

2015 World Service Conference Summary

55th

Annual WSC

World Service Conference 2015

LIVING OUR SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLES EXPANDINGOUR VISION.....

Viviendo nuestros principios espirituales
Ampliando nuestra visión

Vivons nos principes spirituels
Élargissons notre vision

AL-ANON FAMILY GROUPS 2015 WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE

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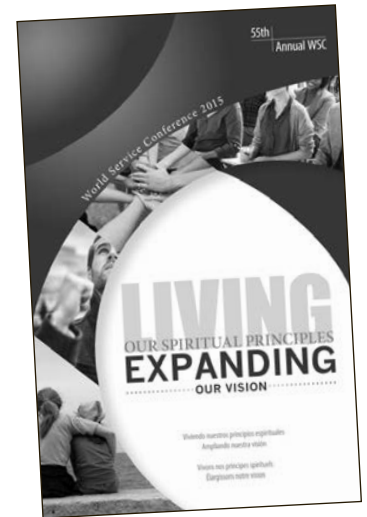
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**“Our World
Service
Conference (WSC)
is the active voice
and the effective
group conscience
of our society in
world affairs.”**

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

©Al-Anon Family Group
Headquarters, Inc. 2015

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.

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LIVING
OUR SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLES
EXPANDING
.....OUR VISION.....

Viviendo nuestros principios espirituales
Ampliando nuestra visión

Vivons nos principes spirituels
Élargissons notre vision

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

The day before the 2015 Conference convened, the Chairperson of the Board reviewed the roles of the 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. They are not decision-making bodies. They make recommendations. Each body's objective is to complete its activity and present it to the originating body to move forward.

World Service Conference (WSC) Thought and Task Forces are originated by the Board of Trustees. Future Thought and Task Forces are determined following a WSC Thought/Task Force presentation, discussion of proposed or presented Chosen Agenda Items, or request in response to the Chairperson of the Board letter.

Paula B.

Chairperson, Board of Trustees

Definitions

• A Committee:

- ✓ is formed by the Board of Trustees
- ✓ responds to an ongoing need of Al-Anon Family Groups
- ✓ does not manage or conduct the active affairs of the service department it is related to (such as Public Outreach, Literature, etc.)
- ✓ makes recommendations about work it is doing or considering
- ✓ is often thought to be a permanent part of an organization
- ✓ can be an originating body, which means a thought 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
- ✓ can be considered a permanent part of the organization that has formed it
- ✓ can be an originating body, which means a thought or task force may evolve from a work group
- ✓ completes an activity and presents to the originating body to move forward

• A Thought Force:

- ✓ is temporary unit of people established to brainstorm ideas and to develop strategies on a single defined task or activity
- ✓ uses the resources available provided by the members of the thought force, knowing that some members may have additional information
- ✓ is not expected to have all the answers, or to provide the final solutions
- ✓ uses the Knowledge-Based Decision-Making questions, primarily "Things we don't know but wish we did," if there are facts that are unknown
- ✓ presents its information to the originating body to 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
- ✓ uses the resources available, provided by the members of the task force, knowing that some members may have additional information
- ✓ implements a strategy developed by a thought force. Task forces are the "doers"



Roles of the Members:

- Delegates, Staff, and Trustees
 - ✓ have equal voice
 - ✓ ideas are given the same weight
 - ✓ bring a different perspective with various experiences or understandings of the issue
- Everyone's role is the same except for Chairperson and Recorder, who have additional responsibilities.
 - ✓ Chairperson:
 - ♦ Planning the meeting
 - builds the agenda—a plan of action
 - reviews the agenda with the group and asks for input and agreement
 - sets ground rules for discussion
 - sets up meeting times, dates, methods of communication, and the tentative purpose of each meeting
 - ensures that the job is done to accurately meet the charge, including submission of paperwork to Executive Committee
 - ♦ During the meeting
 - gives everyone an equal voice, and allows a few minutes for venting, if needed
 - helps the group maintain a sense of unity
 - ensures group agreement on the outcome
 - ✓ Recorder (member selected within the group):
 - ♦ writes down key ideas and other information
 - ♦ asks for clarity, when needed
 - ♦ assists Chairperson as requested

Responsibilities of the Members:

