mentors to the smaller structures, spending considerable time sharing their experience, strength, and hope to encourage the struggling structures in finding solutions and moving forward.

“The Agenda Meeting Topics were:

- Argentina: *Sharing Our Message through Social Networks*
- Uruguay: *Difficulty in Complying with the Structure of Service*
- Paraguay: *Relationship with A.A. in Cooperating without Losing Our Identity*
- Brazil: *Relations between the WSO and Communication between Structures*
- Peru: *How to Attract New Service Workers*
- Mexico: *Advantages of Legally Incorporating Structures*
- Bolivia: *Service Experience*
- Ecuador: *Benefits in Attending the Zonal Meeting*
- WSO: *Purchase, Sale, and Printing Permissions of Literature*
- ICC Chairperson: International AI-Anon General Services Meeting (IAGSM) Update

“It became apparent that different structures experience the same struggles as do those in the Areas of the U.S. and Canada. The different structures do, however, have social, cultural, economic, and political considerations, as well as safety factors that our Structure does not face. They are all struggling with: gaining the attention of younger members, keeping those with service experience involved, attracting new members, improving literature sales and contributions, and using social media while maintaining personal anonymity.

“Their solutions are similar: use technology whenever possible for Board and service meetings, focus on sponsorship, apply our Legacies, study the *Service Manual*, and rely on the WSO for assistance. One of the benefits of our participating in the Zonal Meetings was the opportunity for the Associate Director of Member Services—International to meet face-to-face with representatives from structures she is familiar with as well as the new leaders of structures who have either not reached out to the WSO or who have had issues with communication. As a result of our trip, those structures have made a commitment to continue their communication with the WSO staff through e-mail and the use of AFG Connects.”

The Associate Director shared a presentation related to reprint permission and fielded a number of questions on various topics. The ICC Chairperson shared about the 2014 IAGSM as well as the upcoming 2016 meeting and answered questions related to what a “typical” Board week entails along with the responsibilities and time commitment for Trustees.

Members voted to hold the 2017 Ibero-American Zonal Meeting in Ecuador. Paraguay volunteered to act as the liaison for the new Zonal Meeting link on AFG Connects.

The ICC Chairperson concluded, “Thank you for the privilege of representing you, and I ask that you thank the members of your Area as well. It is only through our members’ continued support of the WSO that we can continue to be of service to structures throughout the world.”

In response to questions about what a Zonal Meeting is from Conference members, the Associate Director shared, “Zonal meetings are a service meeting, similar to TEAM events and in the past, Regional Service Seminars (RSS). A Zonal Meeting is available to groups, Al-Anon Information Service (AIS) offices, and national service structures located in the same region or area; whereas the IAGSM is only available to those countries with a national service structure. Zonal Meetings are a platform to share and grow on different levels. The information is helpful in that it offers an opportunity to be able to do better public outreach, understand how they may want to organize Alateen in their country, and to get answers to their questions. For example, when members in their service structures ask them if they can or can’t do something, it helps when they can go back to a principle to support their answer. The 36 Legacies are the same wherever we go. We all share based on the principles of program.

“We tend to take for granted what we have in our structure. The Zonal Meeting setting gives the WSO an opportunity to share a unified message of hope and information with a wider, larger group and cuts down on WSO costs because it is done in one location. Zonal Meetings support the Board Vision Statement, ‘All people affected by someone else’s drinking will find help and recovery in every community,’ and supports the Board Mission Statement, ‘Anticipate the future and Al-Anon’s place in it and ensure that the necessary resources are available.’ When a structure hosts a Zonal Meeting, it energizes the members in the structure and the service structure will probably never have a chance to host again. None of the structures are as large as we are. Their office may have just one or two workers and open only once or twice a week. Members are energized and encouraged and we, as well, become energized and can bring back their message.”

The Associate Director concluded, “One thing that benefits me no matter where I go is our literature. My favorite reading is in *One Day at a Time in Al-Anon* (B-6), page 323. It says, ‘As a member of Al-Anon, I am part of a group which is part of a fellowship of thousands of such groups, encircling the world. One cannot even imagine the many kinds of people who join Al-Anon for the same purpose as I did: to learn a better way of life despite the difficulties of living with an alcoholic. Their social units and customs are different from mine—the spirit that motivates us is the same. This holds us together as one united fellowship wherever in the world we may be.’”

WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE SITE (2017)

The dates selected for the 2017 World Service Conference are Monday, April 24 through Friday, April 28, 2017. The Conference will be held at the Wyndham Virginia Beach Resort Hotel in Virginia Beach, Virginia.

In searching for a site to hold the Conference, the availability of adequate meeting space, hotel room costs, meal costs, and dates of religious holidays were factors in the selection of the dates and location.

This information will be posted to AFG Connects for Conference members’ future reference.

Suzanne M.

*Associate Director of
Member Services—Conference*



BOARD OF TRUSTEES—DESCRIPTIVE TEXT FOR CONCEPT ELEVEN

Marilyn M.

Trustee, Task Force Chairperson

Concept Eleven: *The World Service Office is composed of selected committees, executives, and staff members.*

The descriptive text of Concept Eleven required updating to reflect changes to the structure of Board committees that were implemented and approved by the 2002 World Service Conference (WSC). Since the Twelve Concepts of Service belong to the world and this WSC is the senior group conscience providing an example to General Service Offices (GSO) and emerging structures around the world, it is important that we maintain a brief description of those Board committees that, while no longer in effect in the WSC Structure, may be in effect in other structures.

In July 2012, the Board of Trustees began this task to update and clarify the text to reflect our current Structure. As with all changes to the descriptive text, any deleted information is maintained in the “Amendments” section following “Al-Anon’s Twelve Concepts of Service” in the *Service Manual*.

To help Conference members prepare to continue the discussion at this year’s WSC, Conference members received a draft descriptive text for review and were asked to also review the 2015 Conference discussion (*2015 Conference Summary*, pages 43-45). At the end of the 2015 discussion, there was consensual approval of the text changes through the section, “Conference Committee on Trustees.”

The 2016 discussion began where it left off at the 2015 WSC. At that time, the Concept Eleven Text Update Task Force was asked to revisit, for improved clarity, the information on “Regional Committee on Trustees” (RCT) under the “Nominating Committee” section. This RCT section is a new addition to the original Concept Eleven text.

The following points provided a framework for the 2016 discussion:

- The Concepts belong to the world.
- The WSC is the senior group conscience providing an example to GSOs and emerging structures around the world. It is important that a brief description of those Board Committees be maintained. While no longer in effect in the U.S., Canada, Bermuda, and Puerto Rico, international structures may continue to use them.
- “Al-Anon’s Twelve Concepts of Service” section is not a procedural manual. It is not the place to outline roles, duties, or provide an organizational chart. Committees have guidelines for direction.
- As with all changes to the descriptive text, any deleted information is maintained in the “Amendments” section following the “Twelve Concepts of Service” in the *Service Manual*.
- The double asterisks mean the Committee is no longer used in the WSC Structure, but may be functioning in worldwide GSOs or emerging structures that look to us for guidance.

The proposed text was reviewed paragraph by paragraph. At the end of discussion on each paragraph, the Conference Chairperson asked three questions:

Is it accurate?

Does it provide clarity?

Can you live with it?

Nominating Committee

The Task Force reviewed the *2010 Conference Summary* (pages 26-28) and the revised nominating packages that had been in a trial and reported at the July 2015 Board meeting that the trial was approved at the 2010 WSC (Motion #6). Immediately after the process was approved, the Regional Committee on Trustees (RCT) formed and began the process for selecting the RCTs for the 2010-2011 Regional Trustee review of candidates. The Board recommended restating the proposed text from the 2015 WSC. The language was accepted by consensus.

Alateen

Since the Alateen Work Group is on a three-year trial (beginning in October 2014), to be reviewed annually, no changes were made to this section.

Literature Committee

This section was revised to more correctly define the responsibility of the Literature Committee.

The use of the word “create” could imply that the Literature Committee writes the literature. However, that is inaccurate as the material is written by member submissions, professional writers, etc. The Literature Committee reviews the material for consistency with the Al-Anon message. Finally, the Task Force wanted to emphasize that Al-Anon’s policy (emphasized purposely with italics) is to produce high-quality literature as it is reflective of our program.

Canadian Public Outreach Subcommittee

There were several questions about the deletion of the Canadian Public Outreach Subcommittee.

The Canadian Public Outreach Subcommittee notified the Board of the Committee’s consensus to suspend the Subcommittee for a three-year trial since Canadian interests were being met in all World Service Office outreach activities by the Public Outreach Committee. Following completion of the three-year trial, the Board, in its oversight capacity, dissolved the Canadian Public Outreach Committee. Since the Canadian Public Outreach is not found in other structures, it will not be retained in the descriptive text. It will be included in “Amendments” at the end of the Concepts. There will be no double asterisks.

Staff Members

The Board of Trustees identified some confusion between staff as paid workers and staff as members of the WSC. The suggested change is intended to make this distinction clear that this section is about staff as paid workers, not as Conference members.

In response to a question about whether staff members are paid to be present at the WSC, it was explained that they are paid for their time at the Conference, but it is reflective of the time when they would be working in the World Service Office. Other members are also working at the Conference, but are not voting members.

Outreach to Professionals Advisory Committee()**

With so many different types of outreach today, we couldn’t hone in on anything specific. It was too general, and one size did not fit all. Until recently, we did not have Task Forces, Work Groups, or Thought Forces. The responsibility of outreach to professionals is now part of the Public Outreach Committee.

Conference Committee

There was some confusion about the composition of the former Conference Committee. The whole Conference was never part of the Conference Committee. The name of the Committee was changed to clarify the role of the Committee. Hence, the new name “Conference Leadership Team.”

There was a question on whether the RCTs are selected committees. RCTs are sub-committees of a selected committee—Nominating. Selected committees can be permanent or temporary and are advisory to the Board of Trustees.

There were several questions about the Regional Service Seminar (RSS) and TEAM Events. Since there are international structures that reference the *Service Manual*, we didn’t eliminate RSS Committee entirely, but utilized the “***” to note that this Committee is no longer used in the WSC Structure. However, TEAM Events are not organized by an actual Committee like the RSSs were. The process for this event is different and a specific Task Force is designated for each TEAM Event.

Admissions/Handbook Committee

We need to leave this for other Structures that still use this Committee and subcommittee. In the WSC Structure, the work of Admissions goes to the Conference Leadership Team, and Handbook is addressed by the Board of Trustees.

Policy Committee

There were questions about the Committee Chairpersons being removed from the Policy Committee. This section is referencing the Chairpersons from Public Outreach and Literature that are established at the direction of the Board. Those Committees never had a Chairperson participating at the Conference since these are At-Large members. They would not be brought into WSO for the quarterly Policy Committee meetings. So, there is no loss of participation. This language merely states current practice for the last several years and is now being cleaned up in the text.

Keep in mind, concerns from Public Outreach or Literature can be brought in the voice of the staff person or Trustee Liaison.

Finance Committee

To clarify the intent of the sentence, “The Committee also sets literature pricing in a way that adequately supports the needs of the service structure,” this is based on the identified (specific) needs in the budget of the service structure. If there were greater contributions, the pricing of literature could decrease.

Nominating Committee

There was some concern about the use of the phrase “refuses to accept,” saying that this is not spiritual. We considered this language, and experience demands a strong statement to ensure we get the best recommendations possible. A member stated, “My Sponsor told me that saying no was spiritual, as I was setting boundaries on unacceptable behavior or practices.”

After reviewing changes to the descriptive text of Concept Eleven, there was a consensus of Conference members that it was accurate, provided clarity, and they could live with it.

A motion was made, seconded, and carried to amend the descriptive text of Concept Eleven on pages 207-214 in the *2014-2017 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27), “Al-Anon’s Twelve Concepts of Service” section. (See Motion #2, page 95).

CHOSEN AGENDA ITEM

Chosen Agenda Item (CAI) discussions have been taking place at the World Service Conference (WSC) for 40 years. The original intent and vision was for the Conference as a body to have open discussions on topics of interest that affect Al-Anon as a whole. The process for submitting questions or topics, the format, and the title (“Red Light, Green Light”; “Green Light”; “Green Light Open Discussion”; “Timely Topics”; and currently “Chosen Agenda Items”) have changed over the years.

For the 2016 Conference, members submitted 22 topics, one of which was referred to a World Service Office (WSO) department for response since it was a question related to the work of the WSO. The remaining 21 topics were combined into 12 topics by a Task Force made up of Wendy R., Panel 55, Florida North; Tina B., Trustee, Conference Chairperson; and Tarcila F., Panel 55, Tennessee.

Ninety-one Conference members were eligible to vote for the topics that they wished to discuss; 68 Conference members voted. Twenty were Panel 54 Delegates; 18 were Panel 55; 15 were Panel 56; 11 were Trustees; two were members of the Executive Committee; and two were WSO Conference staff.

This year, in addition to discussing a Chosen Agenda Item in the General Session, Conference members met in WSC Agenda Item small group breakout sessions to discuss: Alateen—what is the key to unlocking Alateen success through all the Areas; Balance between dominance and trusted servants not fulfilling their jobs; and Groups that are not following the Traditions. (See page 73 for the WSC Agenda Item discussions.)

Chosen Agenda Item

Topic:

How do we adapt and evolve to attract and retain younger members (under 40) while staying true to our purpose, Traditions, and Concepts?

Topic:

How can we promote unity within the fellowship, so we can see past our differences to focus on providing support to people who have been affected by someone else’s alcoholism?

Topic:

Are we as inclusive as we could be, whether a potential newcomer or member has religious beliefs or not (the agnostic)?

Topic:

Is the number of Al-Anon groups worldwide growing or shrinking? Once we determine the answer, how can we best respond to address the trend?

Topic:

How can we attract and retain more members under the age of 50?

Topic:

How can Al-Anon attract younger, more diverse members beyond the current Al-Anon member, being a 60-year-old heterosexual white woman; to maintain and increase Al-Anon's current membership?

Following the reading of the Chosen Agenda Item topics, Conference members responded:

- I was 25 years old when I came to Al-Anon 30 years ago, and there were members of all ages at that time. In our Area, we see young people in all of our meetings. It is not a concern at this time in my Area.
- I was 22 years old when I got to Al-Anon. The “little old ladies” in the meetings were in their 40's, but they spoke in the language of love and I kept coming back. I live in a college town. It is normal for us to see tattoos and piercings at meetings. One of the meetings is composed of many longtime members. I encouraged a young woman to stand for Group Representative. When she did, young members began to come and bring friends. We must not underestimate our young members.
- My Area does not have large groups, but we did a visioning exercise at a workshop to have an Al-Anon meeting in every town in my Area overflowing with members. Our group actually started to grow. Through the referrals of high school counselors, two or three young people came because they recognized a problem with alcohol in the family.
- We are a university town. The number of meetings is increasing, but the membership is stagnant. There are more men coming. The Men's Group is the largest meeting in town. When the treatment centers have an orientation, we get a high number of newcomers, but they are not staying. Is there a decline correlation with groups that meet in churches?
- I was 32 years old trying to learn how to get the alcoholic to stop drinking when I came to Al-Anon. I left, but ten years later, I came back. I knew of Al-Anon, but I was not ready to accept that it had anything for me. That was where I was in my maturity. My town is mostly white and retired, but younger members are coming forward as Group Representatives.
- We get here just at the right time. We have newcomers and some have had Alateen experience, but they need to get to the point of coming back as Al-Anon members in their own time.
- I had some confusion about anonymity. My views of it have changed. Some members still insist you cannot do service outside the home group. Our public outreach is weakened with confusion about what it is. Groups are on the upswing in my district. Members are doing more service outside the group and traveling and participating in other groups' open meetings and events. It seems to be an ebb and flow cycle of a large group of people.
- I was 29 years old when I came in. We sustain each other throughout. I encourage and sponsor young women and encourage a peer buddy to walk along side. Our numbers are shrinking. We had 90 meetings in my city when I came; now we have 30. When I am not thinking abundantly, thinking and worrying diminish me. Abundant thinking lets my Higher Power figure it out. I can't break Al-Anon, and I can't fix it.
- When we did the last Membership Survey, I brought my iPad to my groups and got every member to participate. My group does not represent typical Al-Anon membership; we are diverse. Al-Anon could use technology to better serve our groups. It seems that only those in service know about the surveys and other opportunities, but we can encourage all members to participate. The Membership Survey tells us how important public outreach is.
- Do we offer enough in our program to attract people? It takes so long to develop things, and people are looking for a quick fix. Maybe we should reevaluate our Policy of attraction versus promotion. Al-Anon is not a secret program.
- It is important to embrace and welcome younger people and Alateens. They are hesitant to come to the Al-Anon rooms because they may be uncomfortable with what they hear. Make sure parents and teens coming together do not attend the same meeting. We tried a transition meeting. It worked for a year, but the meeting disappeared as the members went on with their lives—moving and starting families. Be supportive and encourage them. We have a young Area Chair and at times it is not always acceptable for a younger person to be in charge of certain things. We need to support young people as they come up in Al-Anon.

- Engage younger people. As we age, we may not know what is necessary to keep Al-Anon attractive to them.
- I am part of the 40 percent of members who came to Al-Anon primarily for reasons other than someone else's drinking. I would have been here sooner, but I didn't think I belonged. I expressed my doubts, but was assured that I was in the right place. Listening to members share, I knew I was in a place where people understood, and I was not alone. In our public outreach efforts, are we living up to our Al-Anon Declaration?
- On a vacation, I chose to attend meetings three times a day, seven days a week, for two weeks. The true average age might be found in those who did not participate in the Membership Survey.
- I do not presume to know what is best for younger people. When we talk of the Alateen Survey (see page 30 for more information) and what is important to them, I thought electronic meetings would be "hot." We talk about transitioning, but we don't welcome families in meetings. We need to find an activity so children do not disrupt a meeting. We are talking about recovery so they are not going to be hurt by what they hear. We need to use the phrase: "Family meetings, bring everyone."
- Anonymity is not an issue personally for me, so I didn't understand why Al-Anon was made to look like a secret. We had a woman in our group who was killed through abuse by her husband when he found out she was going to Al-Anon. We don't know other people's situations. I've heard that we have to hear something 42 times before it sinks in. I never know if what I say will be the first, 22nd, or 41st time someone will hear the message. Public Outreach is not "once and done." When I am afraid that Al-Anon might go away and wonder what I will do without its support, I remember listening to Lois at the 1985 International Convention saying that Al-Anon will be here for as long as it is of use to our Higher Power.
- We hold a "Super Sunday" meeting for Alateen the day after the Area World Service Committee (AWSC) meeting. It is part of my responsibility as Delegate to attend their Super Sunday meeting if the kids invite me. I am the first Delegate to accept their invitation. We elected an Alateen to serve a one-year term who sits on the dais to encourage young members to stay and transition into Al-Anon.
- I am part of a Step Study group. My home group has babysitting. Our group has really blossomed. We are seeing younger people coming and there is a lot of diversity. Alateen was in charge of a skit at our convention. The skit was about Nemo—moving on from Alateen to Al-Anon. It was moving to see them "under the sea!"
- I came to Al-Anon at age 55 when the pain of my life was so great that I had no other option. This discussion ties in with the Task Force: Acceptance of Communities, Cultures, and Beliefs workshop (see page 65). The average age is a diversity issue. The fellowship needs to be available for everyone. Public Outreach lets everyone know we are here. We get here just at the right time.
- In a forest with natural selection, the strong trees survive and the others die out. I am hoping that this is a natural decline to strengthen our program where the unhealthy groups are being weeded out. A concern is that few Alateens transition into Al-Anon. We could start a young people's meeting, but make it multifaceted because groups of like people are drawn together. There is a comfort level in it. Some ways to assist younger people to participate are to provide babysitting at meetings and to create literature for young members.
- The surge in my home group is because of the drug epidemic. We are welcoming. We listen and let them know that we keep the focus on being affected by someone else's drinking, because usually alcohol abuse is also involved. It seems they never talk about drugs because they are ashamed. My groups have elected young people to be the Group Representative and Alternate and we cover their expenses to attend Assembly. When doing public outreach to high school educators, they tell us teens are not only growing up in homes with alcoholism, but are also in alcoholic relationships. How do we reach that population?
- Fellowship is where we share our tools. My most important tool is having the opportunity to go back to my Area, district, and groups and *show* them how service has moved my recovery forward.

- At Assembly, we have many young Group Representatives. We are proud of our Area. We started a new Spanish District that has a District Representative and an Alternate. So now we have two Spanish Districts! Diversity is important.
- My Area has young Public Outreach and Web Coordinators who are in their 20's. We have Al-Anon meetings near or on college and university campuses. Those members have problems with intimacy, relationships, and roommates. A young adults group hosted a "Day in Al-Anon." Topics they would like to see are intimacy, the college years, moving out of their parent's house, sexual orientation (LGBT), first job, first time away from mom and dad, death and dying, and dating. Older members, please remember to not be patronizing of Alateens and young members—be open-minded. Offer to have a young adult member or an Alateen member manage the Web site with an Al-Anon Member Involved in Alateen Service (AMIAS) to help. Other suggestions are to host more "young adults in recovery" events such as a 5K serenity walk. At each 1K, there will be a member with a Step and questions. If you tell me, I will forget; if you show me, I will remember; if you involve me, I will understand.
- We have literature for diverse groups, but not for the agnostic. Are we inclusive and diverse in that aspect? After listening to the Task Force: Acceptance of Communities, Cultures, and Beliefs presentation (see page 65), I asked myself, am I as inclusive and diverse as I need to be?
- I was 35 when I came to a meeting. What I see today is that my Area stays around 210 groups with a myriad of ages including Alateens who are transitioning into Al-Anon. We have put our PSAs in movie theaters and we are starting to get feedback from that.
- It is up to me to attract new people. A younger woman came to our meeting and I talked with her and told her I was almost the only male when I first came, but I found the help I needed. I suggested that she come back and she would find help. Be the one to help make the changes.
- The WSO does not write literature; we, as members, do. We have to get members to write it. It begins with me. I had a young sponsee who is an atheist and I asked him to write his story to let other people like him in the program know how he works it.
- I have a concern about babysitting. Al-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service (AMIAS) are certified to protect Al-Anon and themselves. Might we be putting ourselves in danger if issues arise with a babysitter? A sponsee who is atheist/agnostic attends an on-line e-mail group. She wrote how she came to Al-Anon and it was published! At times, my home group has had Native American, Jewish, Catholic, and Wicca members. Some hold hands at the closing, some not, but we all got along because the focus was on our primary purpose.

Following the session, a Delegate summarized the discussion:

- What do young people want? We don't know, let's ask them.
- Strategic planning—what do we want Al-Anon to look like in the future?
- Are we already there?
- Men—where are they?
- Public outreach, public outreach, public outreach.
- PSAs in movie theaters.
- Transitioning meetings?
- Do we have to hit bottom before we come willingly?
- Young adults as Public Outreach and Web Coordinators.
- Meetings at colleges and universities—issues unique to young people.
- Al-Anon will be here for as long as it is of use to our Higher Power.

FINANCE COMMITTEE PRESENTATION

Jennie McC.
Trustee, Treasurer

David Zach
*Director of Business
Services, (non-member)*

As your Treasurer, Chairperson of the Finance Committee, and member of the Board of Trustees, I would like to thank you for the ideas gathered from your Areas about closing the budget deficit, a budget we passed at Conference in April 2015. You directly addressed the question from the Finance Committee included in the July Chairperson of the Board letter:

What strategies did your Area identify as a way to close the budget deficit?

“Some Areas took a broader view of the question, and others included specific strategies for the World Service Office (WSO) to consider. The Finance Committee and Board were, and are, very interested in hearing your ideas and input. You took the question seriously and provided many excellent suggestions. You may recall that I posted a list of them on AFG Connects.

“As a result of our past Conference discussions about thinking abundantly, creating an Area budget, and having an Area dream, I believe it is getting easier for us as Conference members to talk about financial matters. It has taken time, practice, and acceptance of reality. Even though we may be more comfortable at Conference, it’s often still difficult to go back home to talk with members within the Area about the financial needs of worldwide Al-Anon. Money is not on the minds of the average member, and as we hear so often, putting a dollar in the basket is still the norm at many meetings.

“I understand so well, as do you, that newcomers attend meetings because they are seeking relief from the family disease of alcoholism. They are not thinking about how Al-Anon sustains itself financially, how the WSO operates, or what service expenses must be met. That is the last thing on their minds. Even when the topic of money comes up at Area World Service Committee (AWSC) meetings or other Area meetings, it can be difficult to discuss with longtime members. They are often more interested in topics directly related to personal recovery, rather than how their contributions help keep Al-Anon alive. Still, other members may be quick to say that Al-Anon is not about money, and that talk of money has no place in our program. That’s true—we are a spiritual program, based on spiritual principles, and yet our Seventh Tradition clearly states that we are self-supporting, and we have operated that way for 65 years. That means we do not accept outside contributions and we pay our own way. That is both amazing and perhaps frightening, especially when we look at our \$5 million dollar budget! What member on any given day stops to think that all of the money sustaining our world services comes from the members of groups around the world? Even I don’t. We are phenomenal, if you think about it!

“During calls to the Delegates this past year, many of you asked Trustees for help in talking to your Area about finances. You wanted to know how to do that more comfortably. You wanted help on providing members a better understanding of the critical need for self-support, yet at the same time you didn’t want the focus to be on money itself. You talked about balance in approaching the subject.

“Although there are no easy tactics to employ, knowledge and education about Al-Anon’s financial income and expenses are simply the most helpful. Once members, as well as ourselves, better understand the financial reports, we can give definite and honest answers to questions or arguments raised. Attitudes toward having financial discussions might be more positive. The more we know, the more we understand—and can willingly help. With that in mind, our Finance Committee put together a presentation about resources to use and then arranged time for smaller group discussions that will help you to become more knowledgeable and comfortable discussing Al-Anon’s financial matters.

“As I was told when I was new to the Board, and as you were told in your orientation as a new Delegate, we want you to be successful. That is our goal here—for you to be successful as a Delegate.”

Following the introduction, the Treasurer presented an overview of available resources, on-line and in hand that can help Delegates to clearly, accurately, and transparently report the WSO current financial status and answer frequently asked questions. Conference members received a crossword puzzle to complete that highlighted resources and budget and financial terms.

Later in the Conference, members met in small groups. The purpose of the workshops was to give the Delegates as much help as they needed to be able to go back to their Areas feeling comfortable explaining the finances of Al-Anon Family Groups, Inc. They were asked to:

Think about what financial information the Finance Committee had provided that might be of interest to your Area.

Conference members then participated in an activity that could help them understand and put together a financial report for their Areas. Realizing that Areas have different interests and different amounts of time available to report on AFG finances, the main elements of a report include:

- Sources of Revenue and Expenses for the WSO and a determination of the important facts and ideas that are the most difficult to explain.
- The Reserve Fund important facts and ideas.

The resources that could be used to discuss the topics were reviewed and a list of the top six most difficult topics was compiled.

In a final general session, Conference members met for feedback and to take the opportunity to clarify points and have their questions answered. The Treasurer opened the session with the following questions:

- How did this small group activity help you understand AFG's finances?
- What did you enjoy about the activity?

Conference members reported:

- My group had such good ideas on how they will talk to groups at Assembly using new ideas for their Delegate Finance Report. We modeled addressing the Assembly.
- I don't have to understand fully, but I know where to get the information.
- How to use the workshop tool and how to plan the reportback to my Area.
- I understand finances myself, but communicating it to others, especially with the help of the financial terms that are defined, makes me better able to communicate.
- The crossword puzzle helps solidify understanding. We know what points come up at Assembly, so it is helpful to have active participation to hone the details.
- It can be more complicated in my mind, but today we simplified it.
- This was a strong reminder to take a message back that the WSO is a resource we need to support financially. Groups don't fully understand the benefits and resources we get and how important it is to support the WSO, even in a small way.

Go on-line to make sure you have the information on what the WSO does for the groups and members, as well as the contribution information.

The most difficult topics to explain to the Area:

- Contributions.
- Salaries/boost in post-retirement medical benefits.
- Investments/Reserve Fund.
- Declining literature sales.
- Deficit Budget.
- Travel and meetings.

The Treasurer asked whether there were any topics that needed more clarity.

Delegates had the following comments and questions:

- Who can I call when creating my presentation for explanations that make sense?
There is a lot of helpful information in the resource packets, or you can contact the Treasurer or Director of Business Services by e-mail or phone.
- When I am asked what happened with investments, it is easy to explain now that I know how the market is now. I will remind members of the good years when we were able to pay off the building with the money we made on the investments.
- We have seen a decline in literature sales and we are not 100% sure why. It is possible that fewer newcomers are buying literature. We are hoping the Group Representatives in the Area do more public outreach. I give a daily reader to my sponsees. I love my torn up, dog-eared daily reader, but maybe it is time I let it go and buy a new one.
- Buy more books or contribute more or do both; but do contribute more if you are not buying books. We—groups, districts, Areas—can't manage the affairs of Al-Anon on a worldwide scale as the WSO can, so we need to pay for it.
- I don't know of any other way to get priceless recovery; there is no dollar amount for it. Make a contribution for your anniversary, birthday, or special speaker meeting with an extra

contribution for our 65th anniversary. I'll remind my Area that recovery is worth something. Step up and make a contribution, it means a lot to our recovery.

- Sometimes the disease teaches us to react and overreact. We learn to take a deep breath and pray. Things can get better. For now, we are able to have a budget that meets our needs.
- Reflect back on our Al-Anon Declaration. People who need help are not always next door—sometimes they are in other countries. We reach them by making sure Al-Anon resources are available to them in their time of need. We need to make sure the WSO is there. Regarding the charitable contributions idea: I will share in my Area the idea of thinking of Al-Anon as their “charity of choice.”
- Our past two Delegates put \$5 in the basket. Just because they put \$5 in the basket, doesn't mean it is coming to the WSO. Even though we can give a personal contribution on the Web site, we still need to put something in the basket for group expenses, but I will strongly point out the idea of making a personal contribution directly to the WSO.
- I wrote an article for the Area and a local newsletter and it ended up in *Area Highlights*. There are approximately 15,000 registered groups and each has an average of five members. If each member puts two cents extra in a jar per week, that is approximately \$75,000 a year.
- Thanks to the Finance Committee, I am confident I have what I need to provide a competent report.
- I am grateful we keep talking about abundant living. I can put a spiritual spin on this. God has provided for me and Al-Anon, and we will get through it.
- There are many members we are missing with direct contributions to the WSO, because they are not aware of our deficit. What if we have 150,000 to 200,000 members who are not aware? We are missing out on a valuable resource.
- We are mostly volunteers in this room. I am thinking of the Executive Committee—what would it mean to the fellowship to have financial figures of the volunteers' time used to help the WSO operate daily? Public Outreach has the most Coordinators (97-98) who are volunteering to help with public outreach. Is there some way to give the fellowship a dollar value representing the time volunteers have given to the fellowship?
- This year, the Delegates have a most challenging and difficult report to deliver to the fellowship. I am grateful to the Finance Committee for preparing us.
- We have been encouraging members over the last several years to put money in the basket, but, have we, as a group, given to the WSO? Share the abundance.
- I never know where something is until my hair on fire. We need to see that the WSO remains financially sound. This statement in “Al-Anon's Twelve Concepts of Service” sets a great tone for what I will tell my Area:

“This [Finance] Committee conservatively estimates each year's income. It develops plans for increasing our revenues and keeps a watchful eye on expenditures. It scrutinizes the annual budgets of estimated income and expense submitted by the WSO, and makes revisions when necessary.

“This Committee may be compelled to risk temporary deficits.

“However, uncontrolled spending could result in the collapse of vital services. On the other hand, fearful hoarding could result in the severe curtailment of such services. Both should be guarded against with great care.” (2014/2017 *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*, page 209)

The Treasurer concluded the presentation saying, “We have tried to answer your appeal for help and to help you feel more prepared in this area. Did we succeed? If you get ‘brain freeze,’ send your questions or post to AFG Connects.”

LITERATURE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

Should the WSC give conceptual approval to remove the “Prayer for Today” from Conference Approved Literature?

Leona W.

Trustee Liaison

Tom C.

*Associate Director of
Communications—Literature*

One of the roles of the Literature Committee is to review suggestions that come from the fellowship regarding literature and possible changes. If a major decision is needed, it must come to the World Service Conference (WSC).

During its June 2015 meeting, the Literature Committee began discussing requests from two members in different Areas for changes to the “Prayer for Today.” This prayer is included in the *Just for Today* Wallet Card (M-10) and Bookmark (M-12). It also appears on page 101 of *How Al-Anon Works for Families & Friends of Alcoholics* (B-22, B-32), as well as on page 103 in editions printed prior to 2008. The first member felt that although it is beautiful, it is clearly a religious prayer, and should be revised or discontinued. The second member requested that the words “O, Divine Master” in the second paragraph of the prayer be changed to “God.” Because the prayer is included in the Newcomer Packet (K-10), she felt it could give many newcomers the idea that Al-Anon is a religious program.

The current wording of the “Prayer for Today” is as follows:

“Lord, make me an instrument of Thy peace. Where there is hatred, let me sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light, and where there is sadness, joy.

“O, Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled, as to console; to be understood, as to understand; to be loved, as to love; for it is in giving that we receive, it is in pardoning that we are pardoned, and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.”

Using the Knowledge-Based Decision-Making Process for an Informed Group Conscience (KBDM), discussion on this topic continued in October 2015. Prior to the October meeting, Committee members answered the five KBDM questions via the discussion board on e-Communities. At the meeting, the Committee had a thorough discussion of all aspects of the information from the KBDM document. It reached a unanimous consensus to recommend removal of the “Prayer for Today” from the *Just for Today* Bookmark and Wallet Card, as well as from *How Al-Anon Works*. The Committee also decided to have a discussion thread in its AFG Connects community to brainstorm ideas on what, if anything, it would recommend to replace the prayer where it is featured.

