



Al-Anon Family Groups

Help and hope for families and friends of alcoholics

phone: 757.563.1600
fax: 757.563.1656

al-anon.org
wso@al-anon.org

October 2022 Chairperson of the Board Letter

Dear Al-Anon and Alateen members,

The purpose of this Chairperson of the Board (COB) Letter is to share with you some of the highlights from the October 2022 Board Week. You will also find updates from our Policy Chairperson, a Finance Update from our Treasurer, and a Conference Leadership Team (CLT) Update.

Road Trip! You and Your Board Connect:

After postponing the Road Trip! You and Your Board Connect! Event for the past two years, we were at last able to hold the 7th Road Trip! In Cleveland, Ohio on October 29th! Registration for the day totaled 137 guests, which is a record number! Thank you to all who attended. For those of you who may be wondering, Road Trip! is an all-day event designed to bring the Al-Anon fellowship together in an engaging way. This year's agenda had an actual road trip theme, which included:

- Stopping at roadside attractions (presentations on the work of Board Committees)
- Stopping at scenic overlooks (personal Al-Anon shares by Board and Executive Committee members)
- Traveling through a construction zone (presentation on how the Envisioned Future Work Group, WSO Staff, Executive Committee, and the Board of Trustees all work together)
- Traveling through roundabouts (table topic discussions)
- Paying the toll at the toll booth (Finance Committee presentation)

It was a day packed full of information and fun. We got to meet new Al-Anon friends and connect with Al-Anon friends we already knew.

We are already thinking about the 2023 Road Trip!, which will be held at the end of October Board Week. The location for the event will be revealed after the January 2023 Board meeting.

Finance Update:

At the end of September, our year-to-date literature sales remain below revised budgeted expectations—literature sales have not returned to pre-pandemic numbers—and our year-to-date contributions remain above revised budgeted expectations. Staff continues to cut costs where needed and our year-to-date expenses are slightly below budget. Thank you for continuing to send your contributions! Please see the financial update attached to this letter for more details.

International Coordination Committee (ICC) Update:

The 21st International Al-Anon General Services Meeting (IAGSM) was held October 12-15, 2022 in London, England. In attendance were all the members of the ICC and 27 Delegates from 18 countries. The theme of the 2022 IAGSM is “Connecting Hearts and Minds Around the World.” Some of the agenda topics for the IAGSM were: Alateen Safety Requirements, Rejuvenating Public Outreach after COVID, Filling Service Roles, Welcoming and Supporting Al-Anon Family Groups Meeting Electronically, Finances, and Trademark and Copyright Issues (such as sharing Conference Approved Literature [CAL] and reprint permissions). Do any of those topics sound like topics that have been discussed in your structure, Area, District, AIS, or home group? It was fantastic being able to be face to face for this IAGSM, as the 2020 IAGSM was held virtually via AFG Connects.

Prior to attending the IAGSM, six members of the ICC, in two teams of three people each, had the opportunity to visit several countries. One team visited Norway, Latvia, Lithuania, and The Netherlands. The other team visited Turkey, Bulgaria, Hungary, and Switzerland. Both teams met in France to visit the French General Service Office (GSO). At each country visited we received warm welcomes and many love gifts. Each country set the agenda for the meetings with topics that were relevant for that country and provided translators as needed. At several locations the ICC members were asked to give a personal share. Each country had many questions for us. Some of the questions or topics that came up at each country were:

- How can we encourage members to do service?
- How do we start an Alateen group?
- How can we use social media for public outreach?
- How can we translate and reprint CAL?
- How do we handle conflict within the groups?
- How do we welcome newcomers?
- How do we sponsor people? Which literature should we use?

I am sure some of those topics are familiar to many of you. What I learned is that Al-Anon members around the world have many of the same problems, which are not that different from mine. Many of the members I met are literally pioneers in their countries, just like Lois and Anne. I met members who are passionate about Al-Anon and are working tirelessly to make sure they have Al-Anon Family Groups in their country. Some Al-Anon members around the world are not able to get literature in their language, which is a barrier. I am glad Staff at the WSO is continuing to work on the Org 05-3 Strategy: Collaborate to Improve CAL Availability Globally.

In order to keep the lines of communication open with international structures, countries with an evolving structure, and groups in countries without a structure, an International Team has been formed at the World Service Office (WSO). Questions or requests for more information can be directed to the International Team at the following email address:

international@al-anon.org

Now for some exciting news! At the last ICC meeting, it was determined that Honduras has met the requirements and is now ready to become a General Service Office (GSO). The ICC recommended to the Board, and the Board unanimously passed, a motion to allow Honduras to become a GSO!