- Be sure that you understand the charge:
 - ✓ Why has this task been assigned?
 - ✓ What are we meant to accomplish?
 - ✓ What are we not meant to accomplish?
 - ✓ What information do we need?
- Ask questions and get clarity in the beginning
 - ✓ The Chairperson of the Board meets with each thought and task force prior to the World Service Conference, to review the background information and charge for clarity
 - ✓ Please ask questions if you need clarity, so that you can be successful
 - ✓ If you think you are clear and then find out you're not, ask for clarity again
- Stay on course of the charge as written, and be careful to not put your own interpretation on the charge, or what you would like the charge to be
- If the conversation gets off track, 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. If unable to complete a task or to be available on a given date, let the Chairperson know
- Be open to accept constructive criticism when the project is up for review
- Brainstorm and share the work with each other

2015 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 53 (2013-2015)	Panel 54 (2014-2016)	Panel 55 (2015-2017)
Conference Committee on Trustees	Rosemarie K., Chair, MP Darcy N., ALNWFL Christine S., WV	Patrick M., Chair Elect, UT Jennifer B., SK Ann B., CT Virginia B., IA	Elizabeth K., CA(S) Brenda L., IN Wendy R., FL(N)
Literature Committee	Lisa B-C., OK Doris K., MN(N) Cathy T., WIUPMI	Jud L., NM/EP Lyri M., IL(S)	Debbie H., MB/NWO Patricia K., FL(S) Betty R., KS Joyce Y., TX(E)
Public Outreach Committee	Marilyn B., CO Donna J., ND Lois K., BC/YT	Liesel B., AK Sherry H., WY Nancy Jo W., ID Pat W., NH	Connie C., MD/DC Yvonne de G., CA(N)
Task Force: Acceptance of Communities, Cultures, and Beliefs	Maryon K., AB/NWT Bud S., VT	Karen L., Chair, MO Kathleen A., SD Betty A., PR	Mike D., MI Barbara G., PA
Task Force: Communication and Strengthening the Links of Service	Sue C., WA Vali F., AZ Cathy O'D., GA	Angela A., Chair, LA Janice B., NV Diane B., ON(N)	Ginny C., OH Loraine D., QC(W) Dana Rae H., HI Tarcila F., TN
Task Force: Meeting Types	Colleen G., OR Connie W., MT	Jinkie R., Chair, AR Sandy F., ME	Chris C., TX(W) Diane C., NY(N) Lori H., KY Debbie P., ON(S)
Task Force: Technology and Anonymity	Rich M., NJ Solange R., QC(E)	Jan R., Chair, NE Maxine D., NF/LAB Michele R., NY(S)	Phyllis H., RI Mary H., MN(S) Sandy W., IL(N)

SHARING AREA HIGHLIGHTS

Prior to the opening of the 2015 World Service Conference (WSC), a session was held for the Delegates to share Area successes and challenges. All other Conference members were invited to attend as guests with no voice. During the session, the Sharing Area Highlights Chairperson Doris K., Panel 53, Minnesota North, and Cathy T., Panel 53, Wisconsin and the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, asked Delegates to share for two minutes on their Area's successes and challenges. 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 shared their previously submitted successes concerns and special projects.

Area successes included:

- Using technology to review and update documents in real time at Assembly and Webinars for Area World Service Committee meetings.
- Updating job descriptions.
- Emphasizing Traditions and Concepts to decrease communication conflicts.
- Placing Al-Anon posters on trains and selling smaller sized ones to groups for public outreach projects.
- Expanding technology by playing PSAs and podcasts before Assembly.
- Developing rules for voting and using the kit, *Using Al-Anon Principles to Resolve Conflict* (K-70), changed Assembly atmosphere.
- Making a budget helped groups to have money.
- Involving Group Representatives (GRs) in the decision-making process.

Area concerns included:

- Difficulty filling Coordinator and District Representative positions.
- Stimulating GR Assembly participation.
- Blurring boundaries between Alateens and Alateen Group Sponsors at meetings.
- Addressing groups that operate outside the Traditions.
- Attracting participation of Spanish-speaking groups.
- Declining Alateen participation and lack of Alateen Group Sponsors.
- Challenging geography in serving rural areas.

Before the session ended, Lyri M., Panel 54, Illinois South, was elected to serve as Chairperson for Sharing Area Highlights in 2016, and Maxine D., Panel 54, Newfoundland/Labrador, was elected to serve as Recorder for the 2016 session.



OPENING DINNER

The evening before the 2015 World Service Conference (WSC) convened, Conference members and International Representatives attended an Opening Dinner. The Conference Co-Chairperson welcomed them and opened with the Conference theme: “Living Our Spiritual Principles: Expanding Our Vision.”