At the Literature Committee’s December 2015 meeting, it recommended that, if the Conference agreed to remove the “Prayer for Today,” the text on the Bookmark and Wallet Card could be enlarged without adding any other material, and that page 101 in *How Al-Anon Works* could end with a quotation from the last paragraph in *When I Got Busy, I Got Better* (P-78), so that it would read as follows:

“*When I Got Busy, I Got Better* offers invaluable information about this crucial area of recovery. Perhaps nowhere is the spirit of Al-Anon service more clearly articulated than in the last paragraph of this booklet:

“We have the opportunity to contribute not only what we can *do* but, more important, who we can *be*. By sharing our recovery, we strengthen its workings in our own lives. By seeking to allow a Higher Power to work in and through us, we come to feel, more fully, the presence of that Power.

“In giving, we receive.”

The Associate Director of Communications—Literature pointed out that no one on the Committee came with preconceived ideas and they looked at facts, talked, and reasoned things out. The question for the Conference is regarding the conclusion the Committee made, but it is important to note that nothing has been changed at this time, as it depends on where the Conference conversation goes. It is an important discussion for the Conference. Our Concepts say that the minority should be heard and that we listen with an open mind.

Upon opening the floor for discussion, the Conference Chairperson reminded Conference members that this is only a discussion. There is no motion at this time. That would depend on where the discussion goes.

Conference members commented:

- I received a petition from three groups objecting strongly to removing the prayer. Lois W. said that it is not a matter of what prayer we close with, but that it be a spiritual moment. If our founders understood the value of prayer, why are we questioning it? I disagree with this process.
- Do all service structures use the same Conference Approved Literature (CAL)?
The World Service Office (WSO) is the only producer of CAL, so any CAL that is translated is from the English version.
- How many service structures use the bookmark?
If available, they generally translate it.
- How long has it been part of the fellowship?
Since 1959. It was a card from the start. The bookmark came later. In 1969, the Board looked at translating Just for Today into Spanish. It discussed whether to include the bookmark because it could be interpreted as religious. It was translated in full.
Is there historic value to be considered?
- I am a Literature Committee member. We considered this over many months and there were varied opinions. I listened and learned and respected the opinions reflected in the KBDM process. I was born into the religion this prayer comes from. Coming to Al-Anon at age 29, I noticed that Al-Anon is a spiritual program, not a religious one. I have not used the back of the bookmark, ever. My focus is always on the pieces that say, “Just for Today . . .” I fully support removing the prayer from the card.
- There were strong reactions in my Area to the thought of editing the prayer. They are against it. Members are on both sides in the Area, but no one is for editing. We have only used the prayer to console, etc. I have been physically abused and this prayer was preached to me as what I needed. I was against the prayer when my Sponsor asked me to use it. It helped me learn tolerance and acceptance. Having to learn to have a spiritual Higher Power has helped me to have acceptance and tolerance and the prayer speaks to me now.
- The part, “It is in dying . . .” is a very specific religious belief—dying and eternal life. We are a fellowship trying to figure out how to correct the misperception that Al-Anon is religious. When I look at other religions, that phrase bothers me. It is a specific religious tenet. Consider removing the last line.
- My Area’s comments: We are trying to take God out of the program. “Take what you liked and leave the rest.” It provides spiritual instruction. The God of my understanding is my Higher Power. What’s the difference, it’s just a name. We are a fellowship of differences, there’s no way to please everybody. Leave as it is.
- There are quotes throughout *One Day at a Time in Al-Anon* (B-6) from spiritual references. If we are removing this prayer, remove references from all religions. Area consensus is they prefer to leave it as it is because we have a choice, just as we do with the closing prayer.
In the Literature Committee discussion, in terms of The Lord’s Prayer, the Conference has repeatedly said it is a group conscience decision. We are talking about literature with the CAL logo, and the Committee felt there was a difference. The CAL logo says this is what Al-Anon believes.
- The program was founded on Christian beliefs and medical expertise. The prayer was designed to bring emotional balance. It works.
- Reactions were all over the place in my Area. Continue the conversation, it will lead to more cohesiveness.
- Two members have invited us to a fight and Al-Anon says we don’t have to participate. Diversity allows us to keep what we have and add to it from different cultures. KBDM told us the prayer is the antitheses of Al-Anon.
- I grew up in this religion, and it is a religious prayer. This prayer is consistent with our level of comfort. It is attached to religious beliefs, and if we change it, will it be necessary to change what we are?

- Can we legally or morally substitute words? Could we drop the second part, instead of editing it?
- I read the entire KBDM before the discussion. There are strong opinions and emotions. I was struck by the process. I watched people with definite opinions, and as I listened as visibly began to change. Watching our minds open up to consider perspectives other than our own, I was encouraged and thought about how the fellowship might benefit. Let's open this up to the Areas and resume the discussion as a Conference later.
- If we are concerned about inclusion of a clearly religious prayer in our literature, use caution because the Serenity Prayer is religious in origin. That prayer is specific to a sermon given by its author. We should be extremely cautious if we are going down the path of using religious material that could give newcomers the idea that Al-Anon is a religious program. If a motion is ever made at the Conference, I would ask every member to read *One Day at a Time in Al-Anon*, page 310 before discussion and a vote.
- I have a personal attachment to it, but it is not appropriate to have a specific prayer in CAL. The rest of our literature is not under discussion—just this bookmark. The minority voice says it is religious. There are specific lines mentioned that are not in keeping with my spiritual tradition, so I am excluded from this conversation in this sense. I hope we would welcome any religious faith or none. It is hypocritical for Al-Anon to use this bookmark. We are not taking God out, but making God a lot bigger to include everyone who needs our program. It is a stumbling block that we can remove without compromising our program. I hope we would be willing to do that.
- Fifty percent of the members in my Area love the prayer. Five percent think we need to come up with our own generic prayers. Forty-five percent want to leave it as is. My concern: If we begin removing obstacles from people's paths to Al-Anon, there will be nothing left, as we all have different obstacles. When I am ready, nothing can keep me away. If I'm not ready, nothing can make me stay.
- How many were bothered, but never said so? Replace the first words with "just for today."
- Does it belong in CAL? No. Don't confuse faith with the program. Keep both separate and strong.
- Our "Suggested Preamble to the Twelve Steps" on page 12 of "Al-Anon and Alateen Groups at Work" in the *2014-2017 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* states, "Al-Anon is not allied with any sect, denomination, . . ."
- Face practicalities—create a new version of the bookmark using different prayers. Let's be more inclusive, not exclusive. If we can't solve this issue, we can't promote unity.
- I don't consider myself a Christian and I value quotes from Confucius even though I don't fall into that religion. Al-Anon is my religion as I develop my spiritual potential.
- As I consider other points of view, I need to keep an open mind to what is best for the fellowship, not for me. Continue to discuss this and remember it's for Al-Anon, not for my group, or me.
- How often has the Literature Committee considered changes based on two requests?

The Committee discusses suggested changes or suggestions for a new piece even if from only one person. The Literature Committee meets quarterly and discusses everything extensively so this is no longer only from one or two members.

The Literature Committee does a lot of processing in small groups. We do not want to give the impression this was a "fly by night" decision.

The Literature Committee is composed of ten Delegate members and five At Large members reflecting diverse perspectives, as well as a staff member and a Trustee liaison. The Trustee has voice, but not vote.

- The joy and strength of KBDM is that we can talk and talk until there is some sense of unanimity. Nothing has to come to a vote until there is a sense one way or the other. We can keep talking and keep the dialogue going and not be fearful something will happen right away. We can look to how long it took to build to a motion with Memorial Contributions. We can relax and know this is an ongoing conversation.
- The Literature Committee's intent was to bring this as a discussion, not expecting any decision. It is important to listen to everyone and keep an open mind, be loving and accepting of others.

We are all different, and the program has helped all of us in different ways. The more we share with each other, the closer we can get to what we want for our program; not just for today, but for our future.

The Conference Chairperson reminded Conference members that the Conference was only asked to have a discussion. With no clear consensus, Conference members were asked to share their thoughts regarding a way to move forward.

- I see the value of opening up the discussion with Area members in service in hopes that they will talk to one another in their groups. When members were respected and they were heard, I saw their minds opening up. This conversation was a powerful experience with a Higher Power present. I can take this back to my Area and discuss how we welcome people when what we say matches what we do. I would like to see an ongoing discussion in the Areas.
- There is such a passion about this bookmark. The prayer itself is bigger than this body. I don't think my Area will allow it to stop. I would like to see a question in *The Forum* asking, "What do you think about this?" Put it out on AFG Connects. Take the conversation out into the worldwide fellowship to discuss—they have a voice.
- I want an opportunity to give the Assembly time to talk it over because of the sensitive nature of the discussion.
- When we come to Conference, we start a conversation here because there is a wide body of knowledge and long recovery experience. I would like to start a conversation here before taking it to the Area because I come back more informed. As in Policy discussions, to arrive at answers that are consistent, loving, and helpful takes time and patience.
- Are we alienating members because of long-held religious beliefs in fellowship? I would like to see this discussion without the recommendation attached.
- Could we step back, continue the discussion and think about language and how our language in the program can evolve without losing the traditional spirit and wisdom from our founders? I don't want to us lose or erase it, but evolve the language in an inclusive way.
- I would like to continue the discussion. I would love to show the Task Force: Acceptance of Communities, Cultures, and Beliefs presentation first, then have this discussion. I have learned to take what I liked, but newcomers may be turned away because they don't know how.
- Where do we go from here? Consensus was clearly split. We need to make a decision regarding what we want to do today. We have to declare the discussion has ended for this WSC, but that doesn't preclude anyone from raising the issue again.
- I appreciate all for sharing their thoughts and feelings. The Literature Committee knew there would be passion. My hope is that we can separate ourselves from political and religious beliefs and focus on Al-Anon's spiritual principles. The Literature Committee is not asking to remove God or all prayers from the literature or to remove all excerpts from religious sources. The Literature recommendation is for this prayer because of its religious tenets.
- I see this as an opportunity to discuss this in my Area, based on spiritual principles, and to bring back their input next year.
- The discussion was more on acceptance of diversity, cultures, and beliefs. The spiritual principles in the prayer reflect ways to act and behave that are universal. It is not about removing prayer from the bookmark but accepting all the diversity we can bring. Alcoholism does not discriminate—everybody is welcome.
- When we name something, the energy dissipates. This is a difficult conversation that is okay to have. Let's name it and walk through it. There was no consensus. Don't hide it, but keep talking. Going forward means we need more conversation. This is a powerful discussion that might "trick" members into learning KBDM!
- This turned into an exercise in discovering the principles associated with and embedded in the prayer. Are we, as a fellowship, more exclusive if we keep the prayer? Are we more inclusive if it is taken out? It is an opportunity to practice the principles in all our affairs.

Following these thoughts, there was consensus to keep the conversation going, take it back to the Areas for discussion, and bring it back to the 2017 World Service Conference.

POLICY DISCUSSIONS

Memorial Contributions

The Policy Committee Chairperson began, “From Al-Anon’s early days until 1986, Al-Anon’s policy did permit one-time memorial contributions by family members who were not Al-Anon members. The policy placed specific dollar limits on the amounts families could contribute, and these limits were increased several times over the years to adjust for inflation. The 1986 World Service Conference (WSC) however, voted to change the policy and eliminate all contributions by family members.

“Since 1986 to the present day, a handful of family members each year have wanted to make a contribution to the World Service Office (WSO) as a gesture of gratitude for the benefits Al-Anon brought to them through a member of their family. Some family members and Al-Anon members feel that families grieving the loss of a loved one should not be denied the opportunity to make this spiritual statement of love and gratitude. They cite Tradition Five, which defines Al-Anon’s purpose (in part) as ‘giving comfort to families of alcoholics.’

“This conversation came at the request of the 2011 WSC in response to a discussion on identifying information for a guideline on memorial contributions. The Policy Committee began the discussion in July 2011 in light of Tradition Five and “giving comfort to families of alcoholics.” Once this Tradition was fully explored, the Policy discussion expanded to include a review of all Legacies and extensive archival research.

“At the 2013 WSC, a Policy conversation began on accepting memorial contributions from a non-member on behalf of his or her deceased family member who belonged to Al-Anon.

“Conference members shared their opinions on a Memorial Contributions presentation, which included an archival timeline that Delegates were provided in preparation for the discussion. During the discussion, members requested clarification on the definitions of ‘family’; ‘member’; and whether there would be contribution limits. WSC members also requested safeguards to ensure no undue influence or ‘ear-marking’ and questioned whether a change to Al-Anon’s policy would affect A.A. as a whole. At the end of the 2013 discussion, the Conference members requested the conversation continue.

“At the 2014 WSC, in response to the work of the Thought Force, Conference members discussed the research presented regarding definitions of ‘family’ and ‘member.’ Due to time restrictions, Conference members requested continuing the discussion at the 2015 WSC.

“In 2015, the Conference discussed setting dollar limits on a contribution, as well as including safeguards. It was also confirmed by the Alcoholics Anonymous General Service Office that our decision on this policy would not affect A.A. as a whole. With all considerations and concerns explored, the Conference asked the Policy Committee to draft language for a proposed change in the policy and to bring the language to this year’s Conference.

“The proposed change would permit the WSO to accept a one-time memorial contribution in memory of a deceased Al-Anon member from the family of that member, even if that ‘family’ member did not belong to Al-Anon.”

New Conference members just coming into the conversation were reminded that past *Conference Summaries* contain detailed accounts of these discussions. (See *2013, 2014, and 2015 Conference Summaries*.)

The Policy Chairperson continued, “Today, our intent is to go forward with proposed language in a motion, trusting that past Conferences have explored the subject thoughtfully and thoroughly.

“The Policy Committee, in an effort to provide spiritual direction without providing rules, took five years to arrive at three paragraphs. The language presented included all considerations that the Conference members requested: A definition of ‘family member,’ limits, and safeguards. Conference members were asked to listen thoughtfully to the reading of the language.”

After reading the language, the Chairperson asked Conference members if the language says what the Conference wanted it to say.

Conference members had the following questions and comments:

- Is the one-time limited to the deceased Al-Anon member or to the contributor? Can more than one family member contribute in memory of one deceased Al-Anon member?

A family member can contribute one time, so multiple family members can contribute one time each.

Judy K.

*Trustee, Policy Committee
Chairperson*

John McL.

*Trustee, Policy Committee
Co-Chairperson*

Robert S.

*Secretary, Director of
Communications*

Claire R.

*Secretary, Associate Director of
Communications—Professionals*

- Last year we discussed a percentage. What happened to that?

We talked about 1% and 0.1%. \$500 would be 0.1% of a five million dollar budget. In using a dollar amount, we will not have to keep going back to adjust it.

- Is this putting a hardship on Treasurers in the Areas? They would have to be certain the donor is a family member so they would have to do detective work.

The definition of “family” was discussed. If someone says they are an Al-Anon member, they are a member; the same is true for family: if someone says they are family, they are family. The Al-Anon family is unique in its mix of what is family. That is self-defined. Business Services was asked how many requests it receives per year. The answer was a handful. Only a close family member would even know of the deceased’s membership in Al-Anon and would want to honor it.

Conference members also had the following comments:

- My mom was in Al-Anon. My two sisters are not in the program. If this policy was in place, both of my sisters would have contributed to the WSO because they knew how our lives changed because of Al-Anon. They would never have intended to destroy Al-Anon, but would have given in love and gratitude to the WSO.
- A family member passed away and an A.A. member wanted to make a contribution. We would not accept it. It created negative tension with Al-Anon members. I like this language.
- I took this to my Area last year. There was a consensus. They were glad the WSO is making the change. Most wished it could be more and not limited to \$500.
- My Area was faced with what to do with checks from memorial contributions. We did adopt a policy in anticipation. I love how we let the donors define whether they are a family member.
- We have no control over what family members might do in an obituary. It is a violation of our Traditions though if they solicit memorial contributions to Al-Anon. Passing this motion could open an avenue to those things happening.

Conference members offered several suggestions for wording to improve clarity which the Committee took under consideration.

Discussion resumed later in the Conference. Following a further reading of the language with the suggested changes, the Conference agreed to amend the text on page 95 of the “Financial Matters” section, “Memorial Contributions” in the “Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies” section of the 2014/2017 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual (P-24/27).

A Motion was made, seconded, and carried. (See WSC Motion #4, page 98).

Conventions and Other Events

The Chairperson began, “*Why and how* has this proposed revision of our policy on ‘Announcing Events’ made its way to the World Service Conference? This topic under consideration relates directly to Tradition Six, that ‘*Our Family Groups ought never endorse, finance or lend our name to any outside enterprise, . . .*’ and the possibility that we might actually be lending our name without realizing it when, knowingly or unknowingly, we announce events at meetings that call themselves Al-Anon but do not necessarily adhere to Al-Anon’s Traditions.

“Besides Tradition Six, this topic also raises a flag about ‘Dilution of the Al-Anon Program’ section (2014/2017 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual, page 124), something we wish to guard against. I believe it was our co-founder Lois W. who said, ‘We are prepared to give away many things, but not our good name.’

“Within the Al-Anon service structure, members have opportunities to attend Area, district, and Intergroup workshops, conventions, and other large get-togethers for service, public information, or simply a celebration of recovery. However, members also have opportunities to attend workshops and other get-togethers that are not sponsored by a link to the Area service structure. This practice is described in the *Service Manual* (page 85) under ‘Mini Conventions, Share-a-Thons, Workshops, or Other Get-Togethers.’

“Prior to July 2013, the Delegate of an Area met with a District Representative (DR) and Workshop Committee to discuss an intended workshop and its purpose. The Delegate tried to explain why the Area would not permit that workshop to be announced at meetings. However, even after consulting the *Service Manual*, the Delegate felt there were mixed messages about what could be announced.

It seemed a loophole existed for those putting on events outside of the service structure, partially because of the statement on page 85.

“Upon further exploration of other supposedly Al-Anon events, the Area discovered that sometimes members sponsoring these outside-the-service-structure events were simply using the Al-Anon name, distributing their flyers, and requesting that groups announce these workshops at meetings although the events were not necessarily Al-Anon events as we typically know them to be. In several instances, the surplus funds derived from these workshops were not accountable to anyone except the members presenting the workshops.

“Concerned about these occurrences, the Delegate requested that the Policy Committee review those sections in the *Service Manual* pertaining to announcing events at meetings. Thus in July 2013, the Policy Committee held its first discussion on this matter.

“The Policy Committee is proposing language for the ‘Policy Digest’ that, while not making any rules, provides guidance according to our Traditions and spiritual principles, particularly the freedom to choose and the ‘obedience to the unenforceable.’ The amended text also includes some common criteria by which members can more readily discern that an event is truly Al-Anon or Alateen.

“The Policy Committee has discussed this for three years. It believes there is no way we can identify every convention or event that may or may not be tied to Al-Anon. It is an outline of specific types of events. It outlined the spiritual principles and criteria to consider in proposed wording. New wording to the text of the ‘Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies,’ ‘Conventions’ section, pages 85-86 was brought to the Conference for consideration.”

Conference members were asked:

- Does the language say what would be helpful to the fellowship?
- Is it clear?
- Does it still have loopholes people can work around?

Conference members asked the following questions:

- When it says “A.A. event,” could you clarify that because in Al-Anon we have Assembly and district meetings, sometimes it is a large group of members. Is that what you are talking about in the language?

We can't take care of everything. Al-Anon can't define what an A.A. event is.

We cooperate, but we are a separate entity. We can't control it.

- We have had a local workshop for years doing combined Al-Anon and A.A. meetings with two speakers, no separate participation. Our singleness of purpose and common welfare are helpful. Can we talk about combined meetings? The guideline talks about it. It is misleading when workshops are not clear about participation in a combined meeting. Could this be added?

The “Policy Digest” does not include the wording of guidelines, but refers members to the guidelines for explanation.

- We have an Al-Anon group that is not connected to the district hosting a Step Four workshop and calling their group “the service arm.”

I consider a service arm created by an existing Al-Anon Information Service responsible to the members they serve. To be a structure arm, it has to be attached to something.

- We need more clarification to replace vague wording. Too many people want to make money off these events. I see loopholes.

The Board takes its responsibilities very seriously. Pages 137 and 138 in the Service Manual describe its responsibilities: “The Trustees, along with the members of the Executive Committee, direct the business operations of the World Service Office, observing the By-Laws of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. They are concerned with guarding the legal rights of the Al-Anon fellowship against those who may try to profit from our ever-growing public acceptance, with protecting our principles from distortion and dilution, and in general, with acting as the chief service arm of the World Service Conference. The Board serves as guardian of our Twelve Traditions, our Twelve Concepts of Service, and the Al-Anon World Service Conference Charter.” We need to protect our fellowship. We cannot publish or support someone making money off events. As a prelude to this discussion, Delegates were provided with a list of underlying principles such as self-support to use as a guideline. Where does the money go? Does it benefit Al-Anon as a whole, or is it a separate entity?

- Is audiotaping a speaker addressed somewhere else? Our Convention has taping. Is this inclusive?
The statement on page 84 of the Service Manual does not speak to conventions. It is under “Meetings.” This was noted for the Committee.
- We have a meeting participating with A.A. in putting on a huge conference. Is that connected or related to the service arms?
The language does not limit this to service arms. Someone did not think it would, but another thought it did. We need to make sure the language is clear. There are large conventions, not directly linked to a service arm, but they adhere to Al-Anon principles and send money to Al-Anon.
- There is confusion with the last paragraph on page 85 of this section of the “Policy Digest.” This could be anyone not necessarily going through the links of service.
The Committee removed it. Generally those events are connected, but not limiting. When we use “only” or “always,” etc., there is always an exception. The word “generally” seemed appropriate.

Conference members shared:

- I would like this to be cleared up. Our largest event has some A.A. participation. We do have members on the Area World Service Committee (AWSC) who are not sponsored or connected to our service arms. I know this would be read as something we couldn’t announce. This is tough for us.
- In our Area, Al-Anon participates only in Area 11 events. So if an A.A. flyer says it is not in Area 11, it cannot be announced.
- In my Area, there are workshops with speakers. We ask for an Al-Anon representative, but A.A. selects the individual who may or may not have done service even at the group level. We don’t get to choose the speakers.
- We do a one-day Area workshop in lieu of a convention. It may be interpreted that we cannot do this.
- We need more parameters. Does the WSC need more thinking from the Policy Committee on this? We do not want to delay this too long because parameters are needed now.
- This is a huge issue in my Area. How does only allowing district, AIS, and Area events ensure it will be Al-Anon? Some of the unhealthiest “groups” are Intergroups. We have several free-standing weekends that use the Al-Anon name that are consistent with the Traditions and use Conference Approved Literature (CAL). This wording would eliminate announcing them. Could it be changed to define more what it is we want them to do, rather than saying they need to be connected to the service structure?

Policy Committee members shared the following thoughts:

- It is difficult to be on the Policy Committee to talk about what do Areas want and need and how can we draft that language. We can’t cover every event, idea, or happening in an Area. We want to include the spiritual principles so that a group or an Area can consider whether to announce an event. Often, they generally follow the rules. We could ask, what is the intent of getting the message out? Is it an opportunity to hear speakers? I have to separate how I feel personally about events and the people involved, and whether to announce it.
- The guideline, “Al-Anon/Alateen Participation in an A.A. Convention” (G-7) has a paragraph on proceeds for conventions and tips for selection of speakers, audio recording, the meeting after the convention, and anonymity. In my Area, we decided when talking about or announcing events in the group, the Assembly said it needed to be tied to a service arm (AIS, district, Area); not a group which stands alone. The most important thing is to have the conversation. The “Policy Digest” keeps it broad. Tightening it up creates other loopholes. Have the discussion with the spiritual principles added in.
- I had an event in mind and I wanted this section to address that event. I had to remind myself that this is policy, not a rule book. It provides principles we can apply to make a decision. We can’t address everyone’s issue in policy.

During further discussion later in the Conference, suggestions for language were received. The Conference asked that its suggestions be taken back to the Policy Committee to address and bring it back for further discussion at the 2017 Conference.

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS (PSAs)

The Associate Director presented the new TV public service announcements (PSA) on behalf of the Public Outreach Committee and the World Service Office (WSO). The new PSAs will be distributed to television stations throughout the U.S. and Canada this fall.

The role of the members of the Public Outreach Committee is to identify the target audiences and review the scripts and videos for PSAs.

The new PSAs are aimed at two target audiences:

- Parents of young people who have a drinking problem.
- Children who have been affected by a parent's drinking.

The Associate Director noted that this marks the first opportunity to present a PSA aimed at children, who are the right age for Alateen, so we are very excited about it.

Following the spiritual principle of anonymity, none of the faces that appear on the PSAs are actual members of Al-Anon or Alateen. They are professional models and actors.

The format for the Al-Anon PSAs is based on recommendations from Nielsen Media Research. The research indicates the need to establish:

- An emotional connection with the audience.
- Eye contact with the actors on the screen.
- Minimal distractions in the background.

These recommendations help to produce a clear message that is easy for the audience to understand and remember.

The PSAs viewed at the Conference were production quality. The PSA producer will convert them to high definition video and audio before sending them to TV stations in the fall.

Following the presentation, the Associate Director asked Conference members to submit any comments via e-mail.

Pat Q.

*Associate Director of
Communications—Media*



TASK FORCES

WSO Committee structures have always changed. Sometimes, there was reluctance to change, but when the benefits became apparent during three-year trial periods; there was a positive response to the change.

In the past, Delegates served on a Committee for their entire term. For the past several years, Delegates are given the option to serve on a Committee, Task Force, or Thought Force each year.

This year, some Task Forces were created due to concerns or ideas originating from previous Conference discussions or from Chosen Agenda Items submitted. At the end of a Conference presentation, some Task and Thought Force presentations resulted in the Conference supporting a specific strategy. While other discussions may be considered further by the Board of Trustees in order to determine possible next steps.

Task Force: Acceptance of Communities, Cultures, and Beliefs

“The Task Force was charged to develop a workshop for a district/Area that includes ways and ideas for group members to welcome and give comfort to newcomers from all communities, cultures, and beliefs, while keeping the focus on Al-Anon’s primary purpose of helping friends and families of alcoholics.

“We all have our own communities, cultures, and beliefs. As our lives unfold, we expand our horizons by reaching out to experience those communities, cultures, and beliefs, just as we did when we first walked through the doors of Al-Anon. We all discriminate (usually unknowingly), believing biases and prejudices help us preserve our personal communities, cultures, and beliefs. The effects of someone else’s drinking on us, our environment, and the media can have a negative impact on our lives. Our opinions, actions, and patterns of behavior are coping skills developed to protect ourselves

Karen L., Chairperson

Panel 54, Missouri

against such negativity. Humans are pack, tribal, and social animals genetically ingrained through millennia of evolution. We discriminate to preserve what we perceive to be our 'own kind.'

“Cultural differences and diversities may include:

Differences between people due to age, religion, race, gender, social or economic status, physical or mental status, etc.

Having or being composed of differing elements or qualities—being unlike.

Differences among groups of people and individuals based on ethnicity, language, sexual orientation, and/or geographic area.

“A few examples of the differences in the things around us include: the fullness of a rich, four-part harmony, compared to a simple melody; the complexity of the many characters in a play, versus a monologue; or feeling the texture of a soft, padded carpet, rather than a smooth, hard tile beneath bare feet. So, even though a harmony may be built around a central, simple melody, while a character may engage in a monologue as well as in dialogue with other characters, and while both tile and carpet serve their own unique purposes, each musical note, character, and woven thread is totally necessary to make up the whole 'thing' of which they are part. In fact, even the letters that make up our written language are like people: some are short and some tall; some are narrow, others wide; some make soft sounds while others are stronger, and each is totally necessary to complete each individual word.

“Listen to the languages we share: tomato from Spain, kindergarten from Germany, pasta from Italy, chow from China, and rendezvous from France. There are cultures and languages represented in our names!

“We may never be able to entirely eliminate our own prejudice, bias, and discrimination, but if we use the ‘spiritual principles of the program,’ guided by our Higher Power, these may be noticeably reduced. By practicing being open-minded, welcoming, and non-judgmental, by assuming goodwill and by stepping outside of our own comfort zones, we may become more open to other communities, cultures, and beliefs.”

Following the introduction, Conference members viewed a presentation about bias—What is it and what does it have to do with welcoming various communities, cultures, and beliefs in Al-Anon? To increase our awareness, the presentation asked us to examine our *own* thoughts, partiality, prejudices, unfair preferences, or dislikes of something and how we and our groups interact with newcomers and members who are different. It included talking points and questions for discussions to heighten our awareness.

This was followed by a skit that looked at how we welcome newcomers who are different.

The Task Force offered two more dictionary definitions of diversity, each demonstrating the importance of including and encouraging members of different backgrounds:

- Characteristics of individuals that make them unique and able to offer different perspectives, skills, and talents.
- All the ways in which people are different from one another; to honor these individual attributes is to value and respect each other.

Someone else’s drinking can affect *anyone’s* life. Al-Anon/Alateen is the Twelve Step recovery program for *anyone* who feels his or her life has been affected by someone else’s drinking, either currently or in the past, directly or indirectly. Alateen is designed for members in their teens. Alateens are members of the Al-Anon fellowship. Where there is no Alateen meeting available, young people are encouraged to attend Al-Anon meetings. As we reflect on how we welcome people from different communities, cultures, and beliefs into our meetings, let’s also think about how we welcome younger members.

Let’s especially remember these three very important principles of the Al-Anon program embodied in the Suggested Al-Anon Preamble to the Twelve Steps”:

- *Al-Anon is not allied with any sect, denomination, political entity, organization, or institution....*
- *Tradition One—“...personal progress for the greatest number depends on unity.”*
- *Tradition Five—we have “...but one purpose: to help families of alcoholics....”*

The Task Force posed the following questions for discussion:

- Did the presentation increase your awareness of how you may not be welcoming?
- Did you recognize things you may want to do in the future?
- What does my group do unintentionally to show bias?
- Do we defend our way of doing things, or are we open-minded?

Delegates shared:

- I would like to expand this to include people with disabilities and mental health issues.
- A sponsee who is black and also a member of A.A. told me, “You can’t drive me away from Al-Anon, it is my life.” She just needed love.
- I personally hated tattoos. I sponsored a young woman, and during a meeting on the Fourth Step she took off her garment and showed me her tattoos. She told me, “It’s the only thing I have that nobody can take away from me.”
- I considered myself unbiased, but there was a woman who looked rough around the edges with tattoos who I thought may also be a member of A.A. When she shared, it blew my socks off. There was such wisdom. It was a reminder to me not to judge a person “by the cover.”
- When meeting in churches, I tell newcomers we meet there because the rent is cheap.
- Be mindful of the newcomer and remember where we were. Give *How Al-Anon Works* (B-32) and try to stay after the meeting and make sure the newcomer has a phone list. If a man came to a meeting with earrings, elderly people in the meeting may not be able to handle it.
- My welcome as a newcomer kept me coming back. My Area doesn’t realize we can look the same but there is prejudice in thought patterns and how we grew up. The presentation can help us look at ourselves more deeply. Diversity takes many forms. When we get out there and realize this, it makes us all better. If I see someone obviously different, I make a b-line for them. After sponsoring for five years, it has stretched me in every way, and I am forever grateful.
- Tradition Twelve is where Al-Anon’s spiritual principles are found. In a strong group, this Tradition is important.
- After a group inventory, we took pride in welcoming a newcomer who was deaf and needed an interpreter. Whatever it takes to get to Al-Anon, we need to accept that.
- I started a meeting in a hospital, not a church. It is important to talk about the disease of alcoholism. Make it a point. Our literature is inclusive of everyone and our group has something to give to anyone walking through the doors—literature in Spanish and French, and an Alateen daily reader. We can all relate to sharings in the Alateen daily reader. Having a variety of literature gives all new members something to walk out with in their hand.
- When I challenge myself to help others work through something, I am the winner and grow the most. I have a difficult time with difficult people. I helped a disruptive member work through it.
- I was the only man in a meeting. A young man with a different lifestyle came and I didn’t reach out. It hurts my heart today to understand what a difference it would have made if I had reached out to him. I sat with a woman from a satanic cult and was able to listen and learn. Speaking to three members who are also members of A.A helped me understand my son.
- I attend a parents meeting. Parents are especially quiet and reserved and unable to relate until we talk about the way children look or behave. A workshop could have that same impact when something is difficult to talk about. It is easier to relax and deal with things as a disease, rather than a black mark on a family.

Following the discussion, the Chairperson of the Board asked for ideas of where to go next.

Conference members responded:

- Incorporate our diversity into our spiritual principles and build on that.
- The NEW DAILY READER (working title) could incorporate members’ diverse experiences.
- Consider where we start new meetings and help those with diverse backgrounds by supporting meetings in new locations.
- Meetings have to be ready for people—how willing am I to go out in communities and not just sit and wait at a meeting? It is a real stretch for us. Step Twelve is the next part.

- Build awareness.
- Participate in an inventory on AFG Connects that discusses diversity and inclusiveness.

The Chairperson of the Board of Trustees ended the discussion by noting that the Task Force had completed its charge and that the presentation information will be available on AFG Connects for Delegates to take to their Areas.

Task Force: Communication and Strengthening the Links of Service

Angela A., Chairperson

Panel 54, Louisiana

“The World Service Delegate brings the viewpoint *from* his or her Area on matters affecting the entire fellowship *to* the World Service Conference (WSC). Conversely, each Delegate serves as the link of communication, reporting on the discussions *from* the WSC *to* the Area fellowship.

“When this flow of information and shared wisdom is optimized, members are well-informed. They understand clearly the issues being discussed at the World Service Conference, are able to apply the information that is shared, and feel safe and supported in expressing their opinions.

“When breakdowns in the communication pathway occur, members may find it difficult to understand and/or accept the discussions and decisions made at the WSC. Likewise, when group problems or communication difficulties in the Areas arise, individual members may not be aware of the resources available to them for resolving conflicts; they may not always know where to turn for guidance in the links of service.

“Over the past several years, much emphasis has been placed on using spiritual principles in our discussions at the WSC, in considering policy revisions, and in conflict resolution.

“Several examples of utilizing spiritual principles as a basis for effective communication were provided at the 2014 WSC.

“First, a Task Force presentation encouraged a discussion about the difference between (spiritual) principles and procedures in Al-Anon (*2014 Conference Summary*, pages 68-70).