For more information on Al-Anon internationally, go to:

<https://al-anon.org/for-members/international/>

Envisioned Future Work Group (EFWG):

The EFWG led a discussion at the October Board meeting regarding diversity and inclusivity. The Board was given reading material and videos to review ahead of the October Board meeting to help generate discussion. At the Board meeting, the Work Group presented a panel discussion which included five variables that contribute to diversity:

- Socioeconomic
- Cultural/Geographic
- Disability
- Race
- Gender

After the Board had a thoughtful discussion, a decision was made to hire an outside consultant to present a workshop at the January 2023 Board meeting on the topic of diversity and inclusivity. The Board will continue to have discussions on the topic of diversity and inclusivity.

Board Development:

With the help of a WSO Staff member, the Board was introduced to an assessment tool that identifies the six activities required for a task or any type of work and measures the fulfillment that comes with a particular skill or activity so we can see what we are passionate about and what brings us joy. Each Board member took the assessment and was provided with a report which identified which types of activities bring them joy and which bring them frustration. One application for what we learned by taking the assessment is in assigning Board members to committees, work groups, or thought and task forces.

Open Board Meeting at World Service Conference (WSC):

At the July 2019 Board meeting, the Board made a decision not to include an open Board meeting as part of the WSC agenda, beginning with the 2020 WSC. At the 2022 WSC, an open Policy Committee meeting was held. (An open Policy Committee meeting is held once every three years at the WSC.) This open Policy Committee meeting gave WSC Delegates a real view into the spiritual nature of Policy Committee discussions. The feedback received from Delegates was overwhelmingly positive. As a result of this positive feedback, the Board held a discussion about bringing back an open Board meeting to the WSC. Part of the discussion centered around the benefits of Delegates seeing how a Board meeting works. Currently, the only exposure Delegates have to what the Board does is the Annual Meeting, which is not a true reflection of the work of the Board. After a thoughtful discussion, the Board passed a motion to request for the CLT to add an open Board meeting to the WSC agenda at least once every three years. The Board looks forward to being able to share our work at an upcoming WSC.

WSO Volunteer Room Requirements:

After a thorough and thoughtful discussion, which included conversations about current Board practices, the benefits gained from sharing a room with another volunteer, the Board's fiduciary responsibility, and changes brought about by the COVID pandemic, the Board passed a consensus to update the language in the Trustee requirements to reflect that it is preferable to share a room with another WSO Volunteer, but it is not a requirement. This change will go into effect immediately.

International Convention:

The 2023 Al-Anon International Convention will be held June 29 – July 2, 2023 at the Albuquerque Convention Center in Albuquerque, New Mexico. The theme for the 2023 International Convention is “New Hopes, New Friends, Renewed Recovery.” Registration opened on November 8, 2022. For the latest updates, go to:

<https://al-anon.org/wso-events/2023-al-anon-international-convention/>

Nominating Committee:

As part of the Board of Trustees' efforts to move towards a skill-based approach to selecting Trustees, the Nominating Committee brought a recommendation to the Board to consider asking each Trustee candidate to provide references. References will inform the Board about candidates' skills and service experience to help in the decision whether to move the candidate forward. Some of what the Board discussed included the principles of anonymity and confidentiality, and what method would be used to obtain the reference information, e.g., written letter, phone call, or survey. After discussion, the Board passed a motion to approve the Nominating Committee asking Trustee candidates for confidential Al-Anon and skills-based references for a volunteer position on a non-profit Board on a two-year trial basis. More will be revealed as the Nominating Committee and the Board transition into a skill-based approach for selecting Trustees.

WSO Staff Speaking to the Media:

At the July 2022 Board meeting, as part of the Strategic Plan update, the Board was presented with an update and a memo regarding the Pub 13 Strategy: Staff Speaking Professionally. During the discussion, some of the items considered by the Board were WSO Staff being experts in their field, the principle of anonymity, and Traditions Eight, Eleven, and Twelve. Based on the information presented and after discussion the Board passed a consensus to confirm that WSO Staff who are members of Al-Anon are permitted to speak at relevant professional conferences in their professional AFG, Inc. capacity without revealing their membership. At the October 2022 Board meeting, the Board had further discussion on WSO Staff speaking to the media in a professional capacity. The discussion held was based on the same considerations listed above. At the end of the discussion the Board passed a motion to allow appropriately trained and approved WSO Staff to speak to the media in a professional capacity, provided that they do not reveal their membership.

Service Manual:

Some of you may have been wondering when the printed copy of the *2022-2025 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27) v2 will be available. The delays in having the printed copy available have to do with significant supply chain delays which are being experienced globally due to the pandemic. The delays did provide the opportunity to include the changes approved at the 2022 WSC in the printed copy (v2). The printed copy of the *Service Manual* will be available by the end of the year. An announcement will be made when it becomes available.

I want to close this letter with a heartfelt goodbye to the Panel 60 WSC Delegates, who will be finishing their term at the end of this year. Thank you for your service and commitment to Al-Anon Family Groups so that families and friends of alcoholics can continue to find help and hope. We wish you all the best in whatever your Higher Power has planned for you in the future.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lynette K.".

Lynette K.

Chairperson, Board of Trustees