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, saying, “This week we will be celebrating 55 years of the World Service Conference. Tonight, and throughout the week, as we socialize with one another, renew old friendships, and make new ones, let us use our spiritual principles as tools to assist us as we move forward discussing new possibilities for the future of Al-Anon Family Groups.”

The Chairperson of Board welcomed new Conference members and introduced the Board of Trustees and Executive Committee. The Executive Director introduced the staff and asked everyone to use our spiritual principles saying, “Nothing has caused me to expand my vision more than those principles found in our Three Legacies. They are what we offer to the world. We want to make sure that we remember that our number one job is to offer hope to the world.”

Following dinner, the Conference Chairperson invited the Conference Mentors to “pin” the new Panel 55 Delegates and new Conference members. Each first-time Conference attendee received a 2015 WSC pin.

Roger C., Executive Committee member, was the opening dinner speaker. (See page 92 for his 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.” The evening closed with the Al-Anon Declaration in French, Spanish, and English.

Sandie D.

Conference Co-Chairperson,
Trustee

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.*



Al-Anon Family Groups ®
hope for families & friends of alcoholics

La déclaration d'Al-Anon

Ça commence par moi
Lorsque quelqu'un, quelque part, tend la
main en quête d'aide, que la main d'Al-Anon
et d'Alateen soit toujours là — et que
ça commence par moi



Les Groupes familiaux Al-Anon ®
pour les familles et les amis des alcooliques

Declaración de Al-Anon

Que empiece por mí
Cuando alguien, dondequiera que sea, pida
ayuda, que nunca falte allí la mano de Al-
Anon y Alateen, y — *Que empiece por mí.*



Grupos de Familia Al-Anon ®
esperanza para familiares y amigos de alcohólicos

CONFERENCE THEME AND OPENING REMARKS

Tina B.
Conference Chairperson, Trustee

Sandie D.
Conference Co-Chairperson, Trustee

Suzanne M.
Associate Director of
Member Services—Conference

The 2015 Conference theme, “Living Our Spiritual Principles; Expanding Our Vision,” laid the foundation for the spiritual tone of this year’s World Service Conference. The ideas in this year’s theme led to thoughtful discussion, creative thinking, and focused decision-making throughout this 2015 World Service Conference (WSC) held at the Wyndham Virginia Beach Resort Hotel in Virginia Beach, Virginia, April 19-23.

This year’s Conference was opened by the Conference Chairperson with a moment of silence followed by the Serenity Prayer. She continued her greeting, “Today we will begin the 55th World Service Conference. Can you feel the love and energy of those who came before you? Pause also, to take a moment to feel the love and support of those who sent you here to do this work to guarantee Al-Anon’s future. You have been entrusted to protect what our pioneers set in motion and continue to build the future that will ensure Al-Anon is vibrantly growing for those yet to come. What an awesome privilege and responsibility.

“We have been fortunate enough to inherit our pioneers’ forward-thinking vision which created a service structure that is powered by you, our leaders, grounded in our spiritual principles, and guided by our Higher Power. Together, this Conference forms the largest group conscience of our Al-Anon Family Groups.

“Our World Service Conference Charter defines the Al-Anon World Service Conference as a ‘body of principles and relationships through which Al-Anon as a whole can function.’ This week, we will hear important updates, reports, and presentations by Selected Committees, Thought and Task Forces, the Board of Trustees, and the WSO staff. We will also be discussing issues of concern in Areas and matters affecting Al-Anon as a whole. As Conference members, we will be asked to listen, engage in dialogue, request more information when warranted, make decisions, and create new plans. We are asked to do all these things working as equals; striving for unanimity; and always remaining democratic in thought and action.

“Lois knew Al-Anon would need to grow and change as the world around us changed—in *Lois Remembers* (B-7) she says, ‘We believe in the principles upon which AA and Al-Anon are founded are fundamental for all time and all people. And yet our individual acceptance and application of these principles must continue to grow or we as societies will perish. For stagnation is retrogression. There is no standing still.’