“Second, the Policy Committee provided insight into the process by which policy revisions are made, whereby the underlying spiritual principles are the foundation for Policy clarifications: “Based on the discussion of the spiritual principles, the Policy Committee concurred that clarifying the text with the spiritual principles would assist the fellowship in understanding and applying the Policy.” (*2014 Conference Summary*, pages, 53-57; quote on page 53)

“Third, at the 2014 WSC, the *Using Al-Anon Principles to Resolve Conflict* Kit (K-70) was introduced. It emphasizes the spiritual principles embodied in each of Al-Anon’s Twelve Traditions as the foundation for dealing with conflicts in our meetings, through our participation in service, and in our everyday lives. (*2014 Conference Summary*, page 73)

“At the 2015 WSC, many Conference members shared how they implemented these tools to begin conversations in their respective Areas that were based upon spiritual principles, and the positive outcomes of that style of spiritually-based interchange. By basing communication on spiritual principles such as gratitude, mutual respect, and abundance, members are better able to understand and apply information communicated through the links of service, and thus are empowered to make better decisions for the group and the fellowship.”

Following the introduction, the members of the Task Force presented a skit that demonstrated group problems, examples of poor communication, and ineffective use of the links of service.

Conference members then participated in a workshop that encouraged trusted servants to use spiritual principles as guideposts in communicating while empowering the membership to find unity through the links of service and using the *Service Manual*.

Conference members also received a handout with a list of spiritual principles and suggestions for communicating using spiritual principles and encouraging the use of the links of service.

At the conclusion of the presentation, the Task Force Chairperson asked the following:

Do you, as Delegates, think you could use this tool in your Areas and how?

Delegates shared:

- The links of service is not just looking to the World Service Office (WSO) to solve right/wrong questions. When we talk one-on-one, we learn the spiritual principles.
- Past Delegates could present this at our Assembly.
- This conflict resolution tool tells us to use it more frequently so “little” things don’t turn into monsters.

- Districts ask for links of service information and conflict resolution. It is useful in the district because they can carry it to the groups.
- I like the concept of spiritual principles in this because business is exhausting. This is a way to think of incorporating the spiritual principles of the program.
- Use the workshop as a way to remind people of the links of service and how to use them.
- When District Representatives contact the Delegate about conflict, refer them to the spiritual principles in the Traditions and Concepts to understand how resolution happens. I will have this as part of my tool kit. It is beneficial in support at the group level.
- The questions posed in the workshop are problems in my Area now and this can help solve them. I will encourage districts to use the workshop.
- Use AFG Connects to share how this worked in our Areas.
- Can we dress up this handout for a service tool handout?

You can dress it up as you wish according to your Area's needs. Also note that there are conflict resolution workshops on the Members' Web site.

Following the discussion, the Chairperson of the Board asked the Conference how it wanted to proceed. Conference members agreed that they had enough information. The Chairperson then thanked the Task Force for doing a fabulous job.

Task Force: Meeting Types

Thought Forces and Task Forces have been discussing Al-Anon groups since 2012.

- Thought Force on How Changes to the Environment Outside of Al-Anon May Affect Our Meetings (2012 Conference Summary, pages 62-65).
- Thought Force: Create Strategies on the Importance of a Home Group (2014 Conference Summary, pages 60-63).
- Task Force: Identify, Gather, and Present Practices that Demonstrate a Healthy, Thriving Group (2015 Conference Summary, page 63-67).

The charge of this Task Force was to develop a list of potential types of meetings that meet a variety of group needs while remaining consistent with Al-Anon Legacies. Then develop a workshop to assist a group in determining the type of meeting that is acceptable to the group conscience, while encouraging the use of *Al-Anon and Alateen Groups at Work* (P-24) and Conference Approved Literature (CAL) by group members.

CAL provides information on many types of meetings that groups can have. This is always the first resource when determining the type of meeting a group should establish.

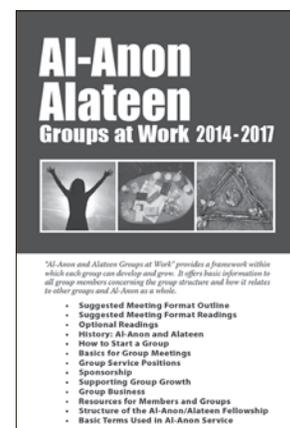
However, there are times when meetings need to be “non-traditional” in order to meet the needs of individual members or the group. The Task Force provided a list of suggestions for other types of meetings. It was noted that the list, while creative and extensive, was not intended to be all-inclusive. All meetings, though, should be consistent with the Al-Anon Legacies. Healthy, thriving groups generally use *Groups at Work* (P-24) to open and close the meeting. This helps provide consistency from meeting to meeting and within the fellowship as a whole, regardless of where a meeting is held.

The type of meeting is defined by what happens in between the opening and closing. The Task Force provided a list of ideas for variations in conducting a meeting and invited Conference members to add their ideas to it.

The Task Force also developed a list of ideas for meetings that allows flexibility. Ideas for non-traditional meetings included:

- Technology-assisted meetings as an alternative to face-to-face meetings for homebound members due to illness/accidents, shut-ins, those who live a distance from face-to-face meetings, or members who are traveling or living outside of the country. They could be one-on-one telephone meetings, registered group meetings with audio and/or video connection, or cell phone meetings to include an ill or housebound member by passing a cell phone during the meeting. With technology, we can share Al-Anon with members we will never meet, which gives an added feeling of inclusiveness.
- “Brown bag” meetings where attendees are encouraged to bring their meal and eat during the meeting.

Jinkie R., Chairperson
Panel 54, Arkansas



- Homebound member meeting of available members who bring a meeting into a home, nursing home, or hospital for a temporarily ill or shut-in member. It keeps the connection. A health issue does not mean a member stops needing Al-Anon.
- Roving meetings where a group changes location with no particular set pattern. Meeting lists would be published on an Internet site where members could go to find the meeting location the way food truck vendors advertise their locations on a daily basis.
- Transient meetings held on college campuses that will have a transient membership as the result of changing class schedules.
- Special language needs meetings that although they may be considered closed meetings, they welcome the attendance of sign language or spoken language interpreters.
- Family-friendly meetings (for families with children of any age that can't be left at home) where any family member, regardless of age is welcome.
- Summer meetings in parks/RV parks, around evening campfires, and on beaches; winter candlelight meetings and soup and bread meetings; meetings at a truck stop.

Following the presentation, Conference members looked in on a business meeting of the “What Do We Do Now” group that illustrated a struggling meeting. Conference members were reminded that they did not have to reinvent the wheel with all the Al-Anon resources that are available. To add to the resources, Conference members received a list of where to find different types of meetings in our literature and guidelines, and a list of all the ideas for non-traditional meetings that the Task Force generated, including ideas for variations for the time between the opening and closing of a meeting. Conference members were then asked to brainstorm additional creative ideas to add to the list.

A workshop was also created to help groups identify possibilities for their group. It is designed for groups just getting established or for struggling groups wanting to revitalize themselves. The purpose is to stimulate ideas to help groups identify the type of meeting they want to have.

In summary, it is up to each group to determine what type of meeting will best fit the needs of the group members and potential members. There are no “rules.” However, meetings should be held in welcoming, convenient, and economical locations. Although churches are popular locations, if possible meetings can be held in neutral locations, such as mall community rooms, hospitals, libraries, or schools. Meetings can be held at any time.

In response to a question by the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees, Conference members indicated that they did not need anything further regarding this topic.

Task Force: Technology and Anonymity

The presentation was created to dispel some of the myths and facts about how to maintain personAl-Anonymity while participating in new technologies.

- According to Tradition Eleven, as Al-Anon members, we are responsible for our own anonymity and that of others, including A.A. members. Therefore, the intent of the presentation is not to educate members on how to use technology. Instead, it is a resource for members to guard their identity when using technology.
- **Tradition Eleven:** Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personAl-Anonymity at the level of press, radio, films, and TV. We need guard with special care the anonymity of all AA members.

As technology evolves and becomes more social, Al-Anon can welcome and adapt to the changes. However, our principle of anonymity does not change. As we embrace new technologies, we need to make sure that we also keep our Tradition of anonymity intact. Al-Anon recognizes the diversity of on-line technology use within our fellowship.

The Task Force created a presentation, “Technology and Anonymity: Do’s and Don’ts/Myths and Facts” for use as a resource by members.

Points to consider when using e-mail for Al-Anon related communications:

- Avoid using an e-mail address that can identify you.
- A work e-mail address is owned by the company and may be subject to review by employers.

Jan R., Chairperson
Panel 54, Nebraska

When sending an e-mail to more than one person, model the principle of anonymity to the individuals who receive the e-mails. Send the e-mail to yourself and use the “blind carbon copy” (Bcc) field to enter all other e-mail addresses.

Other points to consider were:

Alateen Chat Rooms

These are moderated by two certified Alateen Group Sponsors to provide guidance and ensure a safe environment. No personal information is exchanged. E-mail addresses are used for registration purposes only.

Al-Anon Web Sites

- Anyone can visit an Al-Anon Web site and if personal information is there, anyone can access it. Web searches may reveal personal information. For example, searches on our name, address, e-mail address, or phone number may reveal additional personal information about us and our family.
- It is suggested that passwords be made unique to the Area.
- Don't use full name on flyers, newsletters, and other documents posted on Web sites. Use the Area office, Al-Anon Information Service (AIS), or Literature Distribution Center (LDC) phone number and/or address on flyers, newsletters and other documents posted on Web sites.
- Create position-specific e-mail addresses for all Area World Service Committee (AWSC) members and groups.
- Create a personal e-mail account that does not disclose identifying information or create and use a group e-mail account. Use only first name, position title, or pseudonym.
- Don't use e-mail addresses that include last names or employer/business information on Area Web sites, flyers, newsletters, and other documents posted on Al-Anon Web sites.
- Always review flyers, newsletters, and other documents for information that may compromise someone's identity before posting on an Area Web site.

Always consider anonymity when posting:

Members' Photos On-line

- Do not identify a person as an Al-Anon, Alateen, or A.A. member in photographs or reveal photographs of full-face images of anyone identified as a member.
- Confirm that the backgrounds of photographs and that other members or the location are not identifiable.

Social Media

- “Liking” or “following” any of Al-Anon's or Alateen's social media sites does not imply affiliation. It simply means that you support the message.
- Remember Tradition Eleven when posting on any social media site. We do not identify ourselves as an Al-Anon member or disclose the identity of any other Al-Anon, Alateen, or A.A. member.
- Support Al-Anon's public outreach efforts through the use of social media. “Liking” or “following” Al-Anon's social media can have a ripple effect. When you “like” or “follow” a page or post without identifying yourself as a member, you share that information with your social media friends. This helps broaden Al-Anon's message of hope to others.

The Task Force Chairperson asked that Conference members remember that our Tradition of anonymity applies to our identity whenever communicating with anyone outside our fellowship. When communicating within our fellowship, members can choose the degree of anonymity they wish to have, but should always consider the principle of anonymity when writing posts.

The Chairperson opened the floor for Conference members' comments.

Delegates shared:

- If I like something, I can click “like” or “follow” on Facebook. It is a good feeling.
- Sharing messages is how things go viral. With Facebook, 1.1 million equals the “viral effect.”
- My district has a private Facebook page for district members by invitation only. It is used



primarily to share district and Area information. It keeps younger members in the loop.

- All WSO Conference staff members are Al-Anon members. When we publish articles, we don't use our last names, but we do when we answer letters. When including staff names in reports and letters, be cautious to remove our full names.
- The WSO Communications Section created a tool for Areas and General Service Offices (GSO), which is a guide for social media that could be adapted. In the Public Outreach section, there are resources and helpful tools to explain the difference between private and business pages and how social media pages can be set up.
- My home group has three e-mail distribution lists. We average 10 to 15 members at weekly meetings. We send *Group e-News* as a bcc to respect privacy. Using just the basic "AFG" is a helpful tool in social media to maintain anonymity. When members share a WSO post, be mindful of breaking anonymity if you post a comment that precedes your sharing.
- When I "like" and "follow" on Facebook, I share publicly that I like Al-Anon. I don't know where it goes, but the more the better. I do this for people I don't see all the time. They might ask, "What's with all these Al-Anon postings?" It can open a conversation. I love to "follow" Al-Anon on Facebook.
- Facebook is a way to do public outreach for me. After sharing a WSO post, a friend who is not a member asked where to find literature and meetings. This solidified why I "like" and share posts on Facebook.
- I am amazed at the number and variety of Al-Anon Web site flyers with home phone numbers. I only have to do a search on Google to get your name, family names, etc.
- Encourage members to check their privacy settings frequently. The protocol changes often. With a "closed group" on Facebook, the content is invisible but members are visible and searchable.
- I forgot to ask for feedback about an issue, so I sent an e-mail to the Secretary and invited her to send feedback with my contact information. A District Representative sent it to the Group Representatives but did not use "bcc" so the GRs were sending it to members and their information is out there. I have difficulty figuring out the privacy settings on Facebook.
- We are mixing anonymity and privacy. Anonymity is whether you are a member of Al-Anon which is what we are talking about. Tradition Eleven is not to protect a person's anonymity, but to protect the fellowship. Are we going so far in protecting personAl-Anonymity that are not doing public outreach?
- There is confusion between anonymity and confidentiality and protecting the fellowship. We are not just protecting ourselves.
- It is nice to give a card when doing public outreach to professionals to invite them to be a "friend" on Facebook or on the official WSO Al-Anon Facebook page.
- Produce a guideline on technology or expand what we have.
- Is it time to look to putting the term "social media" in Tradition Eleven? In my Area, when we read Tradition Eleven, the Chairperson added that this includes things like other media.

The descriptive text regarding Tradition Eleven under "Anonymity and the Media," in the "Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies" section of the Service Manual was updated few years ago to include: "It is Al-Anon/Alateen policy to interpret Tradition Eleven to include the Internet as well as all forms of evolving public media." (2014-2017 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual, page 91.)

- I would suggest a Task Force around spiritual versus personal confidentiality (social media/sponsorship).
- There could be a need for an ongoing Task Force for this topic because things change so quickly. The implication is, if we get it right, we will have it, but things are constantly changing.

Conference members indicated that they were confident that they had enough information. The Chairperson of the Board then noted that the Task Force had completed its charge and that the presentation would be available on AFG Connects.

WSC AGENDA ITEMS

In her April 2015 Chairperson of the Board Letter, Paula B. noted, “As we look to the 2016 World Service Conference, you may want to plan ahead as we celebrate 65 years of recovery. To aid the Conference Leadership Team in scheduling, please share your response to the following question when your Trustee contacts you: *What topic would you like to see on the 2016 agenda?*”

Delegates shared many different ideas for topics, including:

- Alateen—What is the key to unlocking the success with Alateen throughout the Areas?
- How do we balance those trusted servants who dominate and those not fulfilling their jobs.
- Groups that are not following the Traditions (delisting, do not refer, relisting).

This year, in addition to discussing a Chosen Agenda Item in the General Session, Conference members met in small breakout groups to discuss WSC Agenda Items. All Conference members attended two of the three WSC Agenda Item breakouts.

Following the breakout sessions, Conference members reported to the full Conference.

Alateen—What is the key to unlocking the success with Alateen throughout the Areas?

A Delegate opened the discussion with the following frame:

A Chosen Agenda Item at the 2015 World Service Conference was Alateen (2015 *Conference Summary*, pages 45-48). The discussion included the current model for Alateen, Areas having enough AMIAS to support and sponsor, Al-Anon groups’ acceptance of teens in their meetings, and Alateen members’ interest in attending meetings. During the April 2015 Board of Trustee calls, all Delegates were asked for their suggestions for discussion topics at this 2016 WSC. Continuing the discussion about Alateen was one of the top suggestions.

One of the breakout groups defined success as: Teens find help, hope, and recovery.

Conference members shared the following ideas and strategies to enable success:

Enthusiastic Alateen Group Sponsors

- Train four or more Alateen Group Sponsors per group to ease burnout.
- Support Al-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service (AMIAS). Provide training and education in different formats, electronic manuals, weekend workshops, etc.
- Provide links of service for Alateen Group Sponsors and hold workshops for AMIAS, Alateen Group Sponsors, and Alateen Coordinators. This would help them to get to know each other and share ideas. Include AMIAS on AFG Connects so they can share.
- Weekend of training to meet other Alateen Group Sponsors.
- A Delegate shared that a father became an AMIAS, which helped get his child involved. The Alateen then contacted others—word of mouth from one teen to another.

Target parents in recovery—get them involved

- Hold a newcomer meeting with teens and parents to help them understand family recovery because the disease involves everyone.
- Work with members of Alcoholics Anonymous (A.A.) to refer kids to Alateen. Have Alateen table tent cards (WSO service tool) at Al-Anon meetings to let parents know it is available and where the local Alateen meetings are held.
- The Alateen Survey found that the largest percentage of members in Alateen have parents in recovery. They need encouragement to get kids to Alateen. Help them become aware that our denial/resistance hurts kids. Direct the efforts toward potential teens.
- Develop more literature that shares parent success stories regarding getting their kids to Alateen.

Alateens are attractive—get them visible.

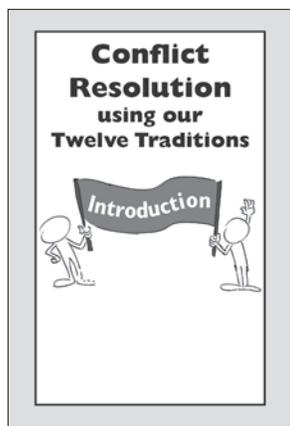
- Have Alateen speakers at Al-Anon/A.A. events.
- Hold family events (pot luck) with Alateen speakers.

Outreach for teens without parents in recovery

- Outreach to professionals.
- Institution/school meetings work best. Have a year-long focus on parents and schools providing information about the Alateen program. Expand outreach to schools, teachers, and counselors. Alateen Coordinators or Alateen Group Sponsors can speak at the schools, and take one or two Alateens to share what Alateen has done for them/means to them. Share information with professionals that includes Alateen pamphlets and meeting schedules. Inquire if they are open to allowing a meeting at the school.
- Take baskets with Alateen information, meeting information, and contact numbers for additional information to school.
- Focus public service announcements (PSA) on teens.

Alateens transitioning to Al-Anon meetings

- Plant the seed. Al-Anon members need to respect the recovery experiences of teens.
- Allow time for Alateen speakers prior to Al-Anon speakers at Assemblies, conferences, workshops.
- Get Alateens involved in Assembly and convention planning.
- Involve teens in planning meetings. Their attention span is short, so be flexible. Include game night, craft night, Step/Tradition study in a fun way.
- Announce Alateen meetings or conferences at Al-Anon events. Include the teens in hosting or co-hosting a monthly or quarterly Al-Anon speaker meeting. Include the teens at Al-Anon meetings and events.
- Allow Alateens to own their meetings and their conferences/events.
- Take a group of Alateens to another state or Area's Alateen Conference.
- Have an Alateen Members' Web site. Many teens are on the web searching for connections.
- Have Alateens as speakers or a panel of speakers at Al-Anon meetings and events.
- Have dances at events for Alateens, games, skits at conferences and events. One Area has a board game similar to Monopoly designed with Alateen program information. Many Areas have various games or activities they have created for teens.
- Alateen conferences or "Growing Together Weekends for Al-Anon's and Alateens." These can be at campgrounds or hotels. They should have a Conference planning committee that includes Alateens and Alateen Group Sponsors. The Alateens should have a chair, co-chair, and their own committees such as decorations, registration, speakers, workshop, ice breakers, archives/photos, etc. More Alateens are involved when the committees are headed by Alateen groups in the Areas, rather than individual teens, as it gets their groups involved whether they are all able to attend the committee meetings or not. Doing tasks in groups inspires other Alateens to want to attend the conference and builds fellowship.
- Teens have a short attention span. Keep them interested, be creative—have dress night, play night, education night, Step/literature night.



Balance between trusted servants who dominate and those not fulfilling their jobs

A Delegate opened the discussion with the following frame:

The question that continues to come up in our groups, districts, and Areas is, "How do we find willing members to participate in service at all levels?" Service is a vital part of recovery; however, we struggle to find enough Al-Anon members to stand for our service positions. Some members who do stand for a service position are willing but may not be skilled to perform a particular position or members take on a position but do not perform the task. Conversely, there is the opposite problem of members who stay in service and tend to dominate discussions and actions for the group, district, or Area.

Conference members shared the following ideas in response to the question, "How do we find a balance between dominance by our trusted servants and trusted servants not fulfilling their jobs?"

Some of the issues Delegates face in their Areas:

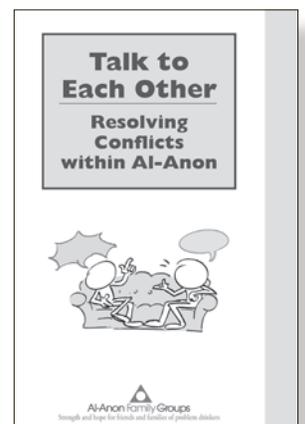
- If there are members who are not fulfilling their duties, how do you communicate with them without being dominant?
- Strong sponsorship is not as prevalent as it used to be.
- Having one small pool of members who constantly rotate positions.
- Lack of compromise.
- Frustration with members who “don’t get it.”
- Chairperson who does not show up.
- Some members simply don’t enjoy holding a service position, but volunteer when “encouraged.”
- Crisis sometimes causes people to act out by domineering or stop doing service responsibilities.

Participants shared the following strategies and suggestions for members not fulfilling their duties:

- Use the *Using Al-Anon Principles to Resolve Conflicts* Kit (K-70).
- Use kindness in approach, and include a Higher Power.
- Encourage sponsorship.
- Written job descriptions and requirements.
- Longtime members guiding new members to serve in positions where they can be successful when service positions are announced.
- Have service Sponsors, mentors, or “position buddies” so no one serves alone.
- Have a one-year commitment in group and district positions that can be renewed for up to three years in a row.
- Have written guidelines for a plan of action when a trusted servant can’t or won’t fulfill his/her duties. Include a “succession plan” for service positions.
- Have clear job descriptions and go through them in the meeting.
- Talk to the person one-on-one. Presume goodwill! Offer strategies for improvement, and offer your assistance.
- Give the person who is unable to fulfill his/her duties a “graceful out.”
- Encourage members to work the Traditions and Concepts.
- Share job descriptions, so those who do stand are better informed and enthused.
- Share yourself; offer to be a mentor to new people. Volunteering when encouraged is a set up for failure.
- Chat and ask/answer questions.

Suggestions and strategies for issues of dominance:

- Communicate without being dominant.
- Use the K-70 Kit.
- Accentuate the good qualities.
- Hold a group conscience, and talk about how “longtimers” can help by sharing experience, strength, and hope.
- Use the Traditions, especially Tradition Twelve.
- There is a difference between perceived dominance and sharing experience, strength, and hope.
- In sponsoring or being sponsored, ask a Higher Power for clarity, openness, willingness, and strength to speak or hear the truth in love.
- Rather than fill a job to prevent a void, give it to a Higher Power. It allows a position to remain open and may encourage someone new to step in.
- The Al-Anon definition of leadership creates balance.
- Lead by example. People will do what they see works for others.
- Encourage outgoing and incoming members to talk to each other so that both are in a comfortable spot to ask and answer questions.



- Look at the *Detachment* (S-19) leaflet. We don't need to prevent/create a crisis. Sometimes groups need to hit bottom before the situation improves.
- Group conscience is a powerful tool to discuss problems. The group process keeps the conversation from becoming personal.
- Get the information out about service positions sooner rather than later.
- We are so afraid of offending people, if I have the tools to address a problem, it is my responsibility to speak up.
- Use the *Service Manual*.
- Use kindness, and point out good qualities.
- Clarify the boundaries of the service role.
- Study the Concepts at meetings.
- Hold regular group conscience meetings.
- Use spiritual principles to solve problems.

Groups that are not following the Traditions

A Delegate opened the discussion with the following frame:

Areas share that they have been grappling with the issue of what to do with groups that do not follow the Traditions. Actions have included creating a process for delisting from the local Area Web sites, having a do not refer policy and a process for relisting groups that have changed. Questions arise as to who determines if the group is following Traditions and whose job is it to police the groups.

Conference members shared the following ideas in response to the question, "How do we protect newcomers from groups that practice policies outside of the Traditions?"

Delegates shared about some of the problems faced in their Areas:

- Using outside literature.
- High pressure sponsorship.
- Groups changing the Legacies through their own interpretations and using gender-neutral pronouns.
- Holding members accountable with punitive actions; abuse not addressed empowers the abuser.

Participants suggested the following strategies:

- Some of these groups may not last, people leave, and the groups disintegrate. It is the self-correcting wisdom of Al-Anon.
- Attend the meeting that isn't following the Traditions to try to get the group back on track. Talk to the group and try to reason things out.
- Develop a "do not refer" policy that spells out how each Tradition applies to the group (the WSO can aid with this).
- The Conference has not asked the WSO for a "do not refer" policy. Make a request of the WSO Policy Committee via a letter to wso@al-anon.org.
- Do the work on an Area level. Have a policy and process. Talk with the district to come up with a policy. They sometimes don't know they have a voice.
- Any policies cannot be personally punitive.
- Be welcoming to the newcomer and suggest good meetings. If we meet the needs of the newcomer, they won't be attracted to these meetings.
- When District Representatives visit, educate the groups, presume goodwill, and talk to them about the Traditions and Concepts.
- If delisting locally, the group is still on the WSO Web site.

Some questions arose during the discussion:

- Are we trying to control the uncontrollable? How do we decide?
- Why are we only concerned about newcomers? We are all vulnerable. When we hear the word “protect,” warning bells go off in our minds and we want to fix it. We can’t save everyone (I didn’t cause it, I can’t control it, I can’t cure it), and sometimes we have to “let go.”

There was a lot of discussion about a “do not refer” list.

- What specific group actions would cause a group to be placed on a “do not refer” list?
- Would a “do not refer” policy do more harm than good? We are not the Al-Anon police.
- How do we explain how outside influences, such as non-Al-Anon literature, are not used in our meetings?

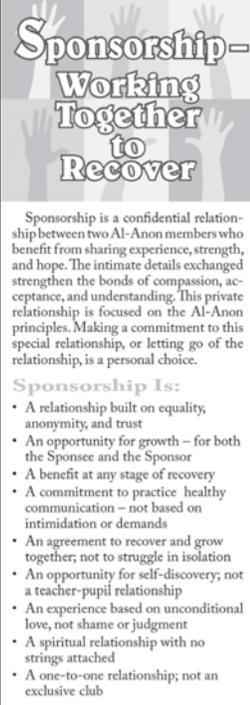
Comments:

- The WSO does not have a policy for delisting a group, however some Areas do. One Area decided not to have one, while another Area formed a Thought Force and decided to refer it back to the districts to decide. Another Area developed a policy for the Area Web site.
- If a group is de-listed, let the group know it can get listed again by changing its group policies. Invite the group to send members to district and Area meetings.
- Connect policies and spirituality. Spell out each Tradition the group does not follow.

Other strategies mentioned:

- Write articles for *The Forum* about what healthy groups are, and challenge others to do this too.
- At Assemblies, educate members about what a healthy group is.
- Encourage use of *Groups at Work* (P-24).
- Ask the WSO staff if they could do a *Group e-News* series about what a healthy group is.
- Place the *Just for Today* bookmark (M-12) or Sponsorship bookmark (M-78) in the newcomer packet.

Following all of the reportbacks, the Conference Chairperson closed the session saying, “We hope you feel the breakout sessions were helpful. The Conference Leadership Team (CLT) took topics you wanted to talk about and held them in small groups because we heard in your Conference evaluations that that is how some members are more comfortable sharing. We hope you got the information you needed.”



Sponsorship - Working Together to Recover

Sponsorship is a confidential relationship between two Al-Anon members who benefit from sharing experience, strength, and hope. The intimate details exchanged strengthen the bonds of compassion, acceptance, and understanding. This private relationship is focused on the Al-Anon principles. Making a commitment to this special relationship, or letting go of the relationship, is a personal choice.

Sponsorship Is:

- A relationship built on equality, anonymity, and trust
- An opportunity for growth – for both the Sponsee and the Sponsor
- A benefit at any stage of recovery
- A commitment to practice healthy communication – not based on intimidation or demands
- An agreement to recover and grow together; not to struggle in isolation
- An opportunity for self-discovery; not a teacher-pupil relationship
- An experience based on unconditional love, not shame or judgment
- A spiritual relationship with no strings attached
- A one-to-one relationship; not an exclusive club

DELEGATES (PANEL 54)

Liesel B., Alaska

In every service position I've been honored to be elected to, I've painfully learned to break through my comfort zone and reach out to others and my Higher Power for help. I recognized that I couldn't do it all and make all the decisions myself. A gentle, quiet voice reminds me to turn my will and my life over to the care of my Higher Power. Through these experiences, I'm able to encourage members in service to break through their comfort zone, ask for help, and listen for their Higher Power. At the same time, these experiences challenge me to take a step back and let my Higher Power take the lead. Tradition Two reminds me that there is but one authority, and it's not me!

When I was elected Delegate, I thought, "I can do this." However, the day I arrived at the World Service Conference my first year, I felt overwhelmed. The voices of "not enough" started playing in my head. I was doubting why I was there—how the heck did I get here? I convinced myself that I wasn't good enough and didn't know enough before I even unpacked my bags. I wanted to hide. Well, there is no hiding at the World Service Conference, by the way! Again that gentle, quiet voice reminded me to turn my will and my life over to the care of my Higher Power. With that, I was able to turn off the thoughts of "not enough," and turn on "faith."

In September, I was spiraled into a divorce. I hadn't ever felt pain that affected my heart to the core as ending a 29-year marriage. I thought I could "talk the talk," and get through the pain myself. But, my faith had turned off, and my thoughts of "not enough," were on constant replay. I had a difficult time keeping commitments and taking care of myself. I started to despise the phrase, "This too Shall Pass," because it wasn't passing very fast! So, recognizing my attitude, I picked up a random book from my bookshelf, *Opening Our Hearts, Transforming Our Losses*. I read the Preface, and knew that I was back to the first three Steps. My life was unmanageable. I surrendered my grief to my Higher Power. I started reaching out and talking to other Al-Anon members and sought professional help. Today, I have the tools to turn off my thoughts of "not enough," for which, I am eternally grateful.

Jinkie R., Arkansas

When I first heard the theme for this year's Conference, I had to laugh. Before Al-Anon, I lived my life in the world of "potential." I fell in love with "his" potential. I wanted others to recognize my potential and not hold me accountable for my shortcomings. I just couldn't understand why things just didn't work out the way I planned.

Then came Al-Anon, and my whole fantasy world came tumbling down. I wasn't really sure that I wanted to live in the world of reality. Reality meant the world wasn't going to change to fit my desires. Reality meant that I had to be responsible for my decisions. Reality meant that I needed to follow through on my commitments. But I wanted something different, and I saw the potential for change in Al-Anon. I didn't realize at first that I was trying to determine what my potential was and strive to

reach it with the help of Al-Anon. For example, I really wanted to be a soft-spoken gentlewoman. To achieve that, I have had two Sponsors, both of whom are soft-spoken gentlewomen. However, after 28 years, I still haven't become that person. Instead, I have learned to accept that I am enthusiastic and passionate. Not exactly what I planned on, but exactly the kind of person my Higher Power wants me to be.

Today, I'm not sure what my "spiritual potential" is. However, by looking at where I am compared to where I was, it is obvious that my Higher Power has been well aware of my potential. My only job is to be willing to say "yes" when asked to be of service in Al-Anon. That doesn't always mean that I will be doing something I want to do. Several years ago, the *last* job I wanted was Area Secretary. Of course, I was elected to that position and ended up thoroughly enjoying the job. By being willing and taking the appropriate action, my Higher Power has a chance to take care of the rest. As a result, I have learned ways to be of service in my home and community.

As I approach the end of this service position, a part of me is looking forward to the role of Past Delegate and the potential of sitting back with my feet propped up, spewing forth pearls of wisdom. However, I expect that it will be like retirement—fun for a very short period of time. Soon, I will be actively looking for ways to be of service, if they haven't come to me already.

Thanks to all of you for accompanying me on this journey.

Ann B., Connecticut

I came into Al-Anon emotionally and spiritually broken and just wanting to fix my problem drinker. What happened was a miracle. He didn't stop drinking, but through the Steps, Traditions, and Concepts I became a new person. I finally realized that I didn't cause, can't control, or cure his situation—just mine. My Higher Power would take care of me. He had his own Higher Power, and it wasn't me. We finally divorced due to some emotionally charged events that impacted the children. I continued on my spiritual journey with a few bumps in the road.

The teenage children were acting out, and I dragged them to Alateen hoping that they, too, would experience the wonders of this wonderful program. My oldest thought she had joined a cult and my youngest began her addictive journey. Through service and a strong Sponsor, I continued in Al-Anon and kept growing by leaps and bounds while my former spouse and children floundered with their own diseases. My prayers and meditations finally worked though. My former spouse still has struggles, but they're not mine any longer due to this program. We see each other for holidays. My oldest got outside treatment that has helped her immensely and she walks her own spiritual path. My youngest struggled longer with her disease and I had to put her in God's hands every day, at times not knowing if she was alive. Three years ago, as I started this journey as Delegate, my youngest daughter became pregnant and sought recovery for herself.

My true miracles are my granddaughter and this program, which have saved all of our lives. To see her close a meeting in the usual matter, smile, and say "hi" to all in the rooms and see

her Higher Power working in her life is amazing. I continue to practice these principles in all my affairs, and I will keep coming to reap the benefits of this program.

Nancy Jo W., Idaho

I was pushed into Al-Anon by a co-worker who attended Al-Anon and saw my pain. I went to a meeting just so she would stop nagging me about it. I had *no* belief in any God, however He believed in me.

Soon I was sent to Dallas, Texas where I started working a program. My Sponsor threw me into being a speaker when I had six months in the program.

I had talked about the abuse with my Sponsor, and one night, I chaired a meeting and my topic was “abuse in an alcoholic relationship.” That night, I became a leader without realizing it.

I wanted freedom from my deepest pain, so I began doing workshops on abuse in the alcoholic relationship. I was invited to take this workshop to Area meetings. Then, I was asked to start a meeting at a treatment center. Two years later, I started an Al-Anon group at a church closer to my home; there was an Alateen group, too. Pretty soon, I was on the Dallas Speakers Circuit.