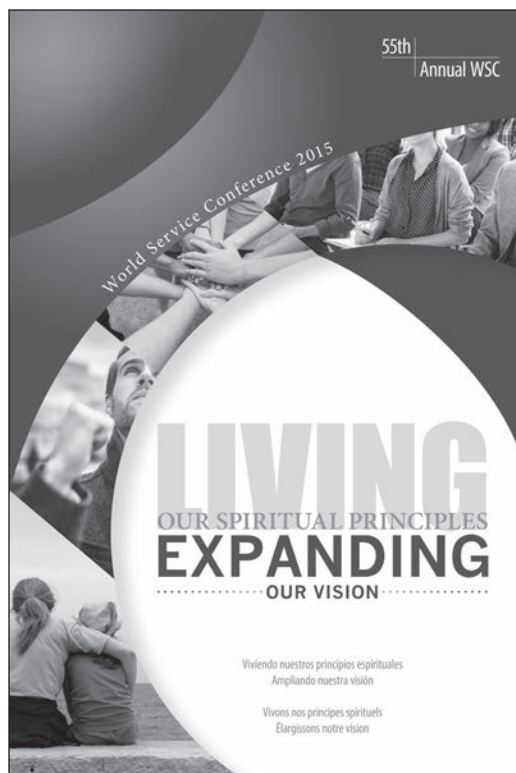
“As members of this Conference, we are the guardians of both Al-Anon’s world services and our Twelve Traditions. It is a great responsibility to listen and share openly and honestly, then to accept the authority granted us to vote our conscience on each issue presented. We will be challenged daily to exhibit strong leadership qualities and to truly *live* our spiritual principles. We will also be challenged to move beyond ‘this is how we have always done it,’ to expand our thinking into seeing a new vision of what could be.

“Have confidence in that all of us are present at this Conference not by chance, but by design. The groups, in tune with the guidance of our Higher Power, have chosen wisely. Trust that you will have all you need to perform brilliantly for the task at hand. Through trust in, and respect for our service structure and your willingness to participate, we come together to form the decision-making body of our Al-Anon Family Groups. I will repeat: What an awesome privilege and responsibility.

“We have all felt the depths of despair that alcoholism brings to the friends and family members who are touched by it. Those of us blessed by finding recovery in the rooms of Al-Anon know a new strength, a new hope, and a new vision. Let us join together this week to ensure all those affected by someone else’s drinking find hope and recovery in Al-Anon.”

As she rapped the gavel, the Conference Chairperson concluded her opening by saying, “With our spiritual principles in the forefront and our vision toward the future, please, join me in opening the 55th 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 people who could provide critical information to the Conference, representatives from other structures, and staff members who attended for one day 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*

Silke S.

*International Representative—Germany
Al-Anon Member*

Nuala C.

*International Representative—UK & Eire
Al-Anon Member*

Lourdes Maria C.

*International Representative—Mexico
Al-Anon Member*

With voice limited to the Universal Understanding of Recovery discussion, the Everyone Everywhere/Metrix Marketing Survey results, and the 2015 Membership Survey results, 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 2015 World Service Conference as designated, with no voice and no vote:

Colette Norman

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

Valerie Stump

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

Sergio Z.

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

Sharon B.

*Group Services Assistant II
Al-Anon Member*

Julie M.

*Communications Manager
Al-Anon Member*

The Motion carried by consensus. (See WSC Motion #1, page 101)

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 55th World Service Conference. Our theme, ‘Living Our Spiritual Principles: Expanding Our Vision,’ will provide our focus this week. The foundation for all of our discussions will start with our spiritual principles and our conversations will expand our vision as we look to the future and Al-Anon’s place in it.

“As Trusted Servants, we strive to allow the spiritual principles of our Legacies to permeate our every thought and action. The principle of Mutual Respect ensures that the voices of all Conference members are heard. These voices bring the thoughts, ideas, and concerns of our current and future members to the discussion. Responsibility, another spiritual principle, reminds us to listen with an open mind. Once heard, we accept the group conscience because we know that our Higher Power was present in our discussions and decisions.

“We will think abundantly as we look at and access our resources this week both in the ideas and goals provided by members, trusted servants, and service structures as well as our financial resources. We are grateful for these tools that help us expand our vision.

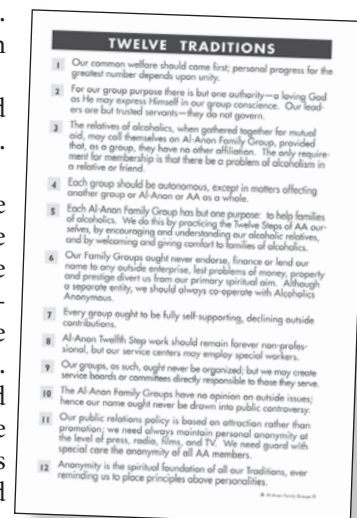
“As we begin the Conference by discussing our roles, we look to Concepts Two, Six, and the principle of Delegated Authority. The Conference is composed of the Delegates, Board of Trustees, Executive Committee members, and the voting members of the World Service Office administrative staff. The differing perspectives and responsibilities of each group are essential to turning our Conference discussions and decisions into actions that will benefit the fellowship. The Area Delegate brings the voice of the Area; the WSO brings the broad knowledge of worldwide Al-Anon and AFG, Incorporated. Through our Conference discussions, goals and directions on behalf of the fellowship are identified and delegated to the Board of Trustees, Executive Committee, and the World Service Office staff. One of the benefits of having these trusted servants as equal members of the World Service Conference is to ensure firsthand knowledge of the goals and desires of the largest group conscience of Al-Anon and Alateen.