I didn’t choose these doors—God was making a way where there was no way. With many burning bushes, I grew in His guidance. I’ve moved across the West and Midwest, not knowing where I was going to live or how to make money. I just knew to trust the God I found in Al-Anon.

I became homeless in 2005, and God brought me to Idaho when I did not even own a roll of toilet tissue. I got on my feet by waiting for God to bring me the right job. I was led to start an Al-Anon group in my home, which then grew and moved to a facility where it is still going today.

My next step of faith was to be a part of the Area World Service Committee (AWSC) and the District Representative (DR) for my district. I thought I would stop there. I never thought of becoming a Delegate. Now, I look forward to submitting a résumé for Trustee, and then I don’t know where my God will take me.

Me—a little girl afraid of people, speaking in public, and never thought of being a leader. As a child, I hoped to be a teacher and a policeman. God has brought both of these into my life, and *today I feel complete*.

Realizing my spiritual potential—my journey has been a life full of adventure and self-discovery that I would never have found without Al-Anon. I will be forever grateful for my opportunity and all of the love I’ve found in these rooms.

Lyri M., Illinois South

I stood for Delegate because a Past Delegate told me it would be a great way to work on my character defects. I did not expect that process to be quite as painful or profound as it has been.

Prior to recovery in Al-Anon, I often felt like an outsider. Terrified of disappointing those I longed to please, lest they abandon or reject me, I learned to earn the approval of others. Seeking to satisfy others has brought me a lot of external success—although the private cost has been great. When I

arrived at Conference my first year, I hoped to earn the respect and admiration of my peers. At one time, I might have willingly compromised my personal integrity toward that goal, but gratefully my Higher Power had other plans.

I never expected the gift of my tenure as Delegate to be finding the spiritual courage to risk the disapproval and potential rejection of my peers in honor of my own spiritual convictions. Learning to ask unwelcome questions and to speak my truth when it seemed in opposition to the majority opinion, have been the hardest lessons I have faced in Al-Anon. For me, this process has been a living amends to myself for the countless times I abandoned myself to fit in and to the people I hurt by failing to speak up.

Spiritual growth is a gift of grace my Higher Power grants me when I am willing to be stripped bare of my certainty; when I am willing to submit all of the petty fears that clutter my soul; to utterly surrender everything I cling to hoping for an easier way. Though I try every day to do my part to lay the fertile groundwork for that growth, my Higher Power’s spiritual gifts seem always to arrive as unexpected miracles.

I cannot know what my Higher Power considers my spiritual potential to be, or how She might envision my future growth in that direction. I know only that my primary purpose is to be myself as completely as I can, wherever I find myself; to always honor my needs and desires, while striving to make a positive contribution in my communities. Whatever chair I occupy in Al-Anon, whether at the World Service Conference or my home group, I am merely a placeholder, preparing the way for those who will come after me.

Whether or not I reach my full potential in this lifetime, I am grateful for the journey and for all I will meet along the way. Thank you to everyone who has been part of my journey thus far.

Virginia B., Iowa

“If we live spiritually in our daily life, then we find a deeper fulfillment for ourselves. I don’t think there is a spiritual part of the program. I think Al-Anon *is* a spiritual program. Every activity can have a spiritual motive.” (*First Steps: Al-Anon...35 Years of Beginnings*, page 156).

Since coming to Conference, my spiritual potential has become more apparent. Walking with, and taking God with me, I’m growing in service and getting stronger and stronger. I’m having those ah-ha moments and realizing how service is spiritual.

As Lois says, Al-Anon is a spiritual program. The business, discussing controversial topics, and personal sharings—Al-Anon is all spiritually led and spiritually based.

Because of the examples that were set for me by members in my group, my district, and my Area, I willingly began to serve at the group level and continued to grow. My spiritual journey began when I gratefully stepped into Al-Anon groups, actively recovering through the Steps, Traditions, and Concepts of Service.

Standing for the Delegate position came from the examples set by those who went before me. In 2006, I made my first trip to Virginia Beach to celebrate Al-Anon’s 55th Anniversary with

fellow Iowa Al-Anon members. On our way home from the airport, I was riding with the Iowa Delegate at that time. I remember her turning to me and saying, “You could be Delegate.” I shook my head!

In my personal life, I have family members who struggle with alcoholism. When I started taking part in service that took me away overnight, I was so afraid of what was going to happen while I was away. Who was going to take care of them and the situation they may have gotten themselves into? Now, I realize what better place to be if something would happen. Al-Anon has given me such spiritual potential to realize I am not alone. I don’t do any type of service work alone, from Conference to Area World Service Committee (AWSC) meetings, to Assemblies, to chairing my group meeting.

As we get involved in Al-Anon service, we are strengthened spiritually in ways we could not imagine. As with most things, whatever we give away in service comes back to us multiplied.

These years serving as the Iowa Delegate, have been some of the most spiritual and gratifying years since arriving at my first Al-Anon meeting. I have been surrounded with encouragement, love, and acceptance. Thank you for allowing me to walk this spiritual journey with you as a member of Al-Anon’s worldwide fellowship.

Angela A., Louisiana

Today, I have a new awareness of this journey in service to Al-Anon as both grace and gift, given freely and abundantly by my Higher Power, who loves me unconditionally.

Arriving at my first meeting, I was enveloped in love and the kind of acceptance that I had never known before. Living with my “dis-ease” was an uncomfortable existence. When the pain of where I was, overcame the fear of where I needed to go next, loving Al-Anon members reached out to me in service and sponsorship to guide me through Al-Anon’s Twelve Steps. This led me to a richer relationship with the God of my understanding.

When my character defects—most of which were rooted in my reaction to fear—were wreaking havoc in my relationships, I was encouraged to delve deeper into Al-Anon’s spiritual principles by embracing service. Here I am, learning about the Traditions and Concepts of Service.

I have a friend who says, “If you want to do a thorough Fourth Step, take a service position and carry a notebook with you.” I have found this to be both true and helpful!

When I first began to serve our fellowship, I had no idea how to “play nicely with others,” and humility was foreign to me. These deficits cost me a lucrative job and numerous relationships along the way.

My Higher Power has used service to give me a roadmap and a tool kit for how to “do relationships,” as well as a safe loving training ground for practicing these skills—my group, district, Al-Anon Information Service (AIS), Area, and now here at the World Service Conference.

Thankfully, my Higher Power also sent me many wonderful friends, Sponsors, and mentors—like each one of you—to walk alongside me on this fabulous journey. Rarely have I tried out a new relationship skill in service that I have not needed to put into practice within a matter of days in my “outside” relationships.

The angry, broken woman who first came to the doors of Al-Anon, battered and bruised by the family disease of alcoholism, would not recognize the woman here today. While I have become more teachable in the process of leaving her behind, my family could tell you a lot about her; the scars on my relationships are fading and not yet gone. They would also tell you about the changes they have seen, the healing, and the hope.

I continue to serve because I have more to learn. Also, I want this vital fellowship to be available when my children and grandchildren decide to embrace it. As you all know, the family disease of alcoholism lives on. Thankfully, here in service, we find great hope. For this, I will always be so very grateful.

Sandy F., Maine

It has been many years since my prayed for, blatant, spiritual awakening. I was an agnostic wanting to believe in a Higher Power, but needing some concrete evidence. This I prayed for, and received. It gave me a solid foundation to practice turning my will and my life over to the care of God. But as the memory of that awakening fades, it becomes more challenging to trust, on a daily basis, that God is always working for my good when I do not know exactly *how* He is working. Recently, I had a huge awareness that caught my attention and is expanding my spiritual growth.

I have finally been able to see God’s work in my life 40-plus years after an extremely painful experience. I was left to raise two toddlers by an abusive alcoholic husband. I still loved him, and if I had gotten my way, we would have sought counseling and stayed together. That wasn’t to be. He remarried within a year, and I was heartbroken. For many years, he had nothing to do with me or our children.

Recently, I saw clearly what I could not see all those years ago—that God had a much better plan. The blessings I have received far outweigh the excruciating pain I went through at the time. Now, I fully understand how differently my children might have turned out had the alcoholic stayed. I have a wonderful relationship with my grown children, and they are kind, respectful, productive members of society. Had they been raised in that dysfunctional abusive situation, my son might have learned to abuse; my daughter might have become a martyr and a doormat. The alcoholic is in his third marriage and is still abusive. Today, my children have a good relationship with him, but they acknowledge that he has a drinking problem and know that he is very sick. They show compassion and amazingly, very little resentment that he was not there for them when they were children. The biggest miracle is that *I* am finally feeling some compassion, instead of hurt and resentment, toward this man that I now understand acts out mostly out of fear.

What this awareness reaffirms for me is that I can trust God in all my affairs and let go of knowing how He is working. With this rejuvenated trust in God, and armed with a deeper understanding of Al-Anon’s Three Legacies, I feel that I am ready to strive toward realizing my spiritual potential in all areas of my life. Page 338 in *Courage to Change* (B-16) states, “. . . I practice remembering that every action can serve a spiritual purpose.”

Karen L., Missouri

Before Al-Anon, I was angry. Life had cheated me and everyone was against me! I just knew folks said, “Crap, it’s Karen!” when I arrived, or, “Thank God, she’s gone!” as I left. And they should have; I was miserable and let everyone know it. Today, I tease that Al-Anon was the first place where folks ever told me to “Keep Coming Back!”

Last year, I needed transportation for a medical test. One friend could take me and another could pick me up. Dropping me off, the first friend gave me a big hug. Inside I had the staff laughing because I was so upbeat. The test *could* have meant “bad news,” but I was alive, I was walking and talking, I could smile and pray, so why worry? Knowing that I have no family close by, my second friend invited me to her mother’s for Thanksgiving. I gently refused. I didn’t know how I’d feel after the test, and I’m not a big mix-with-strangers person. Then I teased, “But you can bring me a plate around 6 o’clock!” And she did—with enough to feed a crowd! The *real* blessing was us talking for hours. Nothing earth-shattering or world-changing, just two friends sharing.

Later, it came to me that I *have* realized at least a little of my spiritual potential. I have family and friends in whose lives I can have meaning. People are willing to pray for me during challenges. The woman no one wanted around is now a loving, loveable friend and family member; someone others are willing to help, love, care for, and share with.

I didn’t do this alone—it’s one of many gifts from Al-Anon and my Higher Power. Accepting and learning to apply the spiritual principles of Al-Anon to every part of my life—the Steps for me, the Traditions for my communities, the Concepts of Service for *all* parts of my life—helps me work toward my spiritual potential.

I know that my Higher Power is the force behind all realizations—character defects to work through or goals to achieve. My Higher Power has no limits. So, how could I *not* become aware of, understand, accept, and eventually fulfill (or *realize*) my spiritual potential?

Have I *fully* realized it? I hope not—at least not yet. I look forward to many more adventures in learning about acceptance and serenity and all the other things that will make my spirituality a reality. Thank you, Al-Anon Family Groups, for making me aware that I *have* a spiritual potential and for being integral in turning that potential into a reality.

Jan R., Nebraska

I didn’t grow up in a family of alcoholism. I had a great childhood and loved life as it was. I was not aware of the disease of alcoholism. When I dated and married the alcoholic, I entered a completely different life. I lost the happiness I had growing up and slowly became full of self-pity, anger, resentment, and sarcasm. I felt alone and unloved.

I had not heard of Al-Anon until my husband went to treatment after seven years of marriage and two children later. I went to Al-Anon because it was suggested 43 years ago. I felt if I went, it would help my husband stay sober. After a couple of weeks, he decided he didn’t need the meetings and, so of course, I didn’t either. When he started drinking again, I went back to the place

where I found hope and happiness on the faces of the members.

With the help of my Sponsor, my group, and service work, I again, found that person who once had loved life. The spiritual principles of the program became apparent to me.

The group(s) I belonged to became my Higher Power until I could find one of my own understanding. The members loved me in spite of all my character defects. I found that if they could do that, then the God of my understanding must be a kind and loving one. Today, my Higher Power loves me the way my father did. He is always there to talk to and to listen to my challenges. The Al-Anon program and its members gave this to me.

Being here, in front of the World Service Conference giving my three-minute talk is beyond amazing. Being of service has given me far more than I could ever give back. It gets me out of “me” and gives me the strength to try new things and learn something new each time. It has taught me how to be kind and loving to everyone, listen when I need to, and speak when necessary. I once heard a priest who came to our meetings say that he wished he was able to teach how Al-Anon works to his parish. The unconditional love he saw at the meetings wasn’t anywhere else.

Thank you to all who work each and every day to keep Al-Anon alive. I am grateful that it will be there when my children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren need it.

Janice B., Nevada

I fell in love with service early in my recovery. I had many great mentors who gently guided me into service with smiles, that I’ll never forget and words of encouragement that were so different from the words I grew up with. I would never have imagined I would someday have the honor of representing the members in my Area as their Delegate. Funny and true, that if you keep coming back, you find yourself in the most amazing places!

As I attended my first Conference, I found all the “old voices” had come back to haunt me—“you’re not good enough, smart enough, and what makes you think you have anything of importance to say?” The thoughts of fight or flight arose within me and being a runner by nature, I have to laugh, I actually had the thought, okay, just run! But God had done His job. My assigned seat was in the front row, and as I looked back at the doors, I knew that if I ran, I would never get out alive, or worse yet, I would be noticed! So, I hung on to my seat and waited. Al-Anon has taught me not to leave before the miracle!

As I reached into my Al-Anon “tool bag” and “leaned into the moment,” the old voices dissipated, and I was able to open my heart and let in the love of the program.

Realizing my spiritual potential comes only when I step outside my comfort zone and trust. If I just trust that God has my best interest in hand, accept those old voices as the voices that held me back from realizing my spiritual potential, and gently let them go, I can allow the new voices to guide me forward continuing the search for my spiritual potential.

The three Conference themes during my term blend together so beautifully for me: My spiritual principles in action expanded my vision, allowing me to realize my spiritual potential.

I am so grateful for the willingness to continue forward in my recovery and to love myself as I continue to grow and change. How lucky am I to have spent this time with all of you.

Maxine D., Newfoundland/Labrador

“Realizing Our Spiritual Potential” is our Conference theme. What is my spiritual potential? Do I have a sense of wholeness, self-confidence, self-assertiveness, and self-discipline? Am I awesome?

When the world asks us to live up to our full potential, it expects us to commit all of our human abilities and effort toward a goal of self-achievement that will bring great profit to us. However, when my Higher Power asks me to live up to my full spiritual potential, He asks me to “Let Go and Let God.” I let Him be my guide on a wonderful journey. Very few people will ever maximize the full potential that God has placed inside them, living mediocre lives. The full extent of their capabilities and talents go untapped.

My “spiritual potential” is a compilation of my unused strength, abilities, hidden talents and the awesome possibilities, which God sees. He sees the restored joy, peace, and sense of accomplishment that He wants in all our lives. Since coming to the Al-Anon program, I have been willing to discover, and align myself with, His plan and purpose for me. He has blessed me more than I could ever imagine.

My husband’s drinking led me to seek help, but after a couple of years in Al-Anon and work on my Fourth Step inventory, I came to realize that I have always had issues. All my life, I longed to feel fulfilled and feel a part of something bigger. I now have a sense of wholeness. I’ve found a home after living in isolation—alone no more. My anger has been replaced by love and patience. I’m still working on the patience part: “Progress, not Perfection.”

In a previous submission to *The Forum*, I compared myself to a gem—buried underground, dug up, and polished off. Am I awesome? Since coming to Al-Anon, I can say with confidence, “Yes I am!”

I’ve even become a safer driver. At one point, I had six fender-benders on my record. Since I walked through the doors of Al-Anon, I’m happy to say I’ve been accident free by keeping the focus on the here-and-now. My life is filled with spiritual awakenings. The difference now is that I am present to see them.

And, I’ve only just begun to discover my true spiritual potential through service. Our abilities are truly challenged when we manifest them in ways that genuinely help other people. Service is love in action. God provides those opportunities for service. I have not been able to do it with my own strength, only with my Higher Power by my side. As it says on page 186 in *Courage to Change*, “Al-Anon has come to my support—undiluted and with no strings attached—when I have needed it. I hope to pass it on in the same spirit.”

Pat W., New Hampshire

I began my service journey in Al-Anon after attending a meeting for three years. This group had not had a Group Representative (GR) for quite some time. A member brought up

the need for a GR to attend an upcoming Assembly. I was asked if I was willing, and, for some unknown reason, I said, “yes.” I remember how confused I was at that Assembly with all the new terms and procedures, but I liked the feeling of belonging.

I brought back the information to my group and was told I did not have to do it perfectly. They trusted me and expressed gratitude for my service.

As I continued to serve at the Area level, I saw the need to study the Concepts. I found it challenging to apply them at times, and with the help of a service Sponsor, I saw the wisdom they offered.

I was delighted with my first Conference theme, “Our Spiritual Principles in Action.” We are a fellowship of equals. As I heard from my first Trustee call—“we want you to be successful”—I was responsible to become familiar with the information sent prior to Conference, and I only needed to ask for clarity and someone would help.

Last year, “Living Our Spiritual Principles—Expanding Our Vision,” opened my mind further to dreams of what could be in my Area and in my life.

This final year, “Realizing Our Spiritual Potential,” inspires me to continue to grow. As I shed my negative beliefs, thoughts, and behaviors, I think about what principle I can use when faced with a challenging situation. The most surprising principle I never considered is prudence. I only need enough plus an ample reserve whether it is money, time, clothes in my closet, food in the refrigerator, or flowers in my garden. How much is enough, and when has fear crept back into my thinking?

Every service position I have accepted, at one time I had declared I would never take it. Today, I am grateful for the lessons I have learned, the skills I have been taught, and the unconditional love I have received. I am part of a fellowship that has embarked on a journey of living a spiritual life. It is very different from the church I attended as a child. It offers hope for a happier life, with a Higher Power of my understanding. As one of us grows spiritually, we all benefit. A rising tide lifts all boats, and I am pleased to be sailing on the Al-Anon ocean.

Jud L., New Mexico/El Paso

For my share on this year’s Conference theme, “Realizing Our Spiritual Potential,” I want to begin with a quote from page 55 in *When I Got Busy, I Got Better* (P-78), “In reaching out to others through Al-Anon service, we have the opportunity to share our unique experience and our personal recovery for a common good. We have the chance to encourage detachment, acceptance, and serenity in a supportive environment and to get to know ourselves better—both strengths and weaknesses—in the process.

“We have the opportunity to contribute not only what we can *do* but, more important, who we can *be*. By sharing our recovery, we strengthen its workings in our own lives. By seeking to allow a Higher Power to work in and through us, we come to feel, more fully, the presence of that Power.

“In giving, we receive.”

Early on in my program in Ohio, I had no desire to be of service. I just wanted to be left alone, but my Higher Power led me to choose a Sponsor who kept saying, “Get in the car.” My

reply was, “But, but, but, I don’t have the time, the interest, it’s too far, it’s too cold, it’s too hot, etc.” I still got in the car. In doing so, I got to see first-hand our recovery program in action through the sharings of a vast array of people all over a large state at health fairs, workshops, Area World Service Committee (AWSC) meetings, Assemblies, and Conventions.

I now live my program in a new Area, New Mexico/El Paso. I have been blessed to share about letting go and letting whom-ever live his/her life while I listen to my Higher Power. In listening, I’m learning as I work through change, fears, making new choices, practicing acceptance, being of service in numerous capacities, and seeing the strength and personal growth that is offered in this fellowship when I just keep getting in the car with my Higher Power, an open mind, and my *Service Manual*.

Lastly, I have a very personal note to share. I no longer use the word “potential” defined as “capable of becoming real.” My first alcoholic husband told me that I wasn’t everything he wanted in a wife, but that I had potential. Being pre-Al-Anon, I worked long and hard to achieve his vision. With my second alcoholic husband, I did the reverse. Being in Al-Anon, I knew the vast benefits achieved by working this Twelve Step program and felt *he* had the potential to love himself and therefore treat me better if he worked his program to the best of his ability. My primary spiritual realization today is to keep the focus on myself and my connection with my Higher Power.

Michele R., New York South

I’d like to start by saying how grateful I am to have found the rooms of Al-Anon. When I walked into my first meeting, I had no sense I could or would realize my spiritual potential. I was broken, suffering, living in chaos, working in chaos—and it was all everyone else’s fault. I couldn’t understand why I was so miserable. And, the more my life became unmanageable, the harder I worked to fix it and fix everyone else around me.

I was very good at what I did, and I was very good at what others did too. I took care of everyone, everything, everywhere, but I never took care of myself. If I did, it was the last scrap, the last piece of energy, the last thought for me.

Of course, I entered Al-Anon so I could fix what was going on in my home at that time. The amazing part is that I never connected the dots back through all my relationships, friends, friend’s families, and my family. There was always alcohol, always drinking, and always the crazy and chaotic behaviors that went with it. Al-Anon helped me shine a light on my past and realize that who I had become was the sum of all I had experienced.

From early on, my journey included sponsorship, many, many meetings, studying the Legacies, and service. These were the ingredients that brought me to the spiritual side of this program. They helped me change my focus, improve my thinking, open my heart, and make better choices and decisions.

I truly found the God of my understanding when I found Al-Anon, and it has been the most powerful gift I could ever have received. Understanding how my Higher Power works in my life, allowing myself to trust and follow that guidance, and sharing it with others is part of “realizing my spiritual potential.”

My experiences through service have given me opportunities to meet incredible people from around this country and beyond, who share my interest and enthusiasm for this program and what it has to offer. I strive every day to carry the message of Al-Anon and practice these principles. I know today, it is not what happens to me, but how I handle what happens to me that makes all the difference. Service keeps me coming back.

Many terms ago, I watched and listened as the Delegate in my Area gave her report, and I thought, “I want to do that some day!” And here I am. So now, I’d like to end by saying how grateful I am to have found the rooms of Al-Anon.

Diane B., Ontario North

I always thank the Ontario North Area for voting me for Delegate and enhancing my spiritual potential. I have been extremely lucky to have an excellent Area World Service Committee (AWSC) that relies on me to bring the message and information back from the World Service Conference and support me in my efforts to do this. Ontario North is 700 miles from one end to the other. Most of it is dense forest, so it is hard to keep in touch at times. Although the distance is vast, we seem to manage with communicating through any means possible.

In my second year as Delegate, I became a grandmother of twin girls and will have another grandchild this year. My two-year-old granddaughter’s birthday party and my birthday fall on the date of our AWSC meeting. I always have to deal with the guilt of not being at her birthday party, although I am with her on her actual birthday. I have tried to fill as many service positions as I could manage. I was a single parent when I found Al-Anon and had no idea that one day I would be the Delegate for Ontario North. As the quote from page 301 in *Paths to Recovery* (B-24) says, “Each and every member of Al-Anon has the potential to become a leader,” and after being the Ontario North Delegate, I believe this to be true. Also, my spiritual potential has been fulfilled in this position and has shown me the wisdom of passing it on to other members to fill their leadership roles for Al-Anon.

I was raised in a household where drinking was a normal way of life, and I married someone who also thought as I did. These people never sought a Twelve Step program or quit drinking. I can thankfully say that I found Al-Anon and rebuilt my life as a single parent and never looked back. My spouse does not drink. I have relied on Al-Anon to support me and guide me through the process of recovery “One Day at a Time.” I cannot imagine my life without Al-Anon, since it is a normal part of my lifestyle. For me, Al-Anon is a huge support that keeps me sane and filled with serenity, as many of you probably understand.

Betty A., Puerto Rico

When I first came to Al-Anon, I felt like a ship with a heavy load, full of people, and lost in the middle of the ocean. I felt like a real failure. My husband is an alcoholic and addicted to medications. Now he has colon cancer. I have two daughters and one son. My sons-in-law and all of them are active in their substance use. One of my daughters is HIV positive, and the other one got pregnant at 13 years old. My son has been in jail

and homeless. But in my first meeting, I took a seat in front of the blackboard (it was a classroom), and someone hung a piece of wood with the Twelve Steps written on it. I spent the whole 90 minutes reading them from top to bottom, over and over. I started to feel as if “this is the place I must return to; this is my space.” And so I have, since February 15, 1990. I meet with these spiritual principles every day.

Thanks to Al-Anon, I faced my son’s imprisonment and one of my son-in-law’s death at 27 years old due to this terrible illness with a very strong standpoint. At that time, I had four granddaughters and four grandsons, and all of them from my sick family. I have learned through Al-Anon as my spiritual guide, to make the appropriate choices for my spiritual serenity and harmony. Now, I have the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to see the difference between them.

Since my first year, I have been very active and have participated in several essential services—in the group as the Group Representative, in the district, in the Area, and now as Delegate.

Now, my spirituality has awakened, and I have a better life. No matter what is happening around me, I have a Higher Power who allows me to realize my spiritual potential and to look at the future with unique feelings of hope.

Jennifer B., Saskatchewan

Service in Al-Anon has provided me with spiritual experiences I could have only dreamt about in the past. From surrendering my fears and sense of inadequacy, to crying uncontrollable tears of gratitude and joy, my journey as Delegate has included an array of spiritual awakenings.

My journey as Delegate started at the Assembly where at first I declined letting my name stand for Delegate. I then reconsidered and told my Saskatchewan Al-Anon family members that I wasn’t going to let my lack of computer skills stop me from giving back in gratitude to a spiritual program that had saved my life. Little did I know that on the third day of my first World Service Conference, I would be walking out of a session that focused on the benefits of technology and crying from the pit of my belly in surrender to my Higher Power.

Through my tears and snot bubbles, I told God that I had done my best to prepare for the Conference by doing the background reading, listening, and taking notes, but I was in over my head when it came to technology—podcasts, Excel, and webinars to name a few. I argued that Saskatchewan Al-Anon deserved better representation and that I had my credit card and was willing to use it to book a flight home immediately.

As usual, my Higher Power patiently waited me out while my fears, feelings of unworthiness, and resistance to change poured forth. I heard my Higher Power’s invitation to trust that I was right where I needed to be. I was in a safe place with loving, compassionate Al-Anon family members who had walked through this similar process on their own unique journeys and would support me if I had the humility and willingness to learn. Also, it no longer seemed like a colossal mistake that I had been placed on the Thought Force about embracing change in Al-Anon.

Our Conference theme of “Realizing Our Spiritual Potential” aptly describes some of the following spiritual experiences I had during my service as Delegate: witnessing our three Legacies uniting and strengthening our Al-Anon family; deepening gratitude for all those who had served in countless ways before me; strengthening my connections with our worldwide family; healing from my perfectionism; thinking and dreaming more abundantly; celebrating our differences; receiving and sharing unconditional love; gaining greater confidence to handle the unexpected; growing awareness of my Higher Power’s presence and guidance; living from a more peaceful and hopeful centre; and expanding my openness to the miracles of transformation possible through Al-Anon. I am grateful we are companions on this amazing spiritual journey.

Joyce H., South Carolina

As I began to write my talk, I felt overwhelmed in the beginning. Thinking back on my spiritual growth and my potential, I realized how much I depended on my Higher Power for guidance and strength during my journey.

I struggled through many losses in my personal life in the past few years. First, my only sibling, then my husband for whom I had the honor to care for for six years, and then my Sponsor. I was overwhelmed and considered stepping down from my Area position. Thankfully, my Area chose not to have that, and I came to realize that I needed my Area as much as they needed me. So, with the help of my Higher Power, I kept going. Then came my failing health during Conference last year. After arriving home, I remembered very little about the matters at hand during Conference. I was disappointed and felt an enormous amount of guilt. I asked for help and was sent bits and pieces. With the help of those loving Delegates, I was able to give my report to my Area. I realized that I did not have the power to control my health and learned to trust the process, and trust others to help.

There have been many joyous times on my journey also. The friends I made and the love we shared for each other, only this program could give.

The program has given me more than I could ever repay. You loved me when things were bad, held me and wiped my tears when things were unbearable, and showed me how to smile again.

Kathleen A., South Dakota

Without even being aware of it, the moment I walked into the Al-Anon meeting room the first time, my spiritual potential began to emerge. I heard things like, “It’s okay to love an alcoholic; trust in a Higher Power; I can’t, God can, I think I’ll let him; humbly ask God to remove my shortcomings.”

Working the Steps and studying the Traditions and Concepts have led me to a reliance on my Higher Power, a true sense of humility and a desire to be of service to others. This spirituality was already inside of me, but I had to find it and allow my Higher Power to develop it. It was buried under layers of self-hatred, guilt, ego, fear, control, and distrust of God’s willingness to care for others and me. Like so many, I would pray for a solution and then tell God what I thought was best for me and

my alcoholic. My fear of letting go of my illusion of control was smothering any possible trust.

The first service I did was to make coffee. Being very introverted, it allowed me to get to the meeting early and be busy while also soaking up the conversations around me and directed to me. What a wonderful feeling of being included, of no longer fighting my fear alone. I set up chairs, answered the Al-Anon phone line, manned a library, and eventually became a Group Representative (GR). My Higher Power had many new lessons for me as GR. For the first time, I listened to Al-Anon members disagree about a decision at the Assembly and yet everyone remained courteous and quietly listened to the minority view. I was stunned to hear a member disagree in a discussion, state her opinion, and the meeting went on! No one was right or wrong! Only a difference of opinion and majority ruled the final decision. In my narrow way of thinking, someone should be wrong. I am so thankful to my Higher Power for that lesson and the beginning of real humility and acceptance.

Service positions always seemed to be plentiful, so I went on to serve on the group level, District Archives, District Representative, Area Archives, Alternate Delegate, and Delegate. Each position helped me become more humble and increased my self-confidence as I realized that I was truly willing to stand up and be of service where my Higher Power placed me.

Al-Anon has offered me the opportunity to be of service and, at the same time, to reap so many spiritual gifts, gifts I did not expect. Patience, acceptance, trust, humility, unconditional love, kindness, and courtesy will continue to grow as my service to others continues to be my priority.

Patrick M., Utah

When I first stumbled from the train wreck that was my life, I was welcomed with open arms and loving hearts into the fellowship of Al-Anon. From my very first meeting, the members of Al-Anon offered me not only experience, strength, and hope, but also love, support, tools, insights, and feedback. These were all freely given, sometimes in the middle of a sleepless night, asking nothing in return, which was a very good thing because in the beginning, I had nothing to give. I was broken and empty from years of living with the unrecognized effects of the family disease of alcoholism in my life.

Growing up in an alcoholic family, I had unknowingly adopted serious misperceptions about how the world operates and faulty ideas about myself and my place in the world. I continued to live a mistaken lifestyle long after leaving my childhood home. But, like every structure built on a shaky foundation, the structure of my life eventually collapsed, leaving me without resources. From the day of my first Al-Anon meeting, the members of this fellowship began giving me the healthy resources I had never had.

After a few months, I began to see that perhaps I *could* give something back. I started to share in meetings. I volunteered to answer the phone and sell Conference Approved Literature at the local Al-Anon Information Service (AIS). Soon, I stood for a Group Representative position, and shortly thereafter, I became a Sponsor. Eventually, I stood to serve as a District Representative and for positions on our Area World Service Com-

mittee. In attempting to give back to the fellowship, I quickly recognized that I always seem to get as much or more back than I am able to give.

A few years ago, I thought serving as a Delegate might balance the Al-Anon “getting” and “giving” in my life. But now, midway through my last Conference, I have a sense that I have once again received more than I have been able to give. Just exactly what I’ve gained from my service as Delegate will likely take years to fully understand, but there are two things that immediately come to mind. I’ve learned that I truly belong and will belong with this group forever. I’ve made dear friends here, who will always be just as close within my heart as the longtime members of my home group who have done so much for me.

Finally, just like almost everything else in life, I’ve learned that service and “giving back” is a journey that brings and extends joy and the prospect of serenity to giver and receiver. I hope that during my service as Delegate, I’ve given some small return on the incredibly huge and life-changing gift that Al-Anon has given me.

Sherry H., Wyoming

My Al-Anon journey began on December 16, 1989 after a phone call from my brother. He had been advised by his therapist to seek treatment for alcoholism, and he called to seek my advice. Despite my family’s independent attitude and distrust of authority figures, I encouraged my brother to check it out. After his call and my advice-giving, I began to have doubts. I couldn’t ever recall seeing him drunk, so why had I encouraged him? I decided to seek knowledge via the yellow pages. I found a number associated with alcoholism and made the call that sent me through the doors of Al-Anon.

I loved my first meeting taking home with me HALT (Hungry, angry, lonely, tired) and the three C’s (I didn’t cause it, I can’t control it, I can’t cure it). My first service position was showing up and tentatively beginning to share. One evening, I was asked to lead the night’s meeting. Since it occurred after I arrived, I had no time to find a way to refuse. When I confessed I had no idea what to lead on, it was suggested I take some time to look over the *One Day at a Time* (B-6) index. I chose “gratitude” as my topic, and it was the best meeting I had ever been to!

My next service venture had me opening the meeting for a month and asking others to lead it. As everyone I fearfully called was so very willing, my confidence within the group began to grow.

Years later, after a move home to Wyoming, I began to take on more challenging duties. In most cases, it was with trepidation and fear that I approached the tasks. My character defects of telling myself I don’t have enough time or money and wanting to do everything perfectly opened the door to procrastination and second guessing myself. With each service responsibility I undertook, I gained new skills, and my confidence in Al-Anon, myself, and my Higher Power began to soar.

As Delegate, it has been a wonderful adventure delving into the spiritual side of Al-Anon. In year one, I learned what the spiritual principles of our program are. Year two found me expanding my vision and more easily incorporating the

principles into my life. The following quote from page 24 of *As We Understood* sums up this year's theme for me: "I'm beginning to understand how the A.A. and Al-Anon groups are able to work so many miracles in so many lives. By combining our

light, we illuminate areas of knowledge and understanding for each other. . . It's this exchange—this giving and receiving of love, faith, hope and joy—that raises our consciousness to a higher level, bringing regeneration and peace into our lives."

INTERNATIONAL REPRESENTATIVE

Lourdes C., Mexico

I'm Lulu, and I have relatives suffering from the disease of alcoholism.