“This week, I encourage you to contemplate and identify the spiritual principles found in all discussions, presentations, and even in controversy, for it is in reaching inward that we spiritually expand outward.”

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

Paula B.

Chairperson, Board of Trustees



ORIENTATION

Paula B.
Chairperson, Board of Trustees

The Chairperson of the Board conducted a short orientation in order that Conference members all had 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.

After reviewing the goals, the Chairperson asked if the Conference agreed with these goals. There was agreement by a show of hands.

Personal Goal

The Chairperson then asked Conference members to consider and write down a personal goal that they would like to achieve at the Conference.

The Chairperson shared her goal with Conference members: “To actively listen to the spiritual principles found in all discussions and presentations and then balance this information with what is best for Al-Anon Family Groups worldwide.”

Conference members were asked to keep the Board Goals for the Conference in mind as they proceeded through the week doing the work of worldwide Al-Anon. The Chairperson shared that she would review the goals every morning before going to the Conference Room as a reminder of why she was here.

Roles

A discussion of roles at the Conference followed. Though Conference members do have differing perspectives and responsibilities, they also have many tasks that are the same. The following is a list of the different roles members have at the Conference:

Delegates

- Bring the viewpoint of their Area 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 Area to share a broader perspective of Al-Anon worldwide.

Trustees

- Are the chief service arm of the World Service Conference (WSC).
- 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.

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.
- Are responsible for carrying out the goals and directions of the WSC.

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 Representatives

- Listen and participate in discussions on matters affecting Al-Anon as a whole.
- Do not vote because they vote in their own structure.
- Gain information regarding Conference procedures and policies.

Executive Committee for Real Property Management (ECRPM) Chairperson

The ECRPM Chairperson is at the Conference to:

- Ensure that the spirit and letter of the resolution to create the ECRPM to handle the management of the property is complied with.
- Is the two-minute timer for all Conference discussions.
- Does not have voice or vote—is not a member of the Conference.

Non-Voting Staff

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

There are a few activities that the majority of Conference members—Delegates, Trustees, Executive Committee, and Voting Staff—participate in.

Two roles that are similar for Conference members:

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

The Chairperson noted that, in realizing this, each one of us in our role has the responsibility to share our thoughts and opinions as well as vote our conscience.

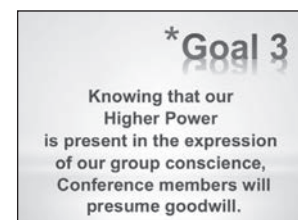
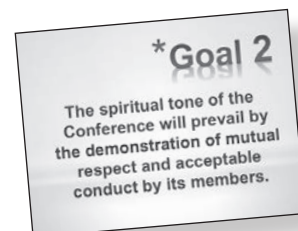
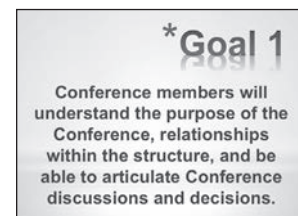
Differences in roles were then considered.

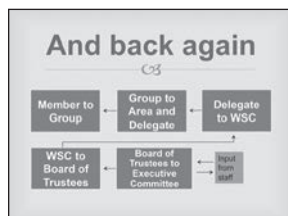
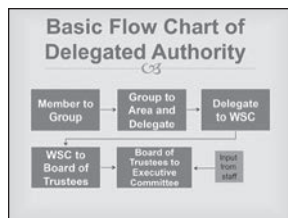
Conference members bring different:

- Perspectives
 - ✓ Delegates bring their Area's
 - ✓ Trustees bring the legal, financial, public outreach, and worldwide
 - ✓ Executive brings the legal, financial, public outreach, and worldwide
 - ✓ Staff brings the WSO perspective working with fellowship.
- Responsibilities
 - ✓ Delegates to their Areas and Conference
 - ✓ Trustees to the Organization, Conference, and the fellowship
 - ✓ Executive to the Board of Trustees and the fellowship
 - ✓ Staff to the Board of Trustees and the fellowship.