I came to Al-Anon on a hot afternoon in April. The psychiatrist had referred me and told me I would be understood there. I thought I would go to just a few meetings and every issue in my life would be solved. I was in a crisis. I felt confused. I didn't know how to make decisions. As the daughter of an alcoholic, I had a lot of fears and insecurities. At the end of my first meeting, I was asked about how I felt, and it was hard to tell because it was hard to trust anyone. In my childhood, I was told that friendship didn't exist, so I learned I shouldn't trust anyone. Since the very first day in Al-Anon, I noticed that people really cared about what was happening in my life. Although we had just met, my fellow members made me feel good; they gave me a warm welcome, and I was invited to return.

At that time, I was about to decide whether to get married or not. I always told myself I would never marry an alcoholic. My father's alcoholism made me feel so embarrassed. He was drunk every day and all the money was spent on liquor. I remember when he left home in the morning to go to his job, he was freshly bathed and so elegant. At night, when he returned, he was drunk and would fight with my mom, who always said she was going to leave because she couldn't stand it anymore. Many times I thought, "Why couldn't I have a dad like my classmates?" However, in spite of that, I chose to marry someone who had a drinking problem. Our relationship wasn't very functional.

When I was at that first meeting, I felt full of hope, and I made the decision to get married to an alcoholic, even knowing it was a risk. I made my decision with the conviction that I wasn't alone anymore, and I had a place to go where I could learn to have a better life with my sick alcoholic, whom I loved so much. Now, I can say, that thanks to Al-Anon, I've been learning every day to assume responsibility for the consequences of my actions. I've learned even from my mistakes and more importantly, I've learned that Al-Anon gives me the wonderful opportunity to improve in all aspects of my life—to reach out. I've practiced two principles that I consider necessary—willingness and perseverance.

Sometimes, I imagine that people affected by the disease of alcoholism are like the inside of a damaged vessel that little by little loses its brightness and color, and then cracks because of its many fractures and voids. Now, I have faith and full confidence that with the help of my Higher Power, practicing forgiveness, and the other tools of the program, life can change, and I can have a better quality of life. I've learned that the Steps heal our emotional cracks, and the Traditions represent the

bandages that offer protection to the relatives of alcoholics in the Al-Anon groups. I also have learned that the Concepts polish us through service and give us the possibility of facing our disagreements by putting principles before personalities.

In my prayers, I asked my Higher Power for a closer family, however, when I was married ten years, my husband died. I took care of my two boys. Today I can say that they are responsible men of whom I'm very proud. By the generosity of my Higher Power, I've been given that family unit. At the same time, He gave me my other family, my spiritual Al-Anon family, that gives me strength and hope to keep growing.

I'm aware that my serenity depends on me, and that by practicing the Al-Anon principles, it has given me the opportunity to keep growing and to make myself a better person, to live in harmony with myself and with other human beings.

Al-Anon in Mexico is constantly growing. Currently, we have 37 zones and a total of 3,098 groups, of which 416 are Alateen groups. Our General Service Office (GSO) has 16 employees, including the Manager. The Board of Trustees is composed of nine members (five Regional Trustees and three Trustees at Large).

Annually, we comply with the tax audit. This way, we fulfill the requirement, so our GSO, as a civil association is exempt from paying taxes.

Most of the income of our GSO comes from the literature sales. That is why the Finance Committee has a project this year to encourage members to make their contributions by the birthday plan, which is named "¡Cumpliste! ¿Cumpliste?" (The first word makes reference to the members' birthday in Al-Anon, and the second word asks if you made a contribution for your birthday.)

Last October, as every year, we carried out the 25th Simultaneous National Congress to celebrate one more anniversary of our beloved GSO. The remaining funds from each zone is sent as a gift to our GSO.

We continue to work on the Internet meetings directory; we had detected some difficulties, but they have been resolved. Zone secretaries can update the times and days of each meeting on this directory, and the GSO manages the changes.

We are working with each zone to strengthen and grow Alateen creating workshops for parents and Sponsors.

This year, we will conduct an awareness campaign on how to welcome newcomers. The campaign is called "Newcomer—Continuity that gives life."

As a project, we want to develop an annual magazine for professionals, following the model of the WSO magazine, *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism*.

In March, we carried out our 43rd Conference Assembly of National Service in Mexico City. There were 37 Delegates and members of the Board of Trustees, Executive Committee, Select Committee Chairpersons, and staff members. For us, the Assembly is the legal body recognized by the state as a Civil Association and each member is an associate. On the other hand, the Conference deals with traditional matters and is governed by the Conference Charter. That is why our Conference is divided into two parts, first we carry out an Assembly and then the Conference, both with the same members. This year, we had a good financial bottom line, which allows us to increase our reserve fund.

This July, we will hold our 8th National Convention in the city of Tepic. We expect around 6,000 attendees. I am honored to be the General Coordinator of this wonderful event. Before the Convention, we will have a gala dinner “In Memory of Lois and Anne,” as well as workshops for Zone Coordinators of Select Committees.

I thank God for the gift of being at this 56th World Service Conference and thank you all for being part of this wonderful experience. I take with me your sharings, your hugs, and your smiles that will strengthen my life.

OPENING DINNER SPEAKER

Connie H., Trustee

Thank you so much to the Conference Leadership Team for inviting me to speak. What an honor to be here with everyone at the start of this exciting week of Al-Anon business and fellowship. The Committee has asked that I share a little bit about myself and also about the various changes I have seen as I served as Delegate and Trustee at the World Service Conference.

My road here is a lot like everyone else's. It was the first thing I thought of when I found out that my husband was an alcoholic. Wait—that is not right! I did not come to these rooms willingly or joyfully. I came because of *him*. I was only going to stay until I could find the courage and finances to kick him out. I am ever so grateful that my Higher Power had more in store for me than I had ever planned for myself.

I started in service because I thought the group needed someone who knew about “business.” I had no time for *those* women who had recipe cards and pictures of grandchildren who just wanted to get their sweet little husbands sober so they could go on with their lovely little lives. I have made amends to all those beautiful women over the course of my time in Al-Anon, but you can see how cold and limited my thinking was. Service became my lifeline, and the only area where I felt like I fit. But, my way of doing service was without emotion and strictly black and white.

Thank goodness for the Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions, and Twelve Concepts because without them I truly believe I would have failed at even the things I thought I knew. There are so many “life answers” in those 36 Legacies, more than I ever would have realized. I am so glad I was given the opportunity to serve as Group Representative (GR) and District Representative (DR). Those positions helped me learn how to listen, and really hear; how to be diplomatic, and yet stand up for my own beliefs; how to be caring, and yet understand that I could only take care of myself. In other words, I began to learn how to use the spiritual principles of our program.

I really grew being a DR. But, oh how I struggled. I constantly questioned the Area officers and especially the Delegate. I could not get it through my head that she might have more information than I had or that she might be more mature in her program than I was. I struggled with the idea of “obedience to the

unenforceable.” For the longest time, I justified my actions stating that I represented the groups, and I had to be their voice since they didn't have one. I tended to forget that they *did* have a voice, their GR. My arrogance stopped me from growing even more when I was given an opportunity to step into an Area position via an appointment by *that* Delegate, and I turned it down because I did not want to be like “them.” Later, at the next election, my Higher Power rescued me as He allowed me to stand for a Coordinator's position. Serving as a Coordinator made me realize I required more maturity. I needed to listen more, shut my mouth, and just be present in the process. I was still missing some spiritual principles.

I also was able to serve as Area Secretary and Alternate Delegate. As Alternate Delegate, I committed myself to just being of service to the current Delegate and giving her the respect she deserved and earned. She served the last year of her term in the final stages of terminal cancer, and I was able to be there for her when she needed me. She gave me the opportunity of being a trusted servant. I did not want to be somewhere else or to be someone else. I learned another principle—to just be of service in the current role I was given.

I was then elected Delegate of Iowa, Panel 45. At that time, I became ill with cancer. God, in His grace, gave me recovery, both physically and spiritually. My priorities also began to change.

My first Conference was in 2005. The theme that year was “Energize Al-Anon; Expand, Explore, Experience.” I had a terrible time remembering that theme. There was still conflict about the Alateen process hanging on, and there was a feeling in the air of a big division between the members of the Conference. The Conference started with the “Clearing the Air” process, which was a way to start the Conference by closing out the past year's questions and concerns. I was coming into a 45-year-old conversation and feeling completely lost. I remember calling my Sponsor and sharing with her that I wanted out of this place. This was too much stress. I couldn't believe how people questioned everything. I was disappointed by the feeling of division, and I could not see how anything would *ever* get done. I found out that everything did get done through long days and long meetings. I am so grateful for the structural changes that have come about over the recent years.

My second year was so different from the first. The 2006 theme was: “Shared Leadership—Moving Forward with Confidence, Collaboration, and Clarity.” Part of the changes were the difference in me and in the process. The Chairperson that year stated, “This year is the beginning of the new model, a new process, which will evolve over time. The goal is to make the quality of the decision more important than who makes it.” The Conference had learned a lot in 2005 about the need to come together and to be as one. We had learned that all of us come to Conference with the thoughts of doing the very best for Al-Anon worldwide and that we needed to learn how to share that love and compassion with each other in appropriate ways. As the *2006 Conference Summary* states (on page 5): “. . . the Board set two goals for itself. One was to have the spiritual tone of the WSC prevail by the demonstration of mutual respect and accountable conduct of its members. The other was to have Conference members understand the purpose of the Conference relationships within the structure and be able to articulate the Conference decisions.” A big change that came from this was the concept of shared leadership.

In 2006, there was a Chair and Co-Chair for every Conference session. The Knowledge-Based Decision-Making (KBDM) process was once again explained to the Conference. It was stressed how important it was for everyone to have all the information they needed for their positions to be able to make the necessary decisions. What a great breath of fresh air this was from my past Conference. I was, and continue to be, motivated about the KBDM process. Although I didn’t quite grasp how it would all work, I knew the change was going to be a big one. I also knew in my heart that we, as a Conference, could not continue the way we had been. We needed to not be stuck in the “small t” traditions of the past and open our minds to where our “capital T” Traditions could take us. We became more aware of the circular flow of communication, allowing information to go all the way around from the groups, districts, Areas, and the World Service Conference. Our world was changing fast, and we needed to be forward thinkers to make certain our program continued to be the go-to place for all those coming behind us.

For my third year of Conference, the theme was “New Thinking—New Energy—Abundant Outlook.” Over the past two years, I had started receiving my correspondence for the Delegates via e-mail and the large brown envelopes had pretty much become a thing of the past. We were thinking of new processes, and we had new energy in looking abundantly at our future. We were working toward not being held back by past mistakes or past constraints, and we were moving forward toward seeing our world, the world of Al-Anon, opening up to several new

ideas and goals. I was much more comfortable in my own skin by my third Conference, and I had several opportunities to be of service during the Conference. There were a couple of times that I probably didn’t follow the “shared leadership” part very well, but my mentors, the Trustees and WSO staff, helped me come back to our purpose with their gentle and instructional guidance. In fact, it was in working with that group of individuals that made me realize that I loved this part of the service arm and would eventually submit my résumé for Trustee.

I cannot share everything with you tonight about all the items/issues that happened over the years I was able to attend the Conference. That is for you to search out and read in the past *World Service Conference Summaries*. They hold a wealth of information and always help you get up to speed when you find you are lost in a conversation. They are also a great place to send your Area members when they have questions about what is going on with “that World Service Conference.”

I would like to close with a little bit on my latest service position. After the required amount of time (two years) had elapsed since serving as Delegate, I put my name forward in a résumé for Trustee at Large. I was so blessed to have been accepted and approved by both the Conference and the Board of Trustees to serve two terms. The time I have spent serving as a Trustee has taken me on a path that has continued to awaken my mind to the spiritual base of our Al-Anon program. I have had the opportunity to work with a very diverse group of like-minded individuals in service. I have loved, stressed over, lost sleep, laughed, and cried over my position as Trustee. I have learned how to keep my mouth shut and watch the process unfold. I have learned how to open my mouth and help the process go forward. I have learned there is a time and place to do each of those things. I have gained immense knowledge about my place in Al-Anon service work and how it changes with each role I take. It is not always my place to be front and center, even though I might think I should be, nor is it always my place to be silent and hidden. But, if my role does take me front and center, then I need to be courageous enough and informed enough to enter the conversation at hand.

All of us are coming together for our 2016 World Service Conference. What a great opportunity to learn where our spiritual principles will take us and to be involved in the future of our wonderful, fantastic program. I hope we all look at it as a blessing and a privilege that not all members get. It is also humbling to remember that the members are looking to us as role models and guides. Let us take care of ourselves, listen, learn, and laugh. It is a life-changing experience that we all have been chosen to receive.

SPIRITUAL SPEAKERS

Jennifer B., Saskatchewan

In Lois W.'s welcome to the 1983 World Service Conference, she said, "Al-Anon is a program of love, and love is the primary motive in all our activities." It is the unconditional love I experienced as a newcomer that kept me coming back and helped me to live out my unique part of our 2016 Conference theme, "Realizing Our Spiritual Potential."

It is impossible for me to fully express the depth of my gratitude for all of the past and present Al-Anon family members who have kept the message of hope alive by realizing their spiritual potential. I firmly believe it is only because of God's grace expressed through the loving members in Al-Anon and the spiritual principles shared in the Legacies that I am still walking the planet today.

Before I came to Al-Anon, peace, serenity, and joy felt beyond my reach. My pain and loneliness were so deep and the darkness was so oppressive that I wanted to just escape it all. I recall going out on my friend's snow covered balcony in minus 30 degrees Celsius temperature and lying in the snow—just wanting to fall asleep and end the pain. I was depressed and suicidal. I felt hopeless and helpless. Thanks to the spiritual principles of the program, I am not that person today.

Al-Anon is a spiritual program of miracles and transformation. I believe in the power of Al-Anon because of the healing and transformation in my own life and the miracles I have witnessed in the lives of others who live the spiritual principles of the Twelve Steps.

One of my first miracles was how I got to my first meeting. I landed at the doors of Al-Anon as a penance, literally. While on a retreat, I went to confession to a priest who happened to be an Al-Anon member. He listened compassionately to me, asked if someone in my family had a drinking problem, and then asked if I would go to an Al-Anon meeting as my penance, and I agreed.

While growing up in an alcoholic home, denial, fear, chaos, and anger reigned most of the time. My childhood home felt like a war zone, and I tried my best to survive. This disease kept me stuck and bound up with fear, anger, and shame. My behaviors and patterns of thinking for survival were lying, judging, obsessing, shutting down, bargaining, and controlling, to name a few.

Surrendering my illusion of control was essential for me to grow spiritually. The Serenity Prayer, which helped me immensely, is my most treasured prayer. When I made my first list of the things I could not change, the column was very short. The list of things I thought I could, should have been able to, and felt responsible to change, though, required my pencil to be sharpened a few times. Over days, months, and years of meetings and reading our literature, the wisdom to know the difference seeped into my understanding to where the few things I can change today have the added phrase, "with God's help." Every time I surrender my will and my life into my Higher Power's care, there is potential for me to grow spiritually.

Supporting and encouraging me to develop a trusting rela-

tionship with my Higher Power is one of the greatest gifts Al-Anon has given to me. My present reality is that my Higher Power is with me always—I am never truly alone.

I used to live from a place of believing I was unlovable and unworthy of care and attention. Because I had been taught that God answered prayers and God did not answer my repeated and desperate pleas for peace in my family, I tried my best to be perfect, hoping to become worthy enough in God's eyes.

I also had a very narrow vision of how to improve my conscious contact with God. My options have expanded to walks in the park, listening, singing and dancing to music, standing in line at a grocery store, and periods of silence in my prayer space. I also admit to sometimes asking God for the winning hand during a competitive card game!

I thank my home group of 25 years for nurturing my ever-widening circles of trust. Trusting God, others, and myself in more situations more of the time has been a slow, intentional process. Overcoming deep-seated childhood fears of rejection, betrayal, failure, and judgement of others involved countless hugs at Al-Anon meetings, cups of tea at coffee shops, phone calls with loving Sponsors, vulnerable sharings in my Fifth Step, daily reading of Conference Approved Literature, and service work in Al-Anon.

I have been married to my husband for ten years. I share a depth of love I could have only dreamed possible before Al-Anon. Slogans such as "Live and Let Live" help me to keep my boundaries in perspective most of the time. Sometimes, I slip in practicing my program with him. Even after 20 years of recovery, I caught myself trying to "encourage" my husband to wear something other than his sweats and a t-shirt out for supper with friends. My husband firmly announced to me that he has been successfully dressing himself for over four decades, and if he needs my help or feedback on his fashion, he will ask for it.

Eight years ago, I needed to trust that God would provide when I let go of a permanent full-time teaching position. My faith perspective had changed, and I could no longer teach with integrity what I was hired to teach. My job was making me ill. My grief took me through an extended period of depression and bargaining with God. Then, I surrendered my feelings of being a failure and my desire for financial stability as one of my highest priorities. That surrendering led me to places I could not have even imagined at the time. If I had still been working in my full-time teaching position, I likely would not have let my name stand to serve as Delegate.

I've learned to live "One Day at a Time" at a different level. Now, as a substitute teacher, I wake up most mornings not knowing if I will be working or which school I'll be at if I get a call. Also, after my husband's stroke three years ago, I've learned to appreciate our marriage and to express my love daily.

This past year, my foundation of trust was rocked significantly a couple of times. It had been a while since I have had my body shake uncontrollably, my teeth chatter so that I could hardly speak, tears overflow, snot bubbles erupt, and my stomach churn nauseously all at the same time. These were like the

“Humpty Dumpty” experiences I feared would happen to me early on in recovery.

It is not a coincidence that these experiences happened while I was connected with longtime Al-Anon members than ever before in my life. I needed to be reminded to honor my fragility in this disease and remember not to become so busy with the business of Al-Anon that I become complacent about practicing the Twelve Steps myself.

To varying degrees, at different stages in my recovery, I have realized and continue to realize my spiritual potential by: seeking spiritual awakenings, rather than dreading imaginary catastrophes; having humility and willingness to learn from all people who have equal dignity; living from a peaceful centre, instead of a place of shame or anxiety in the pit of my gut; discerning whether telling the truth with love or remaining silent is the better choice; extending compassion to people suffering from alcoholism, instead of judging and condemning them as I did before Al-Anon; making amends to those I harm because of my faults; forgiving others, so I don't build shrines of resentments that I previously would polish and dust off; detaching from other people's lives to allow their spiritual paths to unfold; and claiming my freedom to talk, trust, and feel, without worrying what others will think about me.

Al-Anon taught me how to grieve losses in my life, including my loving Sponsor of 20 years. She compassionately helped me cope with other losses, like my dream of being a mother by telling me every Mother's Day, “Jenny, you are one of the most loving mothers I know who never gave birth to a child.” And, when I used to worry about what another person would think about me, she would tell me, “If you really knew how little others spent thinking about you, you wouldn't get so wound up.”

Healing from my grief has definitely increased my capacity for joy from a thimbleful to a vast reservoir. My ability to live the truth of seeming paradoxes has also increased. I know the truth that in order to keep it, I need to give it away—be it love, hope, joy, peace—all of the spiritual gifts that cannot be bought at a store or neatly gift-wrapped in a box. I've also learned that admitting powerlessness can bring strength, and detaching from others can free me to love them more fully.

Because of what I've learned in Al-Anon, I am more willing to live with mystery and the unknown, trusting that I will be led by my Higher Power to use or apply the right Step, slogan, Tradition, Concept, or combination thereof in order to live my life fully through the circumstances that present themselves.

An experience in February revealed that I have grown in responding to challenging situations. While attempting to empty my spam folder, I didn't realize the cursor had moved and I accidentally emptied more than 80 e-mails in my Delegate folder. I hired a computer expert, who sadly told me that they were permanently erased and I could not get them back. It was one of my worst nightmares being realized. I did my best to fulfill my responsibilities as Delegate, with help and patience from some fellow trusted servants and by applying our spiritual principles.

In *First Steps: Al-Anon...35 Years of Beginnings* on page 156, Lois W. is quoted as saying:

“These Al-Anon principles are to live by, not just to wear on Sunday. They are for every day, every week, every year. . .

“ . . . If we live spiritually in our daily life, then we find a deeper fulfillment for ourselves. I don't think there is a spiritual part of the program. I think Al-Anon *is* a spiritual program.”

In a movie, there is a line that asks, “Can our love create miracles?” Whereas the family disease of alcoholism isolates, destroys, and causes suffering and despair, the love in Al-Anon connects, restores, and heals individuals and relationships. Miracles occur daily because of Al-Anon.

Thank you, my Al-Anon family, for freely and generously sharing your love, experience, strength, and hope with me. Al-Anon members loved me before I loved myself. Because of Al-Anon, I have loving, caring and trusting relationships with my Higher Power, my husband, my Sponsor, friends, and family. My life is meaningful today, and I strive to live it with humility, honesty, and integrity. I live with more faith and less fear. And because my heart is filled with gratitude for what I have already received, and you have more of what I desire in my life, I will keep coming back and giving back through service. Until it is time for my ultimate letting go, I will ask for guidance and power to live out God's will for me each day and hope to leave the world a better place for having been a part of it.

Patrick M., Utah

My dear Al-Anon friends, thank you so much for inviting me to be a spiritual speaker this evening. During my preparation, my heart has been filled to capacity with gratitude and love: gratitude for the incredible blessings that have come to me because of Al-Anon and love for members of our fellowship. The trust and support of the Group Representatives who chose me to represent the Utah Area humbles me, and the love extended to me at Conference by fellow Delegates, Trustees, Executive Committee members, and World Service Office staff is overwhelming. Tonight my heart is not only full, but I feel it breaking with joy.

The theme of this year's Conference has been “Realizing Our Spiritual Potential.” I am grateful that we walk the path towards spiritual realization together. I, like many others, first came to Al-Anon seeking relief from the social and emotional pain related to the problem drinking of a loved one. I clearly heard what was offered to me. “The message of the Al-Anon Family Groups . . . is one of hope. It is the story of men, women, and children who once felt helpless, lost, and lonely because of another's alcoholism.” (*Al-Anon and Alateen Groups at Work* [P-24], page 7)

And, I learned that, Al-Anon is a spiritual program based on no particular form of religion. So, with my first Al-Anon meeting, I began a spiritual journey that has brought me to this space, at this time, all of us—together.

Looking back, I can't remember a single discussion with my parents having anything to do with religion or spirituality. My father was a career army officer, who had survived World War II and Korea as a decorated combat soldier, most likely suffering from untreated Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Growing up, I saw him as demanding and impatient, quick to anger, and impossible to please. He was focused on his career, and my mother, my sister, and I understood that protecting his career was the number one priority in our family. My mother had been

a debutante, a society page favorite, and the third of three girls born into a wealthy and very prominent Salt Lake City family. Pampered and without skills, my mother threw her lot in with her soldier husband and, with an ever increasing sense of martyrdom, followed him from posting to posting, throughout the world, dragging her two children along behind.

During my youth, I knew my parents were Mormons, but had no idea what that meant. Later, I realized my parents were members by identification and culture, but outside the actual practice of their religion.

My mom tried hard to be a good mother, just as my dad worked hard to fulfill his role as best he could. And I know now they both loved me very, very much. They protected my sister and me from the hardest knocks of life and taught us survival skills. My dad taught me important lessons about perseverance and generosity. My mom taught me gentleness and courage.

She must have thought that religious education was important because when we were in Salt Lake City, she'd send her children to church with the cousins, and every summer, no matter where we lived, she enrolled us in vacation Bible school. She'd make sure that Dad dropped us off at the base chapel or a corner church every Sunday morning (any church would do). This was good for me. I made friends, had role models, and learned Bible stories. Unfortunately, time and time again, just as the lonely feeling of being an outsider would begin to slip away, my dad would be reassigned and we'd move again. Mom taught my sister and me to never look back. She taught us to always look forward, something new was waiting. She also said, "Don't get too attached there either, because another move was always just over the horizon." I think these experiences set me on a path of spiritual seeking and in some way, must have prepared me to recognize the priceless spiritual gifts that Al-Anon offers.

While I have no recollection of spiritual matters being discussed in my childhood homes, I have very clear memories related to my parents' drinking. I remember a December evening in 1954. We were living in army housing in Germany. Not quite ten years since the end of WWII, it was an incredible place for a boy my age to live. Still standing, the skeletons of bombed out buildings could be seen everywhere, and in the woods behind our apartment building, there were huge craters, perfect for boyhood games. On that December evening, my parents were leaving to go to a Christmas party. My dad looked resplendent in his dress uniform, and my mom beautiful in a lovely evening gown. Looking out through the window, I watched them climb into their car. It was snowing and the streetlights cast a warm glow through the falling flakes. And, I was terrified. I knew there would be drinking at the party. I feared my dad would get drunk and have an accident coming home. I became convinced I'd never see them again. I wondered what would become of my sister and me. I was nine years old.

Just a few years later, we were living in off-base housing in Lawton, Oklahoma. My parents were throwing a big party; there were a lot of people. They were noisy and seemed happy, everyone was drinking, including my mom. Then, she stumbled and fell onto the glass coffee table. It shattered beneath her. Shards of glass cut deeply into her leg, and I saw a lot of blood. "Call an ambulance," I screamed. My dad grabbed me by the arm, told

me to settle down, and go to my room. I remember the smell of the whiskey he'd been drinking. He pulled my mom to her feet, took her into the kitchen, and patched her up with gauze and white tape. Maybe she wasn't hurt as badly as I thought. I was 11 years old.

When I was a teenager, I'd wrap my pillow around my head to try and muffle the sound of the nightly drunken battles. There are other stories, some much worse. You can hear them at any A.A. or Al-Anon meeting. They may be from different lips, but the stories are the same.

Eventually, my father stopped drinking, but other behaviors did not stop. It happened this way: one day, in the summer of 1962, he returned early from maneuvers with his unit. Somehow, I got the message that he'd had a heart attack. He went into the hospital for a month and after he returned home, both he and my mother just stopped drinking. It wasn't until after he died, 13 years later, that I learned there had never been a heart attack. Actually, he'd been found drunk and asleep in the back of his vehicle, while on duty. Although stripped of his command, the Army gave him a second chance, sending him to rehab, but the career we had all worked so hard to protect was over.

As I lived those stories, I made decisions about my reality and how the world works. I learned that it was important to try to be a protector and a keeper of secrets. I learned it was important to look brave and strong, even when lonely and terrified. I never gave up trying to please my father. For years, I sought God's help, hoping and praying for a miracle, like those in the Bible stories, which might make me feel better.

After my father left the Army and we settled in the Northwest, I embraced the religion of my parents, but unlike them, I threw myself into it completely. After high school, I left home to attend Brigham Young University (BYU), went on a Mormon mission, returned to BYU, graduated, met and married a beautiful Mormon girl, and began a family of my own. On the outside, I appeared happy and stable, but on the inside, I was always doubtful and frightened. But I told no one of my fears. I led a double life.

My life began to unravel when, shortly after the birth of my fifth child, my wife suffered a psychotic breakdown with intense religious overtones. It was devastating. For anyone having to deal with mental illness, the road is difficult. For someone with issues of image, loneliness, and lack of worth, it can be overwhelming. I could not understand why this was happening. Were we not living our religion, doing everything asked of us? Why would God allow this to happen to us? Why would God not take it away? Why would God not give me the strength to find peace in the midst of this?

Over the course of the next decade, I realized that to continue to ask these questions would only make me crazy and that I could not pretend to be emotionally healthy and happy when I was not. I rejected my religion, turned my back on my wife and family, and sank into depression and despair. I was alone and consumed with loneliness. I was unworthy of God and God's blessings. I sought solace when I could find it, but the solace I found was shallow and temporary. The words of a favorite Mormon hymn, "Where can I turn for peace? Where is my solace?"

left me empty, because I could not find the answer.

And then, when my life was at its worst, I found Al-Anon. The wonderful women and men of this fellowship welcomed me, gently and lovingly, with open arms. They taught me that I, and I alone, am responsible for my recovery, but they offered freely the tools I would need. They taught me to keep an open mind and to adjust my focus. "Start with gratitude," they said, so I did. And I've found so much for which to be grateful. They taught me that a demanding and impatient father does not necessarily represent a picture of what God is like. They taught me that happiness and stability does not need to be an act and that loneliness and fear can be tamed. They taught me to work the Steps and to be of service, and most importantly to love myself. Because of them, I set my feet upon a new spiritual path.

So, here I stand before you tonight, at the pinnacle of my spiritual development. I stand here with you, humbled to say that I have found a new spiritual way that fills me with joy and gratitude and gives me peace. I no longer seek God. On my new spiritual path, I sit quietly in meditation and gently seek to be ready when God finds me. I open my heart with joyful chanting that often brings me to tears. I seek to be mindfully aware of every experience, every moment of every day.

I've spent much of my life hoping to find God. Today, I realize that He is with me, every moment, available to be seen, if I just quiet my mind and open my eyes. He is in every blade of grass, in the waves of the ocean, and in the sunshine that falls on my shoulder. She is in this room tonight, sitting at every table, looking at me with eyes of love and acceptance. Today, I find the God of my understanding in the gentle unfolding of every moment of every day. God is the path of my life.

Because of Al-Anon, I've found the answer to my hymn's questions. And tonight, I offer great gratitude that, because of this wonderful fellowship, I am filled with serenity and inner peace and, no longer terrified, I am ". . . free to delight in life's paradox, mystery, and awe." (*From Survival to Recovery* [B-21])

CLOSING SESSION

The 2016 World Service Conference theme, “Realizing Our Spiritual Potential,” provided a goal for the week. On the last day of the Conference, the Chairperson of the Board shared some thoughts and observations on the Conference theme.

“On the first day of the Conference, I shared that my Higher Power recognized my spiritual potential long before I did. He surrounded me with people who encouraged and supported me because they had vision.

Paula B.

Chairperson, Board of Trustees

Tina B.

Trustee, Conference Chairperson

“This week we exercised our ‘Duty of Care’ that I noted in the Annual Report in that we:

- Exercised ordinary and reasonable care in performance of duties.
- Exhibited honesty and good faith.
- Made decisions based on information, not opinion.
- Acted in the best interest of the fellowship.
- Were knowledgeable about the fellowship.
- Showed up and asked questions.

“We recognized the miracle in action because miracles happen all the time. Together, we supported each other as leaders in worldwide service to Al-Anon and Alateen. I look forward to the future and continuing this journey in recovery and service.”

The Conference Chairperson commented, “We have done our job beautifully. We have courageously realized a new level of our spiritual potential. I heard you share it. Let us applaud us. I trust you will carry the information forward and share with your Areas.”

Several Conference members shared their reflections throughout the Conference:

- I heard “threads” running through the Conference: Alateens are interested in people, not technology; older members stay home and don’t drive—look to the future and build that in; contributions; registration of on-line meetings—is it time to support the World Service Office (WSO) by being “part of” with financial contributions?
- There have been a handful of times in my life when it has changed in a split second. When I heard a Conference member share about a sponsee with tattoos during the Task Force: Acceptance of Communities, Cultures, and Beliefs presentation, in that moment, I understood my granddaughter.
- As a Board member, we have lengthy discussions and vote on things. It is my duty to carry that information and reflect the Board decisions and not bring my opinion into it. It is my duty to carry the message of what the Conference decided and bring the points of view that were discussed. That is our responsibility as members of this body.
- I was quiet the first year. Today, my comfort level is beyond imagination. Until I got here, I had conversations with new Conference members, but hadn’t seen their faces. This is priceless. Thanks to the Conference Leadership Team (CLT) for my role.
- I am sometimes challenged by humor, and I don’t use it often enough. The God of my understanding gave me what I needed to get through the week.
- Diversity does not mean conformity. We can accept changes without leveling everything out until it means nothing.
- It is a blessing to be part of an organization where we have a voice.
- I will serve a 65th Anniversary cake while I am giving my financial report!
- I will never again use the term “service work.” It will be “service opportunities” or “to be of service.”

Following the closing dinner, scroll presentations to Panel 54 Delegates and other outgoing Conference members, and the Spiritual Speakers, with a tap of the gavel, the Conference Chairperson brought the 2016 World Service Conference to a close.

FLOOR DISCUSSION

Delegate Initiated Request

A request was brought by Delegates who asked that the Chairperson of the 2016 World Service Conference (WSC) appoint a Thought Force to consider ways in which Delegates can be actively and directly involved in developing the agenda for the Conference.

The Conference Chairperson shared about how the Conference agenda is formed and how the Conference Leadership Team works. The Conference agenda is a big project. It is created by feedback from the Conference evaluations, by the quarterly calls to the Delegates by their assigned Trustees, and through submissions of Chosen Agenda Items topics. Any Delegate or AI-Anon member can make a request to the Board of Trustees and Conference Leadership Team (CLT) to be put on the agenda. The WSO, and Thought and Task Forces all use the same process for requesting time on the agenda from the CLT. The World Service Conference is the body that requests a Thought Force or Task Force. The CLT meets a minimum of once a month and during Board weeks. The Conference Leadership Team is finished at the end of the World Service Conference and a new one is created for the next year's Conference. To create a Thought Force as requested needs a charge, background, Knowledge-Based Decision-Making process, history, a Chairperson, and members.

Concept Six says that the Conference is the primary administrative responsibility of the Trustees. However, the Board does not plan the agenda. Thought Forces, Task Forces, and Committees put in requests for what they want and they try to do it early. The CLT plans the agenda and runs the Conference. All Conference members including the Board and WSO staff have to follow the same process and procedure to request of the CLT time on the agenda.

Some Delegates expressed satisfaction with the agenda and felt a part of the Conference. They felt they had a big role and responsibility to communicate their ideas and concerns, to be open and ask for help through their assigned Trustee, to submit questions for the Chosen Agenda Items segment, to serve on Task Forces and selected Committees, to participate in Sharing Area Highlights which is only Delegate participation, and to report back to their Areas the discussions, decisions, and new ideas.

A Delegate clarified that the request was not intended to be divisive, but to give Delegates an opportunity to think bigger, and contribute more.

Since this was a request, Conference members were asked if they would like the Board to consider putting together a Thought Force. There was a consensus that the request be taken back to the Board to consider creating a Thought Force.

2016 WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE MOTIONS

MOTION #1 – CARRIED (BY CONSENSUS)

That the following persons be seated at the 2016 World Service Conference.