Delegated Authority

Now that we have clarity on our roles at the Conference, I want to talk a little about the Path to Group Conscience through delegated authority. In our roles, we have been given 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 the opportunity to speak my truth before voting. Concept Three is about this delegated authority. So, let's follow this Path to Group Conscience through delegated authority.





Member 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 of the Business Meeting. Then, a group conscience vote is taken. The Group Representative (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.

Group Representative (GR) to Delegate

The GRs go to the Area Assembly with their group's information, listen to opinions, and make decisions for Area Al-Anon as a whole. The GRs go back to their groups and report back the discussions while supporting the Area 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 World Service Conference (WSC).

Delegate to World Service Conference (WSC)

The Delegates then come to Conference from their Areas with all of their Area's concerns, questions, and experience. As this information is shared at the Conference, the Delegates also listen 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.

World Service Conference to Trustees

As stated in Concept Six, on page 194 of the *2014-2017 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*, "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."

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.

Trustees to Executive Committee

Delegated authority continues as it states in Concept Eight, "The Board of Trustees delegates full authority for routine management of Al-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. It reports all of its actions to the members of the Board who can ask questions and voice concerns. Then the actions of the Executive Committee are approved by the Board of Trustees.

Using a flowchart of the steps as I just explained, note that the Executive Committee often receives input from the World Service Office staff as it works with projects.

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

You just learned the path which will be used to carry your group conscience, but how do you achieve that group conscience at each point along the path?

The answer is a Knowledge-Based Decision-Making (KBDM) process to reach an informed group conscience. I would make the assumption that all of us here have at least heard of this process, referred to as KBDM, and many of us have had the chance to work with it.

There are five elements to KBDM; I will share the spiritual principles that I hear.

- Open communication between leadership and membership—Equality.
- Dialogue before deliberation—Patience.
- Common access to full information for all decision-makers—Honesty and Generosity.
- Existence in a culture of trust—Understanding and Trust.
- Confidence in the competency of our partners—Acceptance and Trust.

Relationship of WSC Participants

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. Our group conscience can only be totally informed if we all take seriously our responsibility to share all facts and opinions.

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 Al-Anon as a whole.

AFG, INC. VS. AFG, THE FELLOWSHIP

The Family Group idea is nearly as old as Alcoholics Anonymous (A.A.). In A.A.'s pioneering days 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, a number 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 introduction, the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson of the Board introduced a brief skit that demonstrated the difference between Al-Anon, the organization which Lois incorporated as Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. in 1954; and Al-Anon Family Groups, the fellowship.

Paula B.

Chairperson, Board of Trustees

Connie H.

Vice-Chairperson, Board of Trustees

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 logo, our copyrights, our trademarks (name).
- 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 excepted 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.

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.

APPROVALS

Jennie McC.

Treasurer, Trustee

David Zach

Director of Business Services

(Non-member)

2014 Auditor's Report

Each year, the Director of Business Services explains the purpose of the audit and its details. 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.

Prior to the Conference, a copy of the audit, including the opinion letter of the independent auditors, was posted on e-Communities 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 audit can be found on the Members' Web site al-anon.org/members. The Director of Business Services noted that there was a correction to a question about the frequency of International Al-Anon General Services Meetings (IAGSM) in the U.S. It should read every fourth year, not every tenth.

Conference members had the following questions:

- Contributions are lumped together by state. Can they be separated by Area?
There is no way to tell for everyone whether the member is in, for example, the California North Area or the California South Area.
- What is the reason for combining the departments of Fellowship Communication and Public Outreach in the Schedule of Functional Expenses? I would like to understand the expenses for each of those activities.
It is based on affinity, so types of work that are similar are combined into similar operations. Fellowship Communication is not looking at anything in the cost of printing and distribution of books. That is Literature Distribution Services. With Fellowship Communication and Public Outreach, we are looking at what the services are that those two departments provide to the fellowship; not a specific function. For Canada, we track specific activities within the departments, for example, the cost of the Canadian Public Outreach. Printing costs include the cost of printing The Forum for subscribers.
- Does land ever appreciate?
At the present time, the AICPA requires land and buildings to be reported at their cost, not at the appreciated value. We reported it at cost as required even though we believe it has appreciated.
- In your opinion, are we addressing that issue of salaries to a high degree? (Salary ranges, sentence 2) I want to see us as a good employer.
Salaries are looked at yearly and we make sure we are in line with the market. This year the Board is hiring a consulting firm to look at salary ranges and report to the Board of Trustees.
- The Reserve Fund keeps a yearly operating fund goal (Reserve Fund, page 15). Is that basically one year's operating expense?
The requirement is not to exceed one year's operating expense.

A Motion to approve the 2014 Audited Financial Report was made, seconded, and carried. (See Motion #2, page 101).

SCHEDULE 1

Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc.

	2015 Budget	2014 Actual
<u>Operating Expenses</u>		
Salaries	2,838,000	2,711,959
Payroll Taxes	206,000	197,613
Employee Benefits	<u>442,000</u>	<u>458,576</u>
Total Labor Costs	3,486,000	3,368,148
Building Occupancy	296,000	295,875
Packing & Shipping (Net)	(30,000)	(46,879)
Postage	255,000	293,807
Telephone	57,000	56,406
Stationery & Office Supplies	75,000	88,411
Outreach Activities	11,000	6,163
Office Services & Expenses	225,000	252,035
Repairs & Maintenance	8,000	9,307
Travel & Meetings	174,000	152,609
Direct Conference Costs (Net) Schedule 2	89,000	55,585
Legal & Audit	60,000	68,285
Printing	153,000	196,856
Canadian Office	2,000	1,432
General services meeting		16,870
In-Office Volunteers	2,000	1,450
Membership Survey	19,000	
PSA Campaign	86,000	97,463
Miscellaneous	36,000	33,759
Postretirement Health Benefits	<u>55,000</u>	<u>44,331</u>
Total Operating Expense	5,059,000	4,991,913
Depreciation (Exc. Bldg.)	58,000	55,655
Total Expense	5,117,000	5,047,568
<u>Estimated Revenue</u>		
Literature Sales less cost of printing	3,050,000	3,060,050
Contributions	1,700,000	1,521,388
Forum Subscriptions	250,000	242,117
Investment Income/Transfer from Reserve Fund	<u>65,000</u>	<u>207,818</u>
Total Estimated Revenue	5,065,000	5,031,373
Net increase (decrease)	(52,000)	(16,195)

Jennie McC.*Treasurer, Trustee***David Zach***Director of Business Services
(Non-member)***2015 Budget**

The 2015 Budget was presented to the Conference members by the Treasurer of the Board of Trustees of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. The 2015 Budget shows expenses are expected to be \$52,000 more than revenue for the year. We are estimating expenses to be \$5,117,000 and revenues to be \$5,065,000.

Projected Expenses

Overall expense is budgeted to increase by \$70,000 from last year's actual expenses. Labor costs are expected to increase \$126,000 due to new staff positions.

Estimated Income

Estimated income from literature sales is estimated to be about \$10,000 less than last year and *Forum* subscription income to be slightly higher. We are budgeting contributions to be \$1,700,000 which is about 8% 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 we have experienced lower increases in the value of the Reserve Fund than in the past, we reduced the amount for 2015 to about 1.1 percent.

It was also noted that:

- The purpose of the World Service Office (WSO) is to provide services and it is felt that more staff is needed. This is reflected in Labor Costs on Schedule I.
- Packing and Shipping has shown excess revenue over shipping costs and is estimated conservatively.
- Office Expenses reflect costs of Human Resource consulting.
- The Equalized Expense contributions were higher than budgeted, lowering the original estimate for Direct Conference costs.

We have gone from a \$1,000 excess in the Preliminary Budget to a \$52,000 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. The Board of Trustees posed the following question to the Conference members:

Does the WSC want to increase the projected Contributions to cover the projected deficit, increase the amount drawn from the Reserve Fund to cover the projected deficit, or leave the projected deficit at \$52,000?

The Treasurer asked Conference members to consider:

1. While authorized to transfer up to 4% of the average value of the last three years of the Reserve Fund to the General Fund, is it prudent to continue to deplete the Reserve Fund for this purpose?
2. If we do not make a transfer from the Reserve Fund to cover the projected deficit, how will we increase contributions by \$52,000?
3. If we continue to use transfers from the Reserve Fund, are we being fully self-supporting as suggested in the Seventh Tradition?
4. In 2014, 9,461 out of 15,496 groups (61%), of groups contributed an average of \$119 each.
5. If 100% of the groups contributed an average of \$119, group contributions alone would total \$1,844,024. Added to that would be individual and other service arms contributions.
6. If each of the 9,461 groups that contributed last year contributed an additional \$5.50, that would cover the \$52,000 projected deficit.
7. If each of the groups that contributed last year contributed an additional \$20, that would bring the total contributions to the budgeted amount of \$1,700,000 if individuals and service arms contributed what they contributed in 2014.
8. If each of the 9,461 groups that contributed last year contributed an additional \$25, and individuals and service arms contributed what they contributed in 2014, contributions would total \$1,752,000, covering the projected deficit and giving life to our collective abundant thinking in expressing our gratitude for what we have received from Al-Anon.