With voice, but no vote:

David Zach
Director of Business Services
Non-Al-Anon Member

Lourdes Maria C.
International Representative—Mexico
Al-Anon Member

With voice limited to Executive Committee for Real Property Management (ECRPM) business, but no vote:

Carrie K.
Chairperson, ECRPM
Al-Anon Member

With voice limited to the Alateen Survey presentation, but no vote:

Pamela Walters
Marketing Information Analyst
Non-Al-Anon Member

That the following World Service Office staff members be seated as part of their ongoing training at the 2016 World Service Conference as designated, **with no voice and no vote:**

All days

Corrine O.
Associate Director of Member Services—Groups
(in training)
Al-Anon Member

Tuesday, April 12, 2016

Sergio Z.
Group Services Assistant II—Alateen (Spanish)
Al-Anon Member

Wednesday, April 13, 2016

Joe T.
Archives Coordinator
Al-Anon Member

Colette Norman
Language Services Coordinator (French)
Non-Al-Anon Member

Wednesday, April 13 and Thursday, April 14, 2016

Ken Pearl
Controller
Non-Al-Anon Member

Thursday, April 14, 2016

Sharon B.
Group Services Assistant II
Al-Anon Member

Valerie Stump
Group Records Coordinator (French)
Non-Al-Anon Member

MOTION #2 – CARRIED (92 yes, 0 no, 0 abstentions, 0 void)

To amend the descriptive text of Concept Eleven on pages 207-214 in the *2014-2017 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27), Al-Anon's Twelve Concepts of Service section as follows:

(Strikethrough indicates deletion; bold and underlined indicates new text; moved text is only underlined)

Concept Eleven

The World Service Office is composed of selected committees, executives, and staff members.

While the Trustees hold final responsibility for Al-Anon's world service administration, they should always have the assistance of the best possible committees, executives, staff, and consultants. This means careful consideration of these committees, the personal qualifications of their members, the manner of their induction into service, the way in which they relate to each other, and the special rights and duties of our executives, staff, and consultants.

The long-range success of our World Service Office (WSO) will rest not only on the capabilities of the Trustees but also upon the competent leadership and harmonious association of those ~~nonTrustee~~ committee members, service directors, executives, and staff members who actively carry on Al-Anon's world services. Their quality and dedication, or their lack of these characteristics, will make or break our structure of service. Our dependence on them will always be great.

Staff members are in direct contact with Al-Anon worldwide through correspondence and/or travel. Their performance is constantly on view by visitors to the WSO. They perform most of the routine tasks and carry on most of our services. They often develop and implement new plans and policies. Because this group is the visible image of world service, most Al-Anons **members** evaluate our service by what they see and feel in them. These ~~servants~~ **staff members** not only support the world leadership of the Trustees, they share world leadership with them.

With the approval of the Board of Trustees, its Chairperson annually appoints committee Chairpersons. The committee Chairpersons, in consultation with staff liaisons, select the at large or advisory members who are then approved by the Board. The Chairperson of the Board and the Executive Director are ex officio members of each committee. Staff members are represented on each committee. Conference Delegates also serve on a number of these committees.

Selected Committees:

- Admissions/Handbook**
- Alateen Advisory
- Archives Advisory**
- ~~Canadian Public Outreach~~
- Conference **Leadership Team (formerly Conference**)**
- Conference Committee on Trustees (CCT)
- Finance*
- Forum Editorial Advisory
- Group Services**
- International Coordination
- Literature
- Nominating *
- Outreach to Professionals Advisory**
- Policy *
- Public Outreach
- **Regional Committee on Trustees (RCT)**
- Regional Service Seminar**

None of these service committees are executive in character. They do not manage or conduct the active affairs of the service departments.

~~The Admissions/Handbook**, Canadian Public Outreach, and Conference Committee on Trustees are subcommittees of the Conference, Public Outreach, and Nominating Committees, respectively.~~

The Admissions/Handbook is a subcommittee of the Conference Committee**. Conference Committee on Trustees and Regional Committee on Trustees are subcommittees of the Nominating Committee.** Advisory committees and subcommittees make recommendations to their parent committees. Other committees make recommendations to the Executive Committee or to the Board of Trustees. From time to time, ad hoc committees and/or task forces may be established to fulfill a specific, limited purpose. Ad hoc committees and task forces report to the entity which appointed them.

Policy Committee: This is perhaps the most important of all the World Service Office (WSO) committees. It can exercise authority over issues or projects that involve Al-Anon policy, public relations, or the Traditions, as these may arise in other WSO committees. It is empowered to consider any issues or projects submitted by an Al-Anon member, or to reconsider a decision already made if any part of the fellowship dissents.

The Policy Committee makes recommendations to the Board of Trustees and also reports minority views. In an emergency, when immediate action is necessary, its decision is binding so far as that particular incident is concerned. But this decision does not necessarily become part of the overall policy, unless approved by the Board of Trustees and the World Service Conference. [See Appendix for A.A.'s General Policy Committee.]

The Policy Committee is composed of a Chairperson, all members of the Board of Trustees, members of the Executive Committee, ~~the Chairpersons of all WSO committees*~~, and the Conference members of the WSO administrative staff. It meets quarterly in advance of the Trustees' meeting.

Finance Committee: The primary function of this Committee is to see that our World Service Office (WSO) operation remains financially sound, always aligning the use of our money with the spiritual principles of our program.

This Committee conservatively estimates each year's income. It develops plans for increasing our revenues and keeps a watchful eye on expenditures. It scrutinizes the annual budgets of estimated income and expense submitted by the WSO, and makes revisions when necessary. **The Committee also sets literature pricing in a way that adequately supports the needs of the service structure.**

This Committee may be compelled to risk temporary deficits. However, uncontrolled spending could result in the collapse of vital services. On the other hand, fearful hoarding could result in the severe curtailment of such services. Both should be guarded against with great care.

When appropriate, the Finance Committee recommends that the Board of Trustees set aside sums in ~~our~~ **the** Reserve Fund (Warranty One) with the assurance of the immediate availability of those funds.

This Committee is composed of a Chairperson (Treasurer of the Board of Trustees), the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees, the Chairperson of the Executive Committee, the Executive Director, and a volunteer member of either the Board of Trustees or the Executive Committee. This volunteer member is appointed by the Chairperson of the Board and approved by the Trustees each year at the Annual Meeting.

The Director of Business Services is an ex officio member of the Committee.

Nominating Committee: This Committee aids the Trustees in discharging their prime obligation to see that all vacancies within the Board of Trustees or its Executive Committees are filled with those of the greatest possible competence, stability, and industry.

This Committee makes recommendations that will determine, to a large extent, the continuous success of our services.

In making its recommendations for Trustee at Large **and Regional Trustee candidates, the Nominating Committee** it evaluates and reviews the written input of each member of the Conference Committee on Trustees **and the Regional Committee on Trustees** as part of its careful deliberation.

The Nominating Committee refuses to accept casual recommendations in its selection of candidates for Trustee at Large, **Regional Trustee**, and at-large members of the Executive Committees (**see also Concept 8**).

Conference Committee on Trustees: In 1984, the Conference Committee on Trustees (CCT) was formed. The CCT, a subcommittee of the Board's Nominating Committee, is composed of World Service Conference Delegates and elects its own Chairperson annually.

The members of the CCT independently review and evaluate resumes submitted for Trustee at Large **openings and resumes for at large members of the Executive Committee for Real Property Management**. A compilation of their reviews is provided to the Nominating Committee to assist it in the selection of candidates to be presented to the Board.

Regional Committee on Trustees:

The process for the election of Regional Trustees, accepted by the 2010 WSC, includes the formation of a Regional Committee on Trustees (RCT) for each of those regions nominating a Regional Trustee in that year. The RCT is a subcommittee of the Board's Nominating Committee, and is composed of all World Service Delegates from that region plus additional Delegate(s) from outside the region. Each RCT elects its own Chairperson.

The members of each RCT independently review and evaluate resumes submitted by Areas, within that region, for candidates for Regional Trustee. A compilation of their reviews is provided to the Nominating Committee.

International Coordination Committee: In 1978, the International Coordination Committee (ICC) was formed as an avenue of communication to support the international growth **and to perpetuate world-wide unity** of Al-Anon and Alateen.

The ICC; ~~is an advisory committee to the Board of Trustees; works to perpetuate worldwide unity.~~ The Committee coordinates the International Al-Anon General Services Meeting (IAGSM) and reviews the activities of the World Service Office (WSO) as they relate to those individuals, groups, and service arms outside the areas served by the World Service Conference (WSC) structure. It also considers first-time requests for permission to reprint Conference Approved Literature (CAL) outside the WSC structure.

The ICC provides guidance to groups worldwide as they endeavor to form General Service Office structures within their own countries.

Conference Committee **Leadership Team (Conference):** The Conference ~~Committee~~ **Leadership Team** has the responsibility to prepare a World Service Conference agenda that facilitates the active voice and effective group conscience of our fellowship.

To foster communication regarding the work of the Conference, Conference **summaries are available to all members** and groups receive a summary of the Conference sessions.

Admissions/Handbook Committee~~**~~: The Admissions/Handbook Committee~~**~~ is a subcommittee of the Conference Committee~~**~~. The Committee reviews and recommends requests for seating non-voting participants at the World Service Conference (WSC). It determines if an Area meets the criteria for seating at the WSC and reviews requests for an Area name change. It makes recommendations for changes in the World Service Handbook section of the Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual.

Archives Advisory Committee~~**~~: This Committee is concerned with preserving and organizing historical Al-Anon/Alateen material. It recommends to the Executive Committee current preservation and archival record management techniques to further the ongoing maintenance of those materials. It also acts in an advisory capacity to the World Service Office (WSO) in making the archives available to the staff, volunteers, membership, and researchers.

Forum Editorial Advisory Committee: This Committee selects sharings suitable for publication, and through a process of review and assessment, recommends to the editorial staff

articles for inclusion in various sections of the magazine. The Committee critiques previous issues. In reporting to the Executive Committee, it suggests reader surveys, reviews proposed survey text, and considers the results.

Group Services Committee~~**~~: In 1996, this Committee was created to respond to the needs expressed by our fellowship as a whole. The Delegate Committee members bring the shared experience of their Areas so that the Committee can offer recommendations to the World Service Office (WSO) on how to best serve the membership.

Alateen Advisory Committee: The Alateen Committee was restructured as an advisory committee to the Group Services Committee. This Committee identifies and articulates the needs of teenage members of the fellowship to assure that Alateen interests are considered in Group Services Committee decisions and activities. This Committee is composed of members of both Al-Anon and Alateen.

~~The Literature Committees: These Committees are responsible for all Conference Approved Literature (CAL). They create material to meet new needs or changing conditions. They are also charged with the revision of existing books and pamphlets. Broadly speaking, their mission is to see that every aspect of the Al-Anon program of recovery is presented in comprehensive written material for our members, friends, and the world at large.~~

This Committee is responsible for all Conference Approved Literature (CAL) and its mission is to see that every aspect of the Al-Anon program of recovery is presented in comprehensive written material for our members, friends, and the world at large. The Committee suggests creation of material to meet new needs or changing conditions and is charged with the revision of existing books and pamphlets.

Our literature is a principal means for facilitating Al-Anon growth, unity, and service. The influence of the many thousand books and pamphlets ~~shipped~~ **distributed** each year is incalculable. **For these reasons Al-Anon's policy is to produce only high-quality literature.**

~~Our policy is to aim at only the best. Cheap-looking, cheap-selling, and poorly conceived literature is not in Al-Anon's best interest.~~

Public Outreach Committee: This Committee is the umbrella under which we try to reach families and friends of alcoholics and professionals who work with them, through a variety of media and communication vehicles.

The Committee assists in the development of educational tools for our members to use with a variety of outside audiences to inform them of what Al-Anon/Alateen is and how it can be an effective resource for families and friends of alcoholics, and attract new members to our fellowship without compromising our Traditions.

~~Canadian Public Outreach Subcommittee: In 1979, the World Service Conference (WSC) established an ad hoc committee under the Board of Trustees to provide a channel through which federal and national Canadian bodies could be reached. It became known as National Public Information Canada (NPIC). In 2002, NPIC became a subcommittee of the Public Outreach Committee, and later its name was changed to Cana-~~

dian Public Outreach Subcommittee to better reflect its objectives. Its purpose is to assure that Canadian interests are considered in all Public Outreach Committee decisions and activities.

Outreach to Professionals Advisory Committee:** The Cooperating with the Professional Community (CPC) Committee was restructured as an advisory committee to the Public Outreach Committee. The work of outreach to facilities and institutions was also delegated to this Committee.

This Committee follows Bill W.'s suggestion of being friendly with our friends, the professionals. The broad objective of the Committee is to make Al-Anon/Alateen's purpose better known to professionals at a national level.

The Committee works to improve cooperation between Al-Anon and the professional community, institutions, and organizations at a national level by providing information about who we are, what we are, where we are, and how we can cooperate with them.

Regional Service Seminar Committee***: This Committee shares ideas from region to region and recommends ways to make the Regional Service Seminars more effective.

Executives

Any active service, to function well, must be managed by a competent Executive. It must always be directed by one person, supported by such staff as needed. This function must be delegated to an individual with ample freedom and authority to do the job without interference, so long as the work is done well.

Good executives possess a special combination of abilities, one of which is the ability to lead by example, thus securing willing cooperation. If that cooperation is lacking, action must be readily taken without favor or partiality. An executive is often the one who takes the initiative in planning. When making new plans and putting them into operation, consultation must be held with those whose experience and wisdom are actually or officially required.

A good executive knows when to ask for specific definitions and directions and when to make decisions. This choice is structurally guaranteed by Concept Three (Right of Decision). If there is an error in judgment or if authority is exceeded, the decision can be reviewed.

Staff Members

Certain key people at the World Service Office (WSO) must be Al-Anon members. Some of these key paid personnel have a vote on our Committees and Corporate Boards. It is not a requirement that clerical staff be Al-Anon members. It is important that all be treated fairly. As in the management of any business, the prime consideration is getting the job done well.

~~In our Al-Anon structure of service,~~ At our World Service Office we treat our paid workers in all respects as we do our volunteers. Our employees are part of the team. The fact that our employees receive a salary from the WSO should never, consciously or unconsciously, be used as a lever against them. To do so would be neither good spiritual practice nor good business. When we can afford it, every employee should be compensated in relation to those offering similar services and abilities in comparable not-for-profit organizations

No organizational structure can fully guarantee the WSO against the possible damage done by clashing personalities. If, however, they our paid staff cannot or will not do their jobs, we can and should let them go.

By our sustained willingness to practice spiritual principles in all our affairs we can realize these ideals.

* Committees having permanent status, ~~often~~ sometimes referred to as standing committees.

**This Committee is no longer used in World Service Conference structure however the Committee may be functioning in worldwide General Service Offices or evolving structures that look to the WSC for guidance.

MOTION #3 – CARRIED

(85 yes, 2 no, 0 abstentions, 5 void)

To approve the 2015 Audited Financial Report.

MOTION #4 – CARRIED

(84 yes, 5 no, 1 abstentions, 2 void)

To amend the text on page 95 of the "Financial Matters" section, "Memorial Contributions" in the "Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies" section of the *2014-2017 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27) as follows:

(Strikethrough indicates deletion; bold and underlined indicates new text; moved text is only underlined)

Memorial Contributions

Any Al-Anon or Alateen member may make contributions to the WSO in memory of anyone who is deceased. (Contact the WSO for details.)

The World Service Office accepts contributions in memory of deceased Al-Anon members from "family" who are not Al-Anon members. The Fellowship recognizes that accepting such contributions can give comfort to families as described in Tradition Five.

The World Service Conference defines family as anyone who has a close relationship of loving care and concern for another. The individual donor defines his or her relationship to the deceased Al-Anon member.

This one-time gift of gratitude is limited to an amount no greater than \$500. Memorial contributions by non-members are not solicited.

MOTION #5 – CARRIED

(80 yes, 9 no, 3 abstentions, 0 void)

To approve the 2016 Finance Committee Report.

MOTION #6 – CARRIED

(90 yes, 1 no, 0 abstentions, 1 void)

To approve the 2015 Annual Report.

2015
ANNUAL REPORT
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

ADMINISTRATION

Ric B., Executive Director

OVERALL ADMINISTRATION

The Board of Trustees of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. (AFG, Inc.) meets quarterly and is responsible for carrying out the mandates of the World Service Conference (WSC), establishing business policies of the World Service Office (WSO), estimating revenue, administering services to the membership, publishing and distributing Conference Approved Literature (CAL), and approving the annual reports submitted by the Executive Director and WSO staff.

The Executive Committee meets monthly and is empowered to act on behalf of the Trustees between Board meetings. It has legal authority bestowed by the Board of Trustees to have oversight of day-to-day affairs of the WSO, and receives monthly service updates from the Directors and the Executive Director.

AFG, Inc. is a not-for-profit organization, listed under Section 501 (c) (3) of the United States (U.S.) Internal Revenue Code, and has been incorporated in New York State since 1954. Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters (Canada) Inc. was incorporated in February 1999 under the *Canadian Corporations Act* and has since continued under the *Canada Not-for-Profit Corporations Act*. It is a registered charity under paragraph 149 (1) of the Income Tax Act of Canada.

The Executive Director is responsible for overall supervision of the WSO staff (currently an average of 42 full-time employees with three vacant positions) and for administration of the organization's policies. In the absence of the Executive Director, the Director serving on the Executive Committee, currently the Director of Member Services, or the Executive Director's designee, acts in his stead. An Administrative Team (the three Directors and the Controller) oversees office-wide projects, reviews resource allocations, and serves as a resource to the Executive Director. The Director of Business Services is directly responsible for business operations and controlling finances.

AFG, Inc. is committed to equal employment opportunity and is in compliance with applicable federal, state, and local fair employment laws and guidelines. AFG, Inc. does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, age, religion, national origin, or disability status. Every effort is made to maintain a work atmosphere that is free from harassment.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Paula B., Chairperson

The Trustees, along with members of the Executive Committee, direct business operations of the World Service Office, observing the By-Laws of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. The Board acts as the chief service arm of the World Service Conference as it guards the legal rights of the Al-Anon fellowship and controls the finances. The Board serves as guardian of our Twelve Traditions, our Twelve Concepts of Service, and the Conference Charter.

In 2015 the Board of Trustees adopted the following Board Strategic Plan Goal:

The AFG, Inc. Board of Trustees will raise the fellowship's awareness of the Trustees' relationship to the Al-Anon groups and WSC, while articulating and expressing the "why" of the Board's work.

To aid in members' better understanding the actions and duties of the Board of Trustees, it is important to know that Trustees, Executive Committee members, and employed staff have a fiduciary duty to the organization of AFG, Inc., including duties of Care, Loyalty, and Obedience. In short, this means they are required to act reasonably, prudently, and in the best interests of the organization, to avoid negligence and fraud, and to avoid conflicts of interest.

Duty of Care

- Exercise ordinary and reasonable care in performance of duties
- Exhibit honesty and good faith
- Make decisions based on information not opinion
- Act in the best interest of the fellowship
- Listen to experts, if needed
- Be knowledgeable about fellowship
- Show up and ask questions

Duty of Loyalty

- Undivided commitment to the fellowship
- Faithfulness
- Obligation to be accountable
- Interest of AFG as a whole, not as region or group
- Supportive of any group conscience decision, despite personal opinions

Duty of Obedience (adherence to)

- Laws and regulations
- Financial responsibilities
- Legal issues
- Articles of Incorporation
- Bylaws

The Board approved Interim Actions of the Executive Committee:

- To approve providing Al-Anon service arms with a selection of 20 brief quotations in all three languages from Conference Approved Literature, which they could select from for use in 2016 calendars without completing the currently required reprint permission request form; thus ending the trial offering Conference Approved Literature quotations in Al-Anon calendars, and including this as an ongoing project.

- To approve At-Large members for the Literature Committee, Alateen Work Group, Audit Committee, Public Outreach Committee, and *Forum* Editorial Advisory Committee.
- To approve the Alateen Work Group creating two Thought Forces, one of which will consist of Al-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service (AMIAS) and one of which will consist of Alateens, to develop strategies for encouraging teens to use the new chat room platform.
- To authorize electronic distribution of *The Forum* on a month by month basis and set the cost at \$1.49 (US) per issue.
- To approve one staff and one Trustee travel to Lisbon, Portugal; Barcelona, Spain; Paris, France; and to attend the 2015 European Zonal Meeting (EZM) in Brugge, Belgium.
- To accept revised guidelines for the Conference Committee on Trustees (CCT), Finance Committee, and the Strategic Planning Oversight Work Group.
- To approve staff travel for expansion of outreach to professionals, including Canadian national mental and behavioral health and substance abuse organizations and government agencies in Ottawa, ON, October 5-8, 2015.
- To approve offering an audio version of *Courage to Change—One Day at a Time in Al-Anon II* (B-16), as a downloadable audio file, in cooperation with third party vendors, at the price of \$24.99 (US).
- To approve travel and related expenses to Managua, Nicaragua for one World Service Office Board of Trustees member and one World Service Office staff person to attend the 2015 Central American Zonal Meeting.
- To approve travel and related expenses for one World Service Office Board of Trustees member and one World Service Office staff person to attend the 2015 Ibero-American Zonal Meeting in Asuncion, Paraguay.

The Board, in its legal and financial capacity, took the following actions:

- At the Annual Meeting:
 - ✓ To approve the 2014 Annual Report
 - ✓ To approve the 2014 Auditor's Report
 - ✓ To accept the recommendations of the Audit Committee to accept the Dixon Hughes Goodman audit firm and letter of engagement for audit services for the financial year ending December 31, 2015
 - ✓ To approve the 2015 World Service Conference Motions
 - ✓ To elect four Trustee at Large (TAL) nominees, elect three Regional Trustee (RT) nominees, elect the At-Large member of the Executive Committee for Real Property Management (ECRPM) as well as Board Officers, Executive Committee At-Large members, and the Chairpersons of the Executive Committee and ECRPM
 - ✓ To approve the Committee Chairperson appointments for 2015-2016

- ✓ To adopt the banking resolution for the Al-Anon Family Groups Headquarters, Inc.
- To approve the revised 2015 Budget
- To accept the revised Investment Guidelines and reaffirm the Investment Philosophy
- To approve that the equalized expense for the 2016 World Service Conference be \$1,297.00 U.S. The full cost for a Delegate to attend the 2016 World Service Conference is \$1965.00 U.S.
- To approve the equalized expense for the 2016 International Al-Anon General Services Meeting (IAGSM) to be held in Rome, Italy be \$1,229.00 U.S. per Delegate and the full cost for a Delegate to attend the meeting is \$1, 446.00 U.S.
- To offer in 2016 a one-time scholarship of \$1,000 (U.S.) funded from the Reserve Fund for each structure that didn't attend the last two IAGSMs and to offer an equalized expense incentive to structures that send two Delegates to the 2016 IAGSM as long as they share a room
- To accept a Trustee's resignation from the Board of Trustees
- To accept the revised Travel Reimbursement Policy
- To solicit résumés for the ECRPM with a deadline of November 30th

The Board, in its oversight capacity, took the following actions:

- To accept the nine month timeline and the Search Committee Process and Procedure presented by the Task Force on Succession Planning for the Director of Business Services
- To accept the Position Description, Position Qualifications, and timeline presented by the Task Force on Succession Planning for the Executive Director
- To add a column to the Thought and Task Forces Evaluation Forms to indicate whether the work connects or adds value to the Strategic Plan
- To have the World Service Conference presentations indexed by topic for a rotating period of five years, with a note to consult the current *Service Manual* to ensure accuracy of terminology and policies
- To place the definition of recovery in the section dedicated for professionals on the Public Outreach Web site, until there is a plan to announce it in other media
- To approve clarifications to the Regional Committee on Trustees Plan
- To approve the 2015 World Service Conference Agenda Topics
- To approve the 2016 World Service Conference theme as follows:
 - “Realizing Our Spiritual Potential”
- To approve the 2016 IAGSM Theme as follows:
 - “Sharing Worldwide Diversity – Strengthening Our Growth”
- To continue the current Alateen Work Group trial based on an annual review.

Strategic Planning, Board of Trustees

Strategic planning for Al-Anon began in the 1990's. The Strategic Plan is connected to the Vision and Mission, and is the plan for how the Vision and Mission will be carried out.

The current Strategic Plan of the Board of Trustees of AFG, Inc. is:

BOARD VISION STATEMENT

All people affected by someone else's drinking will find help and recovery in every community.

BOARD MISSION STATEMENT

Anticipate the future and Al-Anon's place in it and ensure that the necessary resources are available.

STRATEGIC PLAN PRIORITIES

Al-Anon's spiritual principles permeate our policies and practices; we apply emerging technology and communication options:

- To increase the visibility of Al-Anon so that it is recognized as the number one resource throughout the world for helping friends and families of problem drinkers.
- To empower the Al-Anon fellowship to be vibrant, inclusive and flexible.
- To achieve a viable future for Al-Anon Family Groups, the Board will be adaptive and strategic in its use of talents, skills, and abilities.

The Board of Trustees (BOT) strives to have our work focused on 80 percent forward thinking toward Al-Anon's future. Moving into 2015, the Board continued discussion and brainstorming related to potential goals that would fit under the Strategic Plan third priority. The Strategic Plan utilizes a fifteen month timeline. In the timeline, a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analysis is scheduled. The Board voted to suspend the 2015 analysis in order to focus on forming a goal and objectives for the Strategic Plan Priority Three. The new goal is:

The AFG, Inc. Board of Trustees will raise the fellowship's awareness of the Trustees' relationship to the Al-Anon groups and WSC, while articulating and expressing the "why" of the Board's work.

The current objectives are:

1. To empower Trustees to use existing tools to articulate the "why" of the Board (Blogs, Skits, Webinars)
2. Increase members' understanding that Trustees are Al-Anon members
3. Increase the personal connection of Trustees with the fellowship in order to increase Trustee role education; Demystify the role: why BOT meetings are not open, etc.

The Board will continue to clarify these objectives, will continue to evaluate what tools and resources we use that currently address or partially address these objectives, and will identify potential new methods that may assist in meeting these objectives. The Board will also continue to evaluate this goal and its objectives to ensure they are measurable so we will know when

the goal is completed and to gauge overall success.

The 2015 World Service Conference gave a presentation and held discussion related to a Board "Big Question": How do we envision responsible service leadership in Al-Anon, a vision that inspires today's members to be tomorrow's leaders who are motivated by spiritual principles? This presentation was to assist members to think into the future and to think big. Workshops occurred as part of this presentation with the following topics: Relying on the ideas in Concept Nine, what can Areas do to inspire members to grow and develop as future leaders? What is our vision of a World Service Conference embodying spiritual principles that meet the needs of all Conference members? What skills, talents, and abilities will the World Service Office need of its administrative staff leaders in the future? How can service leaders use technology to link members together at all levels of service, strengthening communication, and inspiring spiritual connections within the service structure? What is our vision of an attractive and dynamic Alateen program that would meet the needs of today's young people affected by someone's drinking? How can we as leaders encourage individual Al-Anon members to personally expand public outreach efforts? Information from this presentation will be used by the Board as we continue to focus on Al-Anon's future.

Over last the several years, a Task Force has been working on forming a definition of family recovery. After receiving extensive feedback from professionals, as well as discussion regarding finalizing the wording by both 2014 and 2015 World Service Conference members, the following definition of Universal Understanding of Recovery was passed by the 2015 World Service Conference: "Family recovery is a process of healing and growth for family members affected by someone's drinking. This process helps these individuals make healthier life choices and develop relationships that are more positive and supportive." This definition will be used going forward with professionals, and by the World Service Office Public Outreach staff.

Part of the Board's responsibility is to evaluate both itself and the Strategic Plan of the Board. During the 2015, the Board held discussion regarding the Board evaluation tool and process used by the Board for the past few years. The outcome of this discussion was consensus that the evaluation process being used was not effective in providing useful information regarding how the Board functions, or assessing if the Board is spending 80 percent of its time in strategic planning. It was decided that a more open and transparent format, including large group discussion, would be used at the end of each Board meeting. The Board will continue to assess its evaluation methods and tools in order to foster continued forward thinking and a healthy Board culture guided by spiritual principles.

During 2015, the World Service Office staff continued to work on goals and objectives, which they formulated under the first two Strategic Plan priorities of the Board. The Member Services and Communications sections continue to report their progress to the Board through the Executive Committee:

Member Services:

Goal 1: To support Al-Anon groups in welcoming and retaining new members. Based on a previously completed member survey related to the benefits of welcoming new members, work on this goal in 2015 focused on objectives of developing a list of ways to use the information gleaned from the survey, and developing a plan for sharing the information with the fellowship. Implementation of that plan is ongoing.

Goal 2: To update WSO service tools to ensure they reflect a vibrant, inclusive, and flexible viewpoint, and link service with our spiritual principles. Service tools were updated. Final text on the updated materials is being submitted now to the Translation Department.

Goal 3: To support groups to grow and thrive by using Al-Anon resources. One Objective of this goal is to increase awareness of the resources available on the Members' Web site. The rationale being that the Members' Web site contains navigation tabs titled: Home, Individuals, Groups, Service Structure, WSO, Public Outreach, and Alateen. The site also offers the capability for additional interactive features such as blogs and surveys. Increasing the awareness of the resources available for groups, and the interactive activities, would support groups to grow and thrive. Another objective begun in 2015 was to identify Member Services' resources for groups, and prioritize for increasing awareness. Rationale for this Objective is that creating a list of all group resources from Member Services, and evaluating the use and/or effectiveness of the resource, will assist in developing a marketing plan to maximize group awareness of the resources, and may also result in minimizing the effort needed to use the resource.

Communication Services:

Goal 1: To increase members' *willingness* to participate in Twelfth-Step work.

During 2015, Communications focused on creating articles and ads for our various Al-Anon communication tools of *The Forum*, *Area Highlights*, e-communities (which transitioned to AFG Connects), *Group e-News*, and *Inside Al-Anon*. A related objective begun that will be ongoing is to conduct a five-year communications campaign utilizing WSO publications to highlight the spiritual benefits of Twelfth-Step service, and encourage members to integrate Twelfth-Step service as part of their Al-Anon program. Another objective that will be ongoing is to help members to understand the spiritual benefits of Twelfth-Step work, based on information in the Readiness for Twelfth-Step Survey. The action plan will include initiating an information campaign based on the spiritual benefits of Twelfth-Step work identified in the Survey (to give back, progression in recovery according to Step Twelve), also addressing the major obstacles to Twelfth-Step work identified by the survey, i.e., lack of available time).

Evaluation of the entire Strategic Plan is an ongoing responsibility of the Board. As our world continues to change, the Strategic Plan must evolve to meet these changes. The Board will continue to look at the effectiveness of the Strategic Plan timeline, and assess the relevance of Strategic Plan goals and objectives to Al-Anon's current and future needs.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Karen R., / Bev A., Chairpersons

The Executive Committee, which meets monthly, is the administrator of the World Service Office, with legal authority granted by the Board of Trustees to conduct its daily affairs.

Its seven members, one of whom serves as Chairperson, are appointed by the Trustees. They include the Executive Director, one member of the administrative staff, the Chairpersons of the Policy and Finance Committees, and three Al-Anon members elected by the Board of Trustees, who contribute experience in specific fields and situations. The Chairperson of the Board also attends the meeting with voice but no vote to bring the Board perspective.

Its actions are submitted quarterly to the Board of Trustees for final approval. On-going work of the Executive Committee:

- To approve the minutes and actions of the Finance Committee.
- To accept the monthly unaudited Financial Statement.
- To approve special projects for the Board and staff that involve day-to-day operations.
- To receive monthly updates of departmental activities from the Executive Director, and the Directors of Business Services, Communication Services, and Member Services.
- To review additions, updates, and corrections to policies and procedures for the Employee Policies and Procedures Manual of AFG, Inc.
- To review and update policies and procedures regarding the WSO Archives.
- To approve Committee Guidelines.
- To approve résumés for At-Large Committee members and certain Thought and Task Force members.
- To review all presentations and handouts for the World Service Conference.
- To review the annual letter from the WSO's Copyright lawyer, regarding current trends in Copyright laws and the Internet.
- To approve and receive updates on the progress of Project Approvals and Proposals to Study submitted by the staff.
- To oversee the Alateen Work Group, as delegated by the Board of Trustees.
- To approve and receive updates on the progress of the Strategic Plan Goals and Objectives, as delegated by the Board of Trustees.
- To discuss spiritual principles that guide work of Executive Committee.

Actions approved by the Executive Committee and presented to the Board of Trustees:

- ✓ To approve a Forum Editorial Advisory Committee At-Large member.

POLICY COMMITTEE

Judy K., Chairperson
John M., Co-Chairperson
Robert S., Secretary

The Policy Committee is the largest group conscience representing Al-Anon as a whole, with the exception of the World Service Conference. The Committee is comprised of members of the Board of Trustees, WSO staff who are World Service Conference members, and the At-Large members of the Executive Committee. The Policy Committee ensures that the "Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies" (Policy Digest) contains clear and concise policies based on Al-Anon's spiritual principles. Topics at the quarterly Policy Committee meetings are generated by members of the fellowship.

The Committee discusses important issues in light of Al-Anon's Traditions and spiritual principles to provide clarity and help to Al-Anon members who inquire about matters important to them or to the Area service structure. The Policy Committee then makes recommendations to the Board of Trustees. If the Board approves a change in the Policy Digest, that change requires approval by no less than a two-thirds vote at the World Service Conference.

After thorough discussion, members of the 2015 World Service Conference (WSC) affirmed by consensus that the Policy Committee should draft language for a proposed policy change on Memorial Contributions. The Committee has completed that task and will bring the proposed language to the 2016 WSC for discussion and vote.

The Open Policy Committee meeting at the 2015 WSC gave Conference members an opportunity to hear discussion on WSO's policy on cooperation with researchers studying the effects of alcoholism on families and friends of alcoholics. The Policy Committee agreed that cooperation with researchers is an important part of public outreach efforts and that the research must be conducted by reputable organizations or individuals. As a result of concluding that conversation, the Policy Committee achieved clarity regarding specific criteria necessary for cooperating with researchers who present research project requests.

A Task Force has continued work on revising the "Financial Matters" portion of the Policy Digest, incorporating relevant spiritual principles into the text. Another Task Force has been reviewing the text on "Announcing Events at Meetings," incorporating spiritual principles and clarifying what can and cannot be announced at meetings.

ADMINISTRATION

Electronic Literature: Earlier in the year the Director of Business Services and the Controller ran a cost analysis for having *The Forum* available through mobile sales and determined that 2,500 copies would need to be sold through this system to break even. At this point it was decided not to proceed. If the Board of Trustees or the Executive Committee wants to proceed without regard to cost, and for a limited audience, then the business

plans need to be revised, as it has never been the WSO's manner of operating. The Finance Committee approved selling The Forum as a monthly subscription in order for all members who have access to systems other than Nook to receive The Forum.

At the end of the year, the Finance Committee approved selling *Courage to Change* (eB-16) as a complete version on iTunes and in two parts on Amazon, Nook, and Kobo due to their pricing policies.

Trips: The Executive Director attended a Service Workshop in Jacksonville Florida, where he spoke about the Concepts of Service. He also was a speaker at the New Hampshire Convention in September, where he also did a workshop on breaking down the barriers to get into service. The Chairperson of the Board and the Executive Director were the WSO team that visited the structures in Spain and France prior to attending the European Zonal Meeting (EZM) in Brugge, Belgium. The team met with the Executive Director of Spain and Portugal, as well as General Service Office staff and volunteers in Barcelona, and the Board of Trustees and key Conference members in Paris. The day after the EZM, the WSO Team held a workshop in Brussels on conflict resolution, and then answered general service questions for members of the French and Flemish Belgium structures.

Archives: *Lois's Story* (AV1) and *Lois W. and the Pioneers* (AV24) were converted to DVD, and a closed-captioned version was included on each DVD. The Archives Coordinator did an analysis with the Business Services Office Coordinator to determine what kind of envelope and postage would be necessary to mail out the DVD rentals. This helped determine that the \$25 price will continue to cover the costs of mailing to and from the office.

A group of three staff members was formed to market the videos *Lois's Story* (AV1) and *Lois W. and the Pioneers* (AV24) in a DVD format. The group came up with a marketing plan that included deadlines for notification to the fellowship when the DVDs were available. A revised \$35 order form request for the AV1 and AV24 rentals was submitted to the Publications Department to update with new information and include a modernized look.

Human Resources (HR): The HR Consultant and the Executive Director have completed their meetings with the Directors regarding their job descriptions. The HR Consultant will be working with the Director of Business Services and the Controller to complete the final meetings with their staff. The rest of the staff had their meetings, and the HR Consultant trained the new Employee Relations and Organizational Development Manager to work with the Directors to provide further coaching and finalize the job descriptions.

Copyright/Web issues: The Executive Director researched with the copyright/trademark attorney the registration of trademarks overseas due to the ongoing problem with a YouTube Channel based out of Mexico that is using the Al-Anon name in its content. YouTube is unwilling to remove the content unless the trademark is registered within that country, which is a different approach than usual. The Canadian trademark laws have been revised, and the Executive Director will meet with the Director of Communication Services and the Market-

ing Information Analyst to discuss the new procedures that will need to be implemented.

The Associate Director of Member Services—International provided the Executive Director with a list of the countries that currently have, or are currently in the process of obtaining, reprint permissions. This list was forwarded to the trademark attorney for filing in accordance with Madrid Protocol.

Paperwork to assist Brazil regarding the transfer of trademark registration to AFG, Inc. was reviewed. The Executive Director spoke with the Trademark attorney regarding the completion of Madrid protocols. The goal is to complete this process by the 2016 Conference.

AFG Connects: The staff, Trustees, and Delegates were all asked to provide feedback about their experience using eCommunities. A wide range of information was received and helped in creating questions to ask the three companies that were interviewed as a possible replacement for eCommunities. AFG Connects became the choice.

The Employee Relations and Organization Development Manager worked with an outside consultant to prepare training videos on how to use AFG Connects.

A work group was formed to continue development of coaching materials for users. Individual discussions regarding shortening file folder names and posting of documents also took place.

A “User Quick Reference Guide” was translated into French and Spanish. AFG Connects has a translation button that translates the discussion and topics in several languages; however, it does not translate attachments.

Computers/Web update: The implementation of Office 365 should be completed by January 31st. Once this is complete, all staff inboxes will be accessible through cloud communication and all messages can be sent to them directly rather than going through Postman. The size of the files the staff can receive will also be increased to 10 megabytes. The plan is to eventually have everything in the server set up in the cloud so that if a disaster were to occur everything will be accessible within 24-48 hours.

A contract was signed with a vendor to have the Spanish and French Members’ Web sites updated by Conference.

During the Finance Presentation at the World Service Conference, a member suggested implementing a “donate now” button on the AI-Anon Web site. The Finance Committee chose to use “contribute now” in order to have consistency with the language used previously by the WSO.

Staff updated the Members’ Web site to add “Contribute Now” and “Order Now” buttons. A consultant was hired to update the contribution information page to ease the ability of making contributions. The Designers also worked on updating the look to be more attractive. The Executive Director and Controller explored the possibility of members’ making contributions using their phones.

The Task Force to review the Public Outreach Web site completed their work. The Task Force suggested that in order for the Web site to be effective, the information that is posted needs to be organized in a way that is easy to find. The next step will be to look for a vendor, and to select a template with the Publications department, to begin the process of reformatting and redesigning the site. There was a presentation about the dis-

play of meeting information on the Public Outreach Web site at the 2015 World Service Conference. By the end of the year, a contract was signed for a new Web Design firm to create an updated Public Outreach site that will be more search-engine optimized, thus directing more potential members to our site.

The new “find a meeting” feature on the Public Outreach Web site was launched. There were a few problems in the initial launch but it appears those have all been worked out.

At the end of the year, the button at the top that formerly said “Member?” was changed to “Member Web site” and a dropdown menu of items on the Member Web site was added. This will help Members to know what is on the Members’ site and allow search engines to know that these items exist on the Members’ site. Other options may be explored as we move forward with the new design firm.

Do not refer: Members from groups affected by the two service arms that have removed groups from either Area or AIS Web sites continue to provide feedback that their meetings are being delisted. The Executive Director held a conference call with one Area Chair and Delegate regarding the previous panel’s experience, and affirmed that it is not their jobs to try and fix the behavior of the groups. A separate call was held with a District Representative (DR) about problems between an AIS and the District. The Executive Director suggested that the DR speak with the Delegate about this matter, and to encourage all Group Representatives to attend AIS and District meetings regardless of whether or not they have a voice at the meetings. These meetings are still considered groups at the WSO level despite not being listed on the AIS Web site.

The two service arms did contact the office at the end of the year to strategize about whether to submit a floor motion or Chosen Agenda item on the topic of whether the WSO needs a “do not refer” policy that would allow it to remove meetings that Areas/AISs had delisted. This has been a particular problem for them due to the “find a meeting” feature which makes it easier to find such meetings.

Incorporation of Areas/AI-Anon Information Services:

The Executive Director is continuing to work with five separate Areas regarding revising their incorporation documents, and discussed information with several other structures.

The Executive Director completed the sample ByLaws for Areas and AISs looking to incorporate. The ByLaws were sent to both the Chairperson of the Board and Chairperson of the Executive Committee for approval. The sample ByLaws were posted to the WSC Members Community of AFG Connects with a memo informing the Conference members that the information is now available. A couple of Areas have been waiting for the document, so they will be receiving the information directly.

Nominating: The Semi-Annual Notice of Trustee and Committee Openings letter was revised and sent to all Conference members and Area Chairpersons. The new letter included highlighting procedures for Delegates to file objections about a Trustee at Large candidate in their Areas by October. This process is in addition to the ability of Conference Committee on Trustees or Regional Committee on Trustees members to file objections once the Nominating Committee selects its candidates in October.

Before the letter was reissued in 2016, a further edit was made to the letter with the goal of bringing the objection procedure to the Delegates. A chart was also included that shows the process in a timeline.

The Executive Director met with the Archives Coordinator regarding researching the history of inviting the Regional Trustees to the office for dinner, in order to determine when the trial began (2010), and whether a final decision had been made to make this a permanent part of the process. No decision had been made according to Board minutes.

Other Twelve Steps programs: The Executive Director spoke to an Al-Anon member who wanted input about the origin of the formation and structure of Al-Anon. She is serving on a Committee designed to found CoAnon.

Staffing: A position for the Employee Relations and Organizational Development was filled at the beginning of June. This position will assist us in creating training materials and Webinars for the staff and fellowship.

The Director of Member Services and the Controller had interviews with several candidates for the Associate Director of Member Services—Groups position. As part of the succession planning, the Directors were asked that all future candidates be hired only if they have the experience to do the level of work for the open position, as well as have the experience or potential to eventually replace future higher management positions. As of the end of the year, the position remains open.

The new Event Planner/Project Manager position was filled at the end of July. She will handle meeting requirements for all WSO events including Meet the Board, TEAM, International Conventions, the Conference, the International Al-Anon General Services Meeting, the Executive Committee, and Board meetings.

Discussions with the Technology Consultant continue regarding the pros and cons of an IT Director position. At this time, there is no decision to create a position.

We interviewed several individuals for app developer positions but discovered that we really didn't have specific needs for an app. We also looked at graphic illustrators but decided that specific needs could be outsourced when the need was identified.

Phone interviews with the potential Member Services Director candidates were held in early August. No candidates had the required skills for the position. This position will continue to be open until the new staff reorganization recommendations have been reviewed by the Board.

The Director of Communication Services' last day was November 4. The Director of Member Services' last day was December 9. The Executive Director met with the staff after the Director of Communication Services' last day to explain that both his and the Director of Member Services positions will not be filled until the Board's consultant has had an opportunity to meet with the entire staff and look at the structure of the office as a whole. During this time, the Associate Director of Communications—Professionals will be the interim contact person for the Communication Department, but will not be given the responsibility of being the acting Director. With the retirement of the Director of Member Services, the Associate Director of

Member Services—International will be the interim contact person for that section.

Alateen Chat: The vendor's quote to upgrade the Alateen Chat site was accepted. This would not be an app, but will be an upgrade to the Web site that will allow the user to view and participate through their mobile browser. Upgrading the chat system will be done to ensure protection of the teens, as well as make it more user-friendly. While we have not been able to complete the transition at this time, we are continuing to work with the vendor.

We are going to continue to search for a different platform that will include the ability to use cell phones.

Strategic Planning: A strategic thinking session was held on Tuesday, May 12 with the Conference staff and other key staff who are involved with strategic planning within their departments. Evaluations have been received from these staff members for feedback on the session.

Phone Meetings: A member of the phone meetings was coached on the proper ways to run a business meeting. This is a follow up to the early conference call held with the phone meeting representatives.

Grant money: The Executive Director and the Associate Director of Communications—Professionals held a conference call with an Area Chair, Delegate, and Institutions Chair as a result of the Institutions Chair's attempt to take a state grant to expand the Area's institutions work. Several passages in the *Service Manual* were reviewed in coming to a consensus that such grants were not possible and a violation of the Traditions.

65th Anniversary: After researching different venues for the 65th Anniversary Celebration, the WSO signed a contract with the Wyndham. There will be a cutoff of 400 tickets to be sold for the event, with 70 being comped. Flyers advertising the event were mailed at the end of the year with the January *Forum*.

Pension: The WSO will be switching from allowing staff to make a defined contribution to a percentage contribution with the idea that in 2016, the staff can choose to set up an automatic increase each year during a specific time. The pension advisors met with the staff members individually to help them understand the new system and to help them determine their percentages.

ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM

The Administrative Team is composed of the Director of Business Services, the Director of Communications Services, the Director of Member Services, and the WSO Controller. The Administrative Team was created to provide oversight of certain office-wide projects assigned by the Executive Director, as well as to provide leadership to the office in the absence of the Executive Director.

The Team oversaw the upgrading of the Members' Web site in Spanish and French, developed the dropdown menu for the Members' Web site on the Public Outreach page, and monitored other staff projects as they developed.

COMMUNICATION SERVICES

PUBLIC OUTREACH

Board of Trustees strategic goal:

The Board of Trustees' goal of "increasing members' willingness to participate in Twelfth-Step work" was further implemented this year by focusing on the topics of anonymity and the spiritual benefits of Twelve-Step work.

Numerous articles and ads in WSO print and on-line publications addressed these topics. Varied approaches included a three-part series of *Forum* articles about anonymity featuring inventories for personal reflection or discussion at meetings. "Let's Talk about Anonymity" PowerPoint presentations, which explored anonymity within and outside of the fellowship, were developed for workshop presentations and members' use. The PowerPoints were accompanied by role-playing scenarios. Improvisational exercises about anonymity and electronic media were also created. The revised *Why Anonymity in Al-Anon* (P-33) pamphlet, which now includes information about anonymity on the Internet, was featured in announcements in *The Forum* and *Group e-News*.

The "Inside Al-Anon Family Groups" department of *The Forum* featured articles that addressed the topic of the spiritual benefits of Twelfth-Step work. *Group e-News* ads and articles also covered the subject throughout the year. In addition, the *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism 2016* campaign theme highlighted "the spiritual benefits we may receive when we participate in Twelfth-Step service," and encouraged members to distribute magazines as part of their day-to-day activities. Audio podcast interviews were conducted with members who participated in outreach to correctional facilities, TV PSA campaigns, distribution of *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism* magazines, and other public outreach projects, stressing the spiritual benefits of Twelfth-Step work. The podcasts are posted on the Members' Web site under the Public Outreach tab.

Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism:

Distributing our annual public outreach magazine is the largest fellowship-wide member-participation public outreach project in our history. Al-Anon members distributed a record-breaking 387,425 copies in 2015, a 12 percent increase from 2014. Members and service arms that bought the magazine were sent thank you's for their participation.

Media:

The WSO continued to increase the visibility of Al-Anon so that it will be recognized as the number one resource throughout the world for helping friends and families of alcoholics. Al-Anon's presence on new media, such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube offered Al-Anon members throughout the world opportunities to share the Al-Anon message of recovery quickly, easily, and inexpensively. The potential is for new media eventually to reach bigger audiences than traditional media, such as television and radio.

Al-Anon's 2015 television public service announcement (PSA) campaign is on target to reach an estimated audience of more than 500 million people, based on approximately 60,000 broadcasts by 365 television stations. Airplays by TV stations during 2015 occurred mainly in small- and medium-sized markets in the U.S., so requests by more Al-Anon members for stations to play the PSAs would be very helpful. Airplays throughout Canada went largely unreported, except by local Al-Anon members. Additional attempts to document Canadian airplays will be explored.

Al-Anon's 2015 radio PSA campaign reached more than 158 million people, based on approximately 54,000 broadcasts by over 460 stations in the U.S. More than 110 radio stations played Al-Anon PSAs in Canada during 2015, but the number of broadcasts and the estimated audience in Canada were unreported. Totals in Canada are usually at least ten percent of the totals from the U.S.

Google AdWords ads appear in Google search results, in the paid search results sections, for searches related to Al-Anon, and link directly to the Al-Anon Web site. The WSO does not actually pay for this advertising, which is provided at no charge to all non-profit organizations by Google. The click-through-rate (CTR) for the WSO's advertisements on Google steadily increased from 4.47% in January 2015 to 8.49% in November, the highest CTR in the account's history. The higher CTR can be attributed to strategies implemented that better target ads for those looking for help.

From January to December 2015, 17 multi-media news releases were published on-line. These releases generated more than 1.4 million impressions and more than 35,000 reads on PRWeb, the company that hosts the releases. Additional impressions and reads on other Web sites that picked up the releases are not known. Impressions were highest on a release in November titled, "Al-Anon Groups Express Gratitude During the Holidays." Reads were highest on a release in July titled, "Al-Anon Members Say 'Al-Anon Saved My Life,'" on results of the 2015 Membership Survey. News releases are available on the Public Outreach Web site, at Al-Anon.org, and can be adapted to attract readers to local Al-Anon and Alateen meetings.

In 2015, we have seen substantial growth in the WSO Facebook pages. The number of Facebook "likes" went from 15,094 in November 2014 to 28,968 at the close of November 2015, a 92 percent increase. The growth of the WSO pages has allowed us to reach over 2.5 million people in more than 90 countries.

Facebook statistics have shown that video posts are more popular and more engaging than regular posts. As a result, we have begun featuring a new video each month. This allows the video to display prominently above our "About" information and in our video library. In addition, we have added a "call-to-action" button to new videos. When the video ends, viewers can click on a "learn more" or "watch more" button and will be directed to either the WSO Public Outreach Web site or YouTube channel.

We have also added a “Send Message” call-to-action button at the top of the page. This makes it easier for visitors to send private messages to the page and lets them know that we are available to answer questions.

Another milestone for the WSO Facebook pages was to have them “verified” by Facebook. This designation means that Facebook has verified the authenticity of the English, Spanish, and French pages, and confirms them as the official pages for Al-Anon Family Groups. This designation also improves the chance that our pages will be first in a search, as all verified pages are listed before any of the other search results.

The social media guideline, *Social Media Guideline for Areas and General Service Office*, is complete and has been added to the Members’ Web site in the Public Outreach Section.

Surveys:

The 2015 Membership Survey was open from January 9–February 22. The number of complete responses received was 8,517–8,176 (96%) in English, 203 (2.4%) in French, and 138 (1.6%) in Spanish. Total participation was up from the 2012 Membership Survey, in which 3,232 complete responses were received. Results are posted on both the Members’ Web site and the Public Outreach Web site.

A survey advertised on the English, Spanish, and French WSO Facebook pages was conducted from September 14–October 12, 2015 to learn more about the WSO Facebook pages audience, and to make comparisons with results from the same survey conducted in January 2014 (in English only): 774 people participated in English, 313 in Spanish, and 42 in French. Among the highlights are the following: 83% of participants were Al-Anon members; the average length of membership among member participants was nine years; French- and Spanish-speaking member participants generally spent more time each month participating in service work, compared to English-speaking member survey participants; and, in 2015, sentiment regarding the usefulness of the site improved slightly among English-speaking participants compared to 2014. However, in general, French- and Spanish-speaking participants have a higher regard for the usefulness of the Facebook page.

Public Outreach Web site:

The bounce rate on the Public Outreach Web site (Al-Anon.org) steadily increased in 2015, meaning that more and more visitors to the site left the site after viewing the page on which they first landed. The average time spent on the site, as well as the average pages-per-visit also steadily decreased over the year.

In an effort to improve the user experience on the Web site and to reach more people who are affected by someone else’s alcoholism, the WSO has selected a Web site design company to completely redesign the Public Outreach Web site.

Working with a member volunteer who is an expert in Search Engine Optimization (SEO), the WSO is designing a navigation structure for the new Web site that will make it easier for visitors to find the information they are looking for. Content will also be written for the new Web pages that will adhere to SEO best practices.

Interviews with Professionals:

An interview with the NIAAA Director of the Division of Treatment and Recovery Research was conducted and posted on the WSO YouTube channel and “First Steps to Al-Anon Recovery” podcast page, dealing with treatment options for loved ones of alcoholics. The WSO continued to attend the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) National Advisory Council meetings, which take place three times a year, to ensure the voice and perspective of family members affected by someone else’s drinking continue to be taken into consideration in this forum.

A “First Steps to Al-Anon Recovery” podcast interview was also conducted with the National Director of Children’s Programs for the Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation, in which the effects of a parent’s or other loved one’s drinking on their children was discussed. Both of these interviews were also shared with the general public by means of national news releases.

U.S. Center for Substance Abuse Treatment (CSAT), National Recovery Month planning meetings (U.S.):

The WSO continues to serve as a resource about the importance of family recovery from alcoholism and the support available in Al-Anon and Alateen. Our involvement also gives the WSO contact with more than 150 substance abuse and mental health organizations. Staff participation includes recommending topics that include family recovery in the “Road to Recovery” Webinar series.

Unite to Face Addiction Recovery Rally (U.S.):

The MD/DC Area cooperated with the WSO by staffing an Al-Anon information table at this event that took place on the National Mall in Washington DC, in October. Al-Anon was one of 450 organizations making information available to the 35,000 attendees of the Rally. Members distributed over 100 information packets, and reported receiving a warm reception for their participation.

National Recovery Day (Canada):

Public Outreach Coordinators were notified about special public events taking place in September in their respective Areas. Local members staffed Al-Anon information tables at three of the 20 events. Although this four-year-old event remains small, participation is increasing in cities that continue to host it.

e-News for Professionals:

This electronic newsletter is available in the “For Professionals” section of the Public Outreach Web site and is distributed to more than 3,000 subscribers. Monthly issues featured data and quotations from members about the benefits of Al-Anon, based on the findings from the 2015 Membership Survey. Timely topics included the value of peer support and peer-facilitated meetings, as well as the variety of relationships members have to alcoholics. Other topics included information about Al-Anon that professionals can provide to clients who are recovering in Alcoholics Anonymous (A.A.).

Canadian regional conference calls, outreach to professionals:

Three conference calls were held with current and new Area Delegates and Area Public Outreach Coordinators. The calls provided an opportunity to exchange information about outreach to professionals within the Areas, and helped to facilitate the transition of trusted servants. The WSO provided 2015 Membership Survey data about the types of Canadian professionals making referrals to Al-Anon, and Canadian members' contact with professionals before and since attending Al-Anon. The conference call participants also discussed the challenge of making Al-Anon available in small or remote communities, and possible interim solutions such as telephone or on-line meetings.

Staff travel, National Canadian government agencies, Ottawa, ON:

Staff met with representatives of the Centre on Substance Abuse and Mental Health Commission of Canada. These government organizations expressed a much stronger recognition of the need to include the family in the recovery process of alcoholics, and showed willingness to meet this need in future projects. A meeting was also held with the Executive Director of the Canadian Association of Social Workers. He recommended that Al-Anon members ask professionals to emphasize to their clients the importance of attending at least six meetings. He also encouraged Al-Anon members to reach out directly to local chapters of the Canadian Association of Community Health Centers that provide mental and medical healthcare services to families of alcoholics.

FELLOWSHIP COMMUNICATIONS

The Forum:

At the end of the year, personal subscriptions to *The Forum* totaled about 18,400—a decrease of seven percent from the previous year. Pending approval, a Readership Survey will be conducted in 2016. The intended audience will be our current readership and also those who do not read *The Forum*. The goal will be to determine how we can improve the magazine so that it continues to be relevant, as well as determine why some members aren't interested in reading *The Forum*.

Individual copies of *The Forum* are now available on Amazon and Kobo for \$1.49 (U.S.) and Apple iTunes for \$1.99 (U.S.). At this time, annual subscriptions are not available from these electronic bookstores.

An annual electronic subscription to *The Forum* continues to be available from *Nook*, the Barnes & Noble electronic bookstore. The cost of an annual subscription is \$11 (U.S.). Individual copies can be purchased for \$1.49 (U.S.).

Electronic subscriptions at the end of 2015:

Barnes and Noble: subscriptions: 481; individual copies: 117

Amazon: 716

Apple: 120

Kobo: 17

NEW DAILY READER (working title):

Various notices and articles were placed in Al-Anon publications throughout the year to encourage members to submit writings for this book, so that it can be completed in time for the 2018 Al-Anon International Convention. In addition to an insert of the first writing guideline in the July issue of *The Forum*, a new guideline with additional details was inserted in December. It was also added as a download on the Members' Web site, where members can submit sharings on-line. The December issue of *The Forum* featured an "Inside Al-Anon Family Groups" article detailing what the Conference intended regarding a daily reader "that reflects the diversity of the Al-Anon fellowship." The WSO has received over 530 sharings from the fellowship so far for this book.

INTIMACY IN ALCOHOLIC RELATIONSHIPS (working title):

At this point, the WSO has received over 1,170 sharings. Notices in WSO publications and requests to Literature Coordinators encouraged further writing throughout the year. A request for proposals from freelance writers/editors for this project was announced to the fellowship in August and September, bringing in 41 bids, which staff is currently reviewing.

PARENTS AND GRANDPARENTS OF YOUNG PROBLEM DRINKERS (working title):

The WSO has received over 180 sharings for this pamphlet. Notices in WSO publications continued to encourage members to write—especially regarding the Twelve Steps from the perspective of parents and grandparents. A request for proposals from freelance writers/editors for this project was announced to the fellowship in August and September, bringing in 18 bids. Staff is currently reviewing each proposal.

Literature Coordinators:

Regular postings were made throughout the year to the Literature Coordinator eCommunity. In March and October, hour-long conference calls with Area Literature Coordinators were held to continue enhancing communication and cooperation regarding their role.

CAL Quotations:

The trial period ended for quotations to use in fundraising calendars, and the project was approved on a continuing basis. Areas and other service arms will be able to use their choice of 20 quotations in their 2016 calendars without having to obtain written permission. Also, throughout the year, quotations from the quarterly "Sample Chapters" were gathered for posting on the Al-Anon Facebook page.

On-Line Al-Anon Timeline:

A thorough timeline of Al-Anon's history was posted on the Members' Web site. The next printing of *Lois Remembers* (B-7) will include an abbreviated timeline of only those historical

events noted in the book, with a note referring readers to the Web site for a more complete timeline. In this way, the timeline can be easily updated without different versions in each printing of *Lois Remembers*.

Public Outreach Committee

Deborah C., Chairperson/Donna E., Acting Chairperson
Pat Q., Staff Liaison, Associate Director of Communications—Public Outreach/
Media

The Public Outreach Committee consists of Delegates from each panel, up to five At-Large members, including an At-Large member Chairperson on a trial basis, a Trustee liaison to the Board of Trustees, and the WSO staff liaison. The Director of Communications and the Associate Director of Communications—Public Outreach/Professionals are non-voting members. The Committee meets three times per year via conference call, and as needed.

During 2015, the WSO Public Outreach Committee provided guidance to staff for targeting priority audiences with Public Outreach messages. Committee members reviewed scripts for the development of new public service announcements for television, radio, the Internet, and other technology aimed at reaching target audiences. The Committee also concluded a review of “The Best of Public Outreach,” a collection of how-to-do-it suggestions on the Members’ Web site. The Committee is continuing to discuss the idea of a goal that is in keeping with the Board’s Strategic Plan Priorities.

Literature Committee

Linda B., Chairperson
Tom C., Staff Liaison, Associate Director of Communications—Literature
Sandi C./Leona W., Trustee Liaison to the Board

The Committee currently consists of nine Delegate members, five At-Large members (including the Chairperson), the WSO Staff Liaison, and the WSO Trustee Liaison to the Board. It continues to meet quarterly by conference call, with intermediate correspondence held through e-mails and the AFG Connects discussion boards.

The Committee approved tentative outlines for both the INTIMACY AND THE ALCOHOLIC RELATIONSHIP (working title) piece and the PARENTS & GRANDPARENTS OF YOUNG PROBLEM DRINKERS (working title) pamphlet.

The Committee had previously made a recommendation to the Policy Committee for a title change for *Dear Mom & Dad* (P-67) to better reflect its content. The Policy Committee agreed, and asked the Literature Committee for specific title suggestions. The Committee recommended the title *Alateens Share with Adults in Their Lives* which was accepted by the Policy Committee in October. After this decision was made, the Literature Committee reviewed the text of the pamphlet to determine if any minor text changes were needed to better reflect the new title.

Several times throughout the year, the Committee discussed

ideas for new Area-wide or structure-wide projects for Literature Coordinators and others to increase awareness among members about using a variety of Conference Approved Literature.

Also throughout the year, the Committee continued to discuss ways to encourage members to submit writings for the NEW DAILY READER (working title), which was conceptually approved by the World Service Conference in 2014. One result of these discussions was that the Committee approved wording for a new writing guideline that clarified in more detail the types of sharings sought by the Committee. This guideline was posted on the Members’ site in September, and distributed as an insert in *The Forum* in December.

The Committee reviewed several suggestions from the fellowship for new literature or revisions to existing literature. From these, it recommended two changes, after completing the Knowledge-Based Decision-Making Process for an Informed Group Conscience for both items. These were to remove the word “prayer” from the Suggested Closing; and to remove the “Prayer for Today” from the *Just for Today* Bookmark (M-12) and Card (M-10), as well as from page 101 of *How Al-Anon Works* (B22). The change to the Suggested Closing was submitted to the Group Services Department for review prior to discussion by the Policy Committee. The Literature Committee agreed to bring the “Prayer for Today” recommendation to the 2016 World Service Conference for discussion.

The Committee also reviewed revisions to *Information for the Newcomer* (S-4) made by a task force of the Executive Committee as a result of its review of all contents in the Al-Anon Newcomer Packet.

Forum Editorial Advisory Committee

Sue C./Brian R., Chairperson
Julie M., Staff Liaison
John M./Donna E., Trustee Liaison to the Board

In April, the World Service Conference granted approval to develop a *Forum* book that captures the “best of the best” sharings from the magazine in recent years. A preliminary work plan has been created along with criteria for selecting sharings to recommend including in the book. The work of the Committee has been stalled as two members rotated off after having served the maximum of six years. Another member had to step down for health and family issues. Only the Chairperson remained. Three new members have since been approved by the Executive Committee. Once our new members acclimate to routine work, we will resume working on THE FORUM BOOK (working title).

MEMBER SERVICES

GROUP SERVICES

Al-Anon Information Services:

The 2015 *Getting in Touch with Al-Anon and Alateen* (S-23) was mailed to 203 AISs and AIS/LDCs and 105 LDCs.

Electronic Meetings:

Conference calls with phone meeting participants:

The WSO held two (first ever) business meeting conference calls with participants from the phone meetings on Saturday, March 21 and Thursday, March 26. Each lasted one hour. All of the phone meetings were invited to participate. Each was provided with the list of topics.

Each conference call had approximately 30 registrants who were invited to share their experience, strength, and hope on three topics that were selected from the “Groups at Work” section of the *Service Manual*:

- Welcoming New Members
- “The Three Obstacles to Success in Al-Anon”
- Group Business Meetings and Group Conscience

An evaluation form was sent following the conference calls, and members responded with gratitude for learning different ways of welcoming newcomers and educating them about Al-Anon in general and their meeting in particular. Several meetings felt they would suggest reading “The Three Obstacles to Success” at the beginning of the meeting. The meetings were also grateful to learn that each meeting can choose how to conduct their business meetings. All responded that they would participate in future calls and proposed future topics to include: how to work Tradition Seven, dominance, anonymity, sponsorship, service [on the phone meetings], using CAL, and how the phone meetings fit into the service structure/bridging the gap.

Guidelines revised and posted:

The revision and translation of the guidelines continued and were posted on the Members’ Web site in their respective languages. The revised guidelines all have the updated masthead and new graphics.

ALATEEN

Coordinators: Eighteen Alateen Coordinators participated in the New Area Alateen Coordinator conference call. Agenda items included an overview of routine correspondence between the WSO and the Coordinators, use of eCommunities, identifying and using WSO resources, and encouragement to use the discussion boards. Coordinators were very interested in learning about other Areas’ Alateen-related projects and requirements.

Literature: Two requests were received regarding the out-of-print booklet *What’s Drunk, Mama?* One member requested that a PDF of the booklet be available as a resource because younger children were coming to Alateen. It was explained that

the piece was created for a younger audience than the members of Alateen. Another member requested that the booklet be available electronically. No decision on either request was made.

e-Service Manual: A longtime member requested the *Alateen Service eManual* in a downloadable PDF format so that it could be printed, and used like a book. An initial response was given that it was not advisable, as based on WSO experience with printed material that it becomes obsolete and that members still use the out-of-date information. It was suggested that he print individual items, such as Alateen guidelines, from the Members’ Web site. This member responded that he was not satisfied with the initial response and presented some points to support his case: 1) Printing page-by-page is time consuming. 2) Having an *eManual* available only online excludes those who don’t have access to Internet, and it cannot be referenced during events or meetings if there is no access to Internet. 3) Having a PDF would be easier to print or download. Staff will take his concerns regarding numbers one and three into account when updating the *Alateen Service eManual* prior to submitting for translation into Spanish and French.

Facebook statistics: In 2015, we have seen substantial growth in the Alateen WSO Facebook page. The number of Facebook “likes” went from 355 on January 1, 2015 to 1,462 by December 31, 2015, a 312 percent increase. The growth of the Alateen WSO Facebook page has allowed us to reach over 129,920 people in 45 countries.

Alateen Chat Meetings: Requests were received from four Areas for new Alateen Chat Meeting rooms. The Areas were informed that the program used for the meetings is in the process of being upgraded, and offered the option of opening the meeting in the current program or waiting for the upgrade, which includes changes to how the Alateen Group Sponsors (AGS) communicate during the meeting. The Areas were also informed that the mobile platform for Alateen use of the program is not yet available. Two of the Areas decided to wait for the upgrade in order to avoid training AGS on both programs. The Event Manager has been asked to assist in the development of a training tool when the upgrade is available.

The third Area has a unique situation, in that current Alateen Group Sponsors (AGSs) for a face-to-face meeting would like to offer the Alateen Chat meetings for teens who are unable to get transportation to the group meeting. The group has been experiencing dwindling attendance, and the AGSs would like to offer an alternative, as well as the opportunity to reach out to potential Alateens. That Area will be offered the training on the current program in order to open the meeting in December, and retraining when the upgrade is available.

The chat room for Idaho was closed by the Area, due to lack of attendance. Other chat meetings are reporting low attendance.

Recording Alateen Speakers: An Area Alateen Coordinator and a member contacted the WSO regarding recording Alateen speakers at a meeting. The member’s home group records the monthly speaker meetings and requested information about

recording Alateens that were being invited to be speakers in a few months. The Alateens would be from the Alateen group supported by the Al-Anon group; both groups meet at the same time and location. The group requested information about WSO recording at the recent International Convention.

The Director of Member Services provided information about the WSO release forms signed by all speakers who were being recorded during the Al-Anon participation in the recent A.A. International Convention. The member and Alateen Coordinator were also informed that at our Al-Anon International Convention, all of the Big Meeting speakers as well as the assigned workshop speakers and moderators were required to sign the release forms. Alateen forms were signed by the parent or legal guardian.

The Alateen Coordinator and member were also informed that information is provided to speakers regarding anonymity, and that Alateens sharing at the meeting should be aware if any mandatory reporters were present. In recording talks, there may also be a problem if the tape is played in a future audience where a mandatory reporter is present and can identify the young person. The Anonymity sections of the "Policy Digest" (P-24/27) and *Groups at Work* (P-24) were noted as references, as well as the *Alateen Safety Guideline* (G-34) and *Members Interested in Speaking* (G-1).

Alateens at Al-Anon meetings: The Group Services Assistant had two calls regarding Alateen members attending Al-Anon groups. A former Area Alateen Coordinator called to find out if there is anything in the *Service Manual* stating that Alateen members are welcomed in an Al-Anon meeting. He said that one of the Alateen Group Sponsors (AGSs) moved to another city and per the Area's requirements, the Alateen group could not meet with only one AGS. The Alateens have been attending the Al-Anon meeting next door until a new AGS becomes certified. Members from the Al-Anon group were going to have a group conscience about this. The member was referred to page 89 of the *2014-2017 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* that states: "When there are no certified Al-Anon members available to be of service to the Alateen group, the Alateens are welcome to attend an Al-Anon meeting."

The member on the second call was asking about safety measures for Alateens attending Al-Anon meetings. The Group Services Department has been asked this question several times in the last few months, as previously reported. Members do not understand that the safety requirements are only required when the teens are in a separate space with one or two Sponsors, depending on Area Requirements. When multiple adults are present, all of the adults are responsible for making sure that behavior is appropriate and does not put the teens at risk.

Alateen Survey: The Delegates sent a document to the Director of Member Services containing questions for the Alateen survey mentioned during a Chosen Agenda Item discussion at the 2015 World Service Conference. The questions were to numerous Area members, and not limited to the Alateens. The Director of Member Services held a conference call with the two Delegates referencing the discussions in the *2015 World Service Conference Summary* (P-46), and that the offer by the Executive Director to host a survey was intended for Alateen members

only; not a comprehensive fellowship-wide survey on all aspects of Alateen. The Delegates agreed that the Alateen Work Group (AWG) would pull questions specifically for Alateens out of the documents and work with the Marketing Information Analyst to create the survey. The Delegates requested that the original submission of framing and questions also be considered. All of the information was sent to the Chairperson of the AWG. The Work Group submitted the first draft of the survey to the Marketing Information Analyst by the end of the year. The survey is in final review and edit mode.

GROUP RECORDS

Group Records:

The meeting location instruction field in the WSO database was cleaned up in preparation of the upcoming release of meeting information on the Public Outreach Web site. After further review of the group records, inconsistencies in other fields were discovered. Area Group Records Coordinators and AAPPs have been asked to follow set criteria when entering meeting location instructions in the WSO database, so uniform data can be provided on the Web site.

As of July 2015, meeting addresses of newly registered groups and changes in meeting locations for existing groups are standardized and geocoded on a monthly basis. The Group Records staff supplements the process for the meeting addresses that cannot successfully be geocoded by researching and manually adding geocode information into the WSO database. To date, only 121 US and 11 Canadian meetings, out of the original 1,039 unsuccessfully processed by the vendor, remain without a geocode. The Group Records Department will contact the affected Areas to request assistance in obtaining the geocode information.

Newly Registered Group Packet:

A change in the Postal Service regulation has affected the mailing of the new group packets and other WSO mailings as well, since the packages now require a tracking number. The Group Records Department and Business Services section have worked in collaboration to develop a new process to gather the mailing label information directly from the WSO database.

The total number of Al-Anon & Alateen groups worldwide is 25,231 for 2015

- US/PR/BDA Al-Anon 13,028
- US/PR/BDA Alateen 906
- Canada Al-Anon 1, 233
- Canada Alateen 70
- International Al-Anon 9,307
- International Alateen 687

The total number of electronic meetings for 2015 is 164: 19.7% net increase

- 114 Phone includes: 28% net increase
- 107 English
- 7 Spanish

39 On-Line includes: 18.75% decrease

- 19 English
- 3 French
- 6 Spanish
- 1 Danish
- 4 German
- 1 Polish
- 1 Portuguese
- 3 Russian

11 Skype includes: no change

- 1 English
- 9 Spanish
- 1 Icelandic

2015 Al-Anon Annual Update Sheet:

Starting in 2015, a flyer is being included with the Al-Anon Annual Update form mailings to encourage groups to provide an email address so the group can receive electronic mailings. The option to use the Current Mailing Address (CMA) email address or create an email address for the group is highlighted. A new “Group eMail” address field has been added to the form. To date, 957 English, 23 Spanish-, and 15 French-speaking groups have an email address specifically created for the group on file.

Group e-News:

The December 2015 issue of *Group e-News* was sent to 9,423 English, 369 Spanish, and 144 French unique group email addresses. Duplicate email addresses are removed from the mailing list by the vendor, so recipients don't receive multiple emails. Duplicate email addresses result when more than one group uses the same email address.

The number of valid email addresses for Al-Anon and Alateen groups increased by five percent (423) for English, 12 percent (41) for Spanish, and 13 percent (17) for French groups and electronic meetings between December 2014 and December 2015. To date, seventy percent (9,934) of the English groups (14,275), fifty-three percent (389) of the Spanish (736), and sixty-eight percent (146) of the French groups (214) have a valid email address on file.

An average of 50 email addresses are excluded monthly from the mailing list because *Group e-News* “bounced” and the email couldn't be delivered to the recipient. The number of unsubscribed emails remains steady, an average of 20 monthly.

Group Records Conference Calls and Training Sessions:

The new Area Group Records Coordinators Conference Call was held for the incoming Panel 55 Coordinators on January 31, 2015. The main topics of the call were to reinforce and emphasize the importance of maintaining accurate group information, introduce the On-line Group Records application to the new Coordinators, and respond to concerns and questions Coordinators had about their new position.

The New Area Alateen Process Person (AAPP) Conference Call was also held on January 31th. The call was designed to

review the certification process and highlight the benefits of processing Alateen paperwork electronically. The Alateen Annual Recertification Conference Call was held on March 21st. The recertification process and on-line 2015 AMIAS Recertification were reviewed.

Several WSO Online Group Records training sessions were held via conference call using “GoToMeeting.” Different days and time were offered to accommodate Area Group Records Coordinators and AAPPs. Coordinators were introduced to the newly released features and reviewed specific Al-Anon group scenarios, while AAPPs focused on Alateen Group, AMIAS scenarios, and the 2015 AMIAS on-line Alateen Recertification.

Alateen Annual AMIAS Recertification:

All the Areas have completed their Alateen Annual AMIAS Recertification by the July 1st deadline. The AAPPs' feedback was very positive, as minimal paperwork was required by the WSO to complete the AMIAS Recertification online, since AAPPs were able to update their Alateen group records electronically as well.

4,957 Al-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service (AMIAS) were certified in 2015.

MEMBERSHIP OUTREACH

World Service Conference and Area Delegates:

The Chosen Agenda Items Task Force, comprised of two Delegates and the Conference Chairperson, combined like topics that resulted in the 21 Chosen Agenda Items submitted for the 2015 Conference becoming 12 Chosen Agenda Items.

Twenty-one new Delegates and five Trustees participated in the New Member Orientation conference call. The purpose of the call is to share information and answer questions about what to expect at Conference. One Delegate asked about “love gifts.” In response, another Delegate noted that her Area chooses to give a financial contribution to the WSO in lieu of tangible love gifts. A member of the Conference Leadership Team noted that a number of Areas have agreed to do that.

The Sharing Area Highlights meeting, an out-of-Conference session that takes place the day before Conference convenes, was expanded to three hours as a way to allow Delegates more time to discuss Area successes and concerns.

Ninety-five voting members attended the 55th World Service Conference in Virginia Beach, Virginia, April 20-24, 2015. The Alternate Delegate for Delaware represented her Area; the Mississippi Area Chair represented that Area. Germany, UK & Eire, and Mexico each sent a General Service Office (GSO) Representative to attend the Conference. The GSO in Mexico also sent a translator to assist its Representative.

The Conference Leadership Team implemented the use of electronic devices to take notes. All Conference members had the option of taking notes electronically or by hand.

In order to be financially prudent with both the WSO and the Area's Equalized Expense contributions, the Board of Trustees had approved holding the 2015 Conference in Virginia Beach,

with an *optional* trip for Delegates to visit Stepping Stones following the Conference. Sixty-nine people (including some guests) traveled to New York on Friday, April 24 and visited Stepping Stones in Bedford Hills, New York the morning of Saturday, April 25. Fifteen Delegates (22%) chose not to visit Stepping Stones, because the trip/visit was not part of the Conference. Evaluations indicated that the attendees had a good experience in all segments of the trip.

Conference evaluations indicated that the Conference was very successful.

The *2015 Conference Summary* arrived ahead of schedule. Shipping the bulk orders of the *Conference Summary* to the Delegates for the members of their Area World Service Committees was completed. One copy each of the *Summary* was sent to Past Delegates, Past Trustees, and Past World Service Conference staff. In addition to the mailings, the *2015 World Service Conference Summary* was posted on the Members' Web site.

A fully-executed contract was reached to record the 2016 World Service Conference. A contract to write the *2016 Conference Summary* was signed.

Panel 54 Delegates were invited to mentor a Panel 56 Delegate.

e-Communities/AFG Connects:

Panel 55 Delegates, Area Chairs, and District Representatives (DRs) were welcomed and given access to e-Communities, the on-line system the WSO used to communicate with trusted servants. Beginning in August, electronic communication moved to AFG Connects for Delegates, Area Chairs, and DRs.

Delegates continue to share on a variety of discussion topics, including using service résumés at election Assemblies. The Area Chairs discussed links of service and how to handle trusted servants who are not doing their jobs. The DRs discussed dominance at meetings, and service positions for Al-Anon members who are also members of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Conference Leadership Team

Tina B., Chairperson

Sandie D./Karen W.-P., Co-Chairperson

Suzanne M., Associate Director of Member Services—Conference

The Conference Leadership Team (CLT) clarified the section of the Conference Procedures Booklet that outlined how to submit a floor motion. This information was sent out in advance in order to give ample time for Conference members who may want to submit a floor motion before Conference. This would allow members to pose any questions they may have regarding the document before Conference.

In initial planning for the 2016 WSC, the Conference Leadership Team unanimously agreed on (and the Board approved) the 2016 Conference theme: "Realizing Our Spiritual Potential."

Staff has a fully executed contract for the 2016 WSC, which will be held at the Wyndham Virginia Beach Oceanfront in Virginia Beach, Virginia, April 11-15, 2016. The following sessions will take place on Monday, April 11: The New Member Orientation Session, Committees/Task Forces, Sharing Area Highlights, and the Opening Dinner. The Conference will begin Tuesday, April 12, and the Closing Dinner will be held Friday, April 15.

The Conference Communication Kit, a set of documents that provides information on travel, housing, and dates to remember, was consolidated from 12 documents to four documents. A "Recap" document was added to the kit in order to provide a concise source of information regarding Conference travel/lodging.

Members of the CLT agreed to include a Conference Leadership Team Update as an addition to the quarterly Chairperson of the Board Letter that is posted on the Members' Web site.

Translation Department

The following projects were translated into Spanish and French in 2015:

Beginners' Meeting (G-2)

Al-Anon/Alateen Public Outreach Service (G-10)

Alateen Conferences (G-16)

Guidelines for Newsletter Editors (G-21)

District Representatives (G-37)

AFG Connects User Guide

Group Conflict Workshops

Booklet

Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism 2016

Al-Anon/Alateen Internationally

Africa

Egypt - A contact on behalf of an English-speaking meeting located in Dahab, South Sinai, requested registration information from the World Service Office (WSO). There is one meeting currently registered with the WSO in Egypt.

Israel - A member located in Jerusalem shared that they are interested in starting Alateen meetings. There are currently five Al-Anon meetings registered with the WSO located in Israel; three of the meetings are in Jerusalem.

Rwanda - A request was received from a member interested in starting a meeting. Currently there are no meetings for this country. Registration materials, as well as information about how to access Electronic meetings, were sent to the member.

South Africa - After extensively researching and comparing costs, the contact on behalf of the GSO for South Africa reported that their Board of Trustees voted unanimously for the office to reprint Al-Anon/Alateen Conference Approved Literature (CAL) in South Africa rather than purchase it directly from the WSO. The contact stated this is due to the very high shipping costs and the exchange rate.

Uganda - An individual from Uganda contacted the WSO looking for meetings. There are currently no meetings in Uganda, however the WSO advised the individual she was not alone, and did put her in contact with the GSO in South Africa.

Europe

Austria - The contact, on behalf of the GSO in Austria, attended the European Zonal Meeting (EZM) held in Brugge,

Belgium. The GSO is doing well and is continuing to do public outreach activity to raise the visibility of Al-Anon in Austria.

Belarus – A member wrote WSO and asked if a book from another Twelve Step program could be used during meetings. WSO advised that only Conference Approved Literature (CAL) is used during Al-Anon meetings to keep Al-Anon's message focused and to encourage unity in the group.

Belgium (French) – The contact on behalf of the GSO shared that the structure was invited by Germany to send a representative to Germany's Service Conference in February 2015. The structure also hosted a Conflict Resolution Workshop and question and answer session with the WSO representatives on the day following the EZM at the structure's office in Brussels.

Belgium (Flemish) – The contact on behalf of the structure reported that they are working towards returning to the International Al-Anon General Services Meeting (IAGSM).

Denmark – The WSO was informed that the GSO communicates with the groups via an electronic newsletter. The WSO was also told they are having trouble recruiting volunteers to do service work on the national level.

Estonia - A contact on behalf of a group requested that their meeting be added under the tab for "International Meetings" on the Public Outreach Web site. The WSO explained that at this time the information listed on the Web site is for those countries that have a GSO or Al-Anon Information Service (AIS). The contact was advised that all registered groups are listed in the WSO database.

Finland – It was reported by the GSO that their Literature Committee has begun their preparations to schedule the reprinting of Al-Anon pamphlets. The primary reason for the reprints is to update all covers in the format now used by the WSO. The contact notified the WSO that they have decided to translate and print *Sponsorship – Working Together to Recover Bookmark* (M-78).

France – The WSO Chairperson of the Board of Trustees and Executive Director met with the Board of Trustee members for France before attending the EZM in Belgium. The WSO representatives were able to discuss and share experience on various topics requested by the GSO. The GSO has shared that the meetings were very helpful for their structure and they are now energized to continue their service work.

Greece – The contact on behalf of the AIS reported that, after formally registering with the government as a recognized service organization, they have now started the process of creating a national structure for the country.

Italy – The GSO translated and printed *Many Voices, One Journey* (B-31) and the *2014-2017 Al-Anon Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27) in Italian. Plans are underway to host the 2016 International Al-Anon General Services Meeting (IAGSM) in Rome October 5-8, 2016.

Norway – Their annual service meeting took place April 17-18, 2015. It was reported that one of the agenda items selected for a general discussion topic was "Anonymity at the Level of Press."

The structure experienced a major break of anonymity when some members were interviewed by a local journalist in Oslo. It was believed the journalist was not given enough information (by the Al-Anon members before the interview) to ensure the journalist had an understanding of how they expected the article would be written to support the Al-Anon principles as expressed in Traditions Eleven and Twelve.

Poland – The GSO celebrated the 35th Anniversary of Al-Anon in Poland. The theme for the convention was "Serving—I love, loving—I serve."

Portugal – The General Secretary for Portugal sent the WSO an acknowledgment that they received the *2015 World Service Conference Summary* and *Using Al-Anon Principles to Resolve Conflict Kit* (K-70) in Spanish as requested. She explained that they were excited to use this new service tool to help them through their discussions. She also extended a heartfelt thanks to the WSO Board of Trustees for allowing the two WSO representatives to come to Europe (prior to the EZM) so that she could have the opportunity to meet with them in Spain.

Slovenia – The contact on behalf of the AIS reported that the structure began their preliminary discussions about becoming a national service office. The contact indicated they are planning to submit a formal request to the International Coordination Committee (ICC) sometime in 2016 so they can possibly consider attending the International Al-Anon General Services Meeting (IAGSM) that will take place in Rome, Italy October 5-8, 2016.

Spain – The Executive Director for the GSO notified the WSO that their structure has elected a new IAGSM Delegate that will attend the 2016 meeting. In addition, they expressed their heartfelt thank you to the WSO Board of Trustees for allowing two WSO representatives to meet with them in Spain prior to the representatives attending the EZM.

Switzerland (French) – A contact on behalf of the GSO reported that their annual service meeting took place in March. A new panel of officers was elected during this meeting.

Switzerland (German) – The contact notified the WSO that their General Secretary died expectedly.

UK & Eire – The General Secretary for the UK & Eire informed the WSO that their structure is in discussions about whether to conduct their first Members' Survey. The GSO requested the questions used by the WSO from a previous survey as a sample resource.

Ukraine – The English-speaking contact reported that a service meeting took place September 4-6 in Kiev. The purpose of this meeting was to discuss the unity of Al-Anon in Ukraine. The members attending this meeting also celebrated 26 years of Al-Anon Family Groups in the Ukraine. The structure also submitted a request to be allowed to translate and print, which will be considered at a future ICC meeting when all of the questions are completed.

Asia

India – The contact on behalf of the GSO shared that “members are quite excited about the new publication *Reaching for Personal Freedom – Living the Legacies* (P-92).” The contact reported that the Board of Trustees decided to print this booklet in India.

Iran – The WSO was notified that a new English-speaking contact was selected by Al-Anon members in Iran as their contact. A service meeting was held July 20-22 in Tehran and there were a number of questions posed by the attendees concerning the translation and printing of Al-Anon and Alateen Conference Approved Literature (CAL). The WSO spoke with the contact on the phone and followed up with an e-mail to document the conversation. The WSO shared and sent the following in writing:

The service structure in Iran that identifies as Al-Anon Family Groups has not received any permission from the WSO to translate or print in Farsi or reprint in English any of the following Al-Anon Conference Approved Literature (CAL):

Alateen – a day at a time (B-10)

As We Understood (B-11)

Blueprint for Progress (P-5)

Alateen Hope for Children of Alcoholics (B-3)

Living Today in Alateen (B-26)

Living with Sobriety (P-49)

Paths to Recovery— Al-Anon’s Steps, Traditions and Concepts (B-24)

The contact indicated he understood, and he agreed that he would translate the written correspondence sent to him from the WSO to share with those attending their next service meeting.

Japan – The contact for the GSO sent the WSO an acknowledgment and thanks for services and included as a contribution Al-Anon Conference Approved Literature translated and printed in Japanese.

Korea – The contact on behalf of the GSO reported that they are doing more public outreach work to try to increase the visibility of Al-Anon in Korea.

Myanmar – A member from Myanmar requested registration materials. Myanmar, also known as Burma, is a sovereign state in Southeast Asia bordered by Bangladesh, India, China, Laos, and Thailand. This would be the first meeting for this country.

Philippines – The contact reported they currently have 18 Al-Anon and no Alateen meetings.

Singapore – A new meeting located in Singapore registered with the WSO. Currently Singapore has an AIS and three registered meetings with the WSO. All are listed as English-speaking.

Thailand – The contact on behalf of the AIS advised that they maintain a 24-hour-a-day helpline to provide meeting information for Al-Anon in Thailand. Al-Anon members in Thailand continue to cooperate with Alcoholics Anonymous (A.A.) by holding meetings during the annual A.A. roundup.

Vietnam – A request from a member in Al-Anon that moved from the United States to Vietnam was received for materials to start a new meeting in Hanoi.

Australia/New Zealand

Australia – The General Secretary shared that they are continuing their updating of pamphlets with the new covers. Current plans include the reprinting of *Understanding Ourselves & Alcoholism* (P-48) with the new design. In addition, they have decided to print (for their first time) the booklet *Talk to Each Other—Resolving Conflict within Al-Anon* (S-73). The General Secretary also reported that their members have found the *Conflict Resolution Wallet Card* (S-71) and the *Using the Traditions in Conflict Resolution* (S-72) cards to be useful service tools.

New Zealand – The General Secretary indicated because of the high shipping costs when purchasing literature from the WSO, they are looking at options to reprint literature in New Zealand.

North and Central America

Costa Rica – An English-speaking contact on behalf of the GSO in Costa Rica reported that the office is exploring starting a Facebook page.

Dominican Republic – A member contacted the World Service Office (WSO) requesting registration materials to start a new meeting in Santo Domingo. In addition to the eight meetings currently registered with the WSO, there is an AIS located in Santo Domingo.

El Salvador – A contact on behalf of the GSO informed the WSO that they are in the process of updating their registration records. The contact requested a current listing from the WSO of registered groups for El Salvador. The WSO currently has 26 groups registered for this country.

Guatemala – The Executive Director stated that their service structure is currently doing well. She also reported that their Board of Trustees made the decision that the office should reprint more CAL in Guatemala, as shipping and import costs from the United States have escalated, and it is no longer cost-effective for the GSO to purchase literature from the WSO. Guatemala currently has 26 Al-Anon and six Alateen meetings.

Honduras – A contact from the service structure indicated that they expect to hold their first service conference in 2016 or 2017. It was also reported that those involved in the current service structure are now meeting bi-monthly in different cities to organize and encourage unity. They are currently creating Group Representative (GR), District Representative (DR), and Zone/Area service positions. Mexico – The contact from the GSO in Mexico reported that their Board of Trustees is exploring writing their own “Mission” and “Vision” statements. The contact requested a copy of the WSO Board of Trustee statements. A copy of each was sent in Spanish. The WSO was also congratulated on “the amazing job” for the new communication platform AFG Connects!

Nicaragua – The AIS hosted the Central America Zonal Meeting (RECACSA) in Managua.

Panama – The contact for the structure reported that they are continuing to experience a decline in groups. Because of high importing costs, they are having difficulty purchasing literature from the WSO.

South America

Argentina – A contact on behalf of the GSO reported that their structure has begun preparations to celebrate 50 years of Al-Anon Family Groups in Argentina. As plans are finalized, information and invitations will be sent to all national structures.

Bolivia – The contact for Bolivia stated that their country has been struggling financially and that to date they are not able to take the steps to form a national service structure for the groups, as was previously planned. In responding to their question during the recent zonal meeting in Paraguay, “What would be our next step to organize our service structure?” World Service Office (WSO) representatives responded they could consider forming an Al-Anon Information Service (AIS). The representatives indicated they were relieved to hear this response. Bolivia currently has 42 Al-Anon and no Alateen groups.

Brazil – The General Secretary for Brazil reported that they have finally completed the necessary paperwork to transfer the requested trademark information to Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters Inc., 1600 Corporate Landing Parkway, Virginia Beach, Virginia 23454. They were notified by their attorney in October 2015 that the process may take an additional six months up to a year. The request to do this change was sent to all national service offices in August 2014. The GSO originally initiated their process in October 2014. Brazil celebrated 50 years of Al-Anon in 2015.

Colombia – The contact for the GSO informed the WSO that they are reprinting *Reaching for Personal Freedom—Living Our Legacies* (P-92). They are excited about this publication and believe this literature will be received well by the fellowship.

Ecuador – Two representatives from the GSO attended the Ibero-American meeting. Ecuador became a GSO in 2013.

Paraguay – Paraguay hosted the 2015 Ibero-American meeting (RIASA) in Asuncion.

Peru – The contacts on behalf of the GSO reported that their country had experienced an extreme loss in their volunteer base; including members from their Board of Trustees. As a result of this extreme loss, they were forced to re-evaluate their strategies and use the principles, which resulted in increased participation.

Uruguay – The General Secretary reported that their structure has experienced a steady decline of groups since 1996. That year, there were 305 Al-Anon and seven Alateen groups. They now have 79 Al-Anon and no Alateen groups. They are currently exploring ways to increase their membership.

International Coordination Committee

Connie H./Debbie G. Chairperson

Debbie G./Marilyn M. Co-Chairperson

Marsha W. Associate Director of Membership Outreach—International

The International Coordination Committee (ICC) started planning for the 2016 International Al-Anon General Services Meeting (IAGSM) that takes place in Rome, Italy, October 5-8, 2016. The theme for this meeting is “Sharing Worldwide Diversity: Strengthening Our Growth.”

The purpose of the IAGSM is to share the experience of Al-Anon national services around the world through its Delegates. Every two years at the IAGSM, national structures have the opportunity to meet in a face-to-face setting. The topics of the Delegate-led presentations and workshops during this meeting are the result of the input received from General Service Offices (GSOs), Delegates, and the ICC.

Zonal Meetings

A Zonal Meeting is an informational meeting held every two years for countries with General Service Offices or evolving service structures.

European Zonal Meeting (EZM)

Brugge, Belgium was the site for the EZM. The dates were August 21-23 and the General Service Offices (GSOs) for Belgium (French) and Belgium (Flemish) co-hosted the event. The theme was “Participation is the Key to Harmony.” Those sending representation included Belgium (French), Belgium (Flemish), Finland, France, Germany, Poland, Russia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland (French), UK & Eire, and the US and Canada. Topics discussed included communication, service, literature, Alateen, and finance.

Central American Zonal Meeting (RECACSA)

The 2015 RECACSA was hosted by the Al-Anon Information Service (AIS) for Nicaragua on November 13-15, in the city of Managua. The theme for this meeting was “Un sol Pais”—one single country. The countries represented at this meeting were Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama, and the US and Canada. Each structure presented a report sharing public outreach activities, and service work. Many shared about the growth of Al-Anon/Alateen in their respective structures.

Ibero-American Zonal Meeting (RIASA)

Paraguay was the host country for the 2015 RIASA. The city was Asuncion, and the GSO in Paraguay hosted this two day event. Nine structures were represented and included Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Ecuador, Mexico, Peru, Paraguay, Uruguay, and the United States and Canada. After a welcoming dinner on the evening of November 13th, the meeting took place on the 14th and 15th. The agenda included various presentations and discussions on topics such as “How to cooperate with A.A.” and “Where to find volunteers.”

BUSINESS SERVICES

During 2015, we replaced e-Communities with AFG Connects. We also developed a system for potential members to find a meeting on the Web site.

The French and Spanish Members' Web sites were redesigned during 2015 and the content management systems for the Public Outreach sites and the Member's Web site in English were upgraded.

Other non-routine actions included:

Approved the extension of the trial of selling the softcover book of *How Al-Anon Works* (B-32) for an additional three-year period.

Approved the WSO preliminary budget and the ticket price of \$55.00 per ticket for the 65th Anniversary Banquet.

Worked on a Finance Committee presentation for the 2016 World Service Conference.

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Jennie M., Chairperson

David Zach, Director of Business Services

The Finance Committee meets monthly and reports to the Executive Committee immediately following the Finance meeting. During the Conference, the Finance Committee reports directly to the Board.

Responsibilities of the Finance Committee include monitoring expenses, cash flow, aligning the budget of estimated income and expenses, and recommending that the Board of Trustees set aside funds in reserve when appropriate. The Committee's oversight ensures that we remain solvent.

The Committee reviews the financial feasibility of proposed projects not already included in the budget, taking into consideration the goals and desired outcomes, cost-effectiveness, timing, and the relationship to the Strategic Plan. Additionally, it sets prices for new or existing literature. The Committee reports those actions to the Executive Committee.

Other routine functions include:

Approval of the quarterly Appeal letters.

Review of handouts on previous year's contributions received from the U.S. and Canada for distribution at the World Service Conference.

Recommendation of the equalized expense amount to send a Delegate to the World Service Conference to the Board of Trustees.

Review, revise when appropriate, and submit recommendations for the Investment Strategy Goals to the Board of Trustees for approval.

Review of each department's budget with the Director of that service in preparing the Preliminary 2016 Budget for presentation to the Board of Trustees in January.

Review Investment Philosophy.

Review Finance Committee Goals and Objectives.

Review the Investments in the Reserve Fund

Meeting with the Investment Managers twice a year.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Trustees at Large

Tina B.	Judy K.	Karen W-P.
Terry F.	Jennie McC.	
Connie H.	John McL.	

Regional Trustees

Paula B., US Southeast	Therese S., Canada East
Joyce B., US Southwest	Joan S., US Northeast
Donna E., US Northwest	Annette T., US South Central
Debbie G., US North Central	Leona W., Canada Central
Marilyn M., Canada West	

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Bev A., Chairperson	Judy K., Policy Chairperson
Mary G., Executive Director	Roger C., Member at Large
Paula B., Board Chairperson (Ex-officio)	J.P. M., Member at Large
Jennie McC., Treasurer	Marsha W., Staff member

NON-TRUSTEE COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

Carrie K., Executive Committee for Real Property Management
Chairperson**

WORLD SERVICE OFFICE STAFF

Mary G., Executive Director	Pamela Walters, Marketing Information Analyst*
David Zach, Director of Business Services*	Pat Q., Associate Director of Communications—Media
Claire R., Associate Director of Communications— Professionals	Suzanne M., Associate Director of Member Services— Conference
Cory O., Associate Director of Member Services—Groups**	Tom C., Associate Director of Communications—Literature
Marsha W., Associate Director of Member Services— International	

INTERNATIONAL REPRESENTATIVE

Lourdes C., Mexico**

*Non-member, non-voting

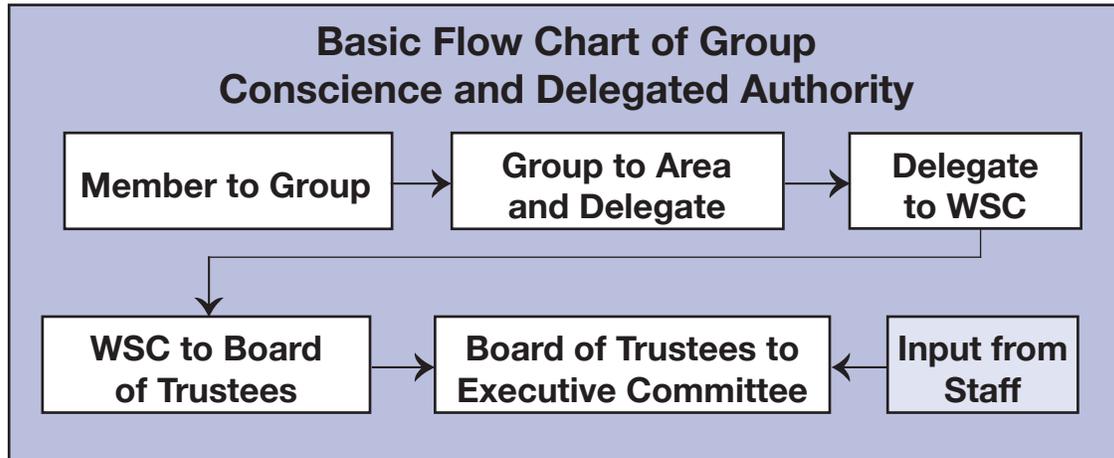
**Non-voting

AREA DELEGATES

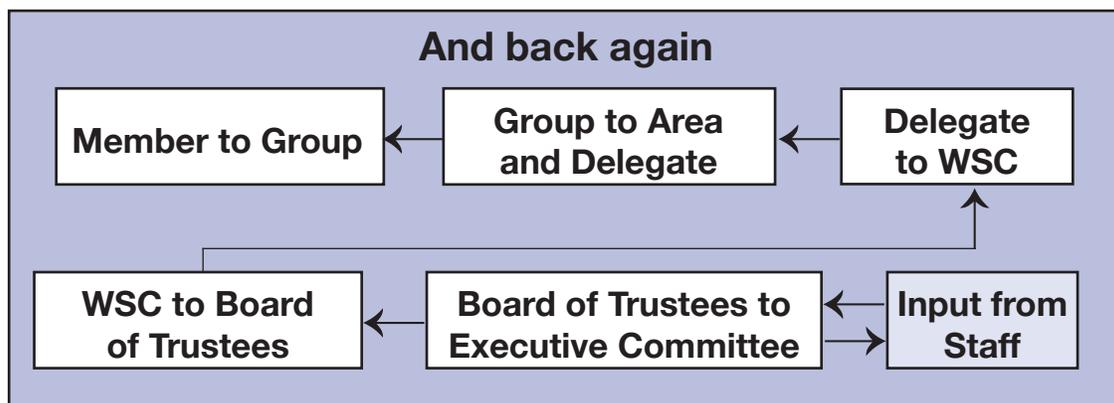
Marty W., Alabama/Northwest Florida	Jud L., New Mexico/El Paso
Liesel B., Alaska	Diane C., New York North
Norma F., Alberta/Northwest Territories	Michele R., New York South
Barb L., Arizona	Valentina H., North Carolina/ Bermuda
Jinkie R., Arkansas	Carol T., North Dakota
Janis A., British Columbia/Yukon	Ginny C., Ohio
Yvonne D., California North	Laura D., Oklahoma
Elizabeth K., California South	Diane B., Ontario North
Eloy M., Colorado	Debbie P., Ontario South
Ann B., Connecticut	Cindy E., Oregon
Jean M., Delaware	Barbara G., Pennsylvania
Wendy R., Florida North	Betty A., Puerto Rico
Patricia K., Florida South	Gaston A., Quebec East
Renelle M., Georgia	Loraine D., Quebec West
Dana Rae H., Hawaii	Phyllis H., Rhode Island
Nancy Jo W., Idaho	Jennifer B., Saskatchewan
Sandy W., Illinois North	Joyce H., South Carolina
Lyri M., Illinois South	Kathleen A., South Dakota
Brenda L., Indiana	Tarcila F., Tennessee
Virginia B., Iowa	Joyce Y., Texas East
Betty R., Kansas	Chris C., Texas West
Lori H., Kentucky	Patrick M., Utah
Angela A., Louisiana	Kenneth R., Vermont
Sandy F., Maine	Duane F., Virginia
Debbie H., Manitoba/Northwest Ontario	Julie P., Washington
Tony S., Maritime Provinces	Marilyn M., West Virginia
Connie C., Maryland/District of Columbia	Don B., Wisconsin and the Upper Peninsula of Michigan
Richard McC., Massachusetts	Sherry H., Wyoming
Mike D., Michigan	
Rachelle C., Minnesota North	
Mary H., Minnesota South	
Angie R., Mississippi	
Karen L., Missouri	
Elaine D., Montana	
Jan R., Nebraska	
Janice B., Nevada	
Maxine D., Newfoundland/ Labrador	
Patricia W., New Hampshire	
Ann Marie Z., New Jersey	

Path to Group Conscience through delegated authority

See pages 10 – 16 for more information regarding the Conference Orientation session outlining delegated authority as it relates to Conference discussions and decisions.



Note that the Executive Committee often receives input from the World Service Office staff as it works with projects.



This chart shows how both delegated authority and group conscience goes back through the same channels. Communication is what makes the process work.