The Treasurer asked to hear the thoughts of Conference members:

- Does the \$65,000 transfer from the Reserve Fund reflect the 4% authorized reserve?
It is below 4%. We did not feel it would be prudent to go higher.
- Have you transferred up to 4% in past years?
Yes.
- Why don't you think it is prudent this time?
You saw that investments took a hit last year so the value is lower and that could change in 2015. We didn't want to deplete the reserve by taking more than is prudent. We didn't want to assume, so we are asking the Conference what it wants to do.
- If we don't fill positions that are currently open, would it save \$52,000?
Yes. This is based on filling positions by July so that would be seven months. Every month they are not filled is a saving. This is actually based on three positions: Associate Director of Member Services and two new positions posted two weeks ago. It also means a delay of projects or programs these people represent and we will have to make another set of choices.
- I try to think how to help the Area see the big picture. Detail makes people nitpicky. I'd like people to support them and to inspire great dreams. Last year the Treasurer said we do not have to have a balanced budget. Let's have people support the dream and not cut costs.
- Tradition Seven tells us we have no fees but we do have expenses and we have a responsibility to let the fellowship know when we are falling short. When our Alateen conference Sponsor stole money from Alateen, we put word out and they now have a little reserve. We say these are the expenses and 61% of the groups contribute 100% of what we need.
- My Area is creating abundance and the vision of abundance. The last panel had a budget and came up short. We put the budget out and talked about it and money came in. Our fellowship appreciates the transparency of how it is. A Higher Power will make it happen.
- I appreciate being allowed the opportunity to weigh in and not put a bandage on this. I will carry home a simple message, that investments are not swimming along and we are relying on our Traditions.
- If we take money out of the Reserve Fund, at some point it might not be there. The WSO wants to provide services to members. It costs money to do that and we need some additional staff. The Conference is an employer and if want additional staff, we need salaries for the employees and to pay benefits. When we tell the membership we have a need, they come forth. We built a building and the membership provided.
- When we show a deficit and call attention to it in the Area, that it is our ownership and our services, this has helped the Area increase the amount of giving. Taking from the Reserve Fund is no different than borrowing from a retirement fund. There is no way to get it back. The more reality-based we are around contributions and through the spirit of the WSC, the more able we are to transform to abundance. I think we can do it if people know. We have clarity on some of the services we are going to gain—trust the fellowship.
- We have been given a gift that we can use as a perfect opportunity to talk about abundance and trust in the fellowship. Take the \$52,000 divided by the number of registered, then divide by 52 weeks. The WSO could write a letter to attach to the documents we have now and in the letter include the amount the WSO spends on each group. Trust the fellowship and they will step forward
- A general call is sufficient to give more.
- I would suggest a conversation about the “break the buck barrier” budget or send the deficit budget with a birthday envelope with Lois's shoe.
- I would like to take back the idea of reaching \$1,750,000. That is a large number that is too abstract. Break it down more concretely to what it would mean from last year to this year.
- There was a pie chart of percentages where each dollar the WSO spent went. We could have a silent auction to bring a speaker to our Area. Dream it and live abundantly and people are willing to speak up and step up.

- I had conversation a few years ago and said if we got the message out to the groups and membership, they would respond. The idea of “Let It Begin with Me” made me look at what I could do to increase my own contributions. I need to have that conveyed again.
- I used to buy a brand name coffee before every meeting. There are easy things to do to increase contributions. The “Break the Buck” project is a start. The ultimate solution is to get past the dollar in basket idea that has been holding us back for a long time.
- If every group would donate one dollar more, we would have the \$52,000.
- Years ago, there was a project called “Change for Change” for Russia. Groups were so excited to think they were helping people in Russia. We put our change in a coffee can. Our pennies may only be \$12 but that raises more than if I do nothing. It may bring people together.
- \$5.50 per group per year equals \$52,000 last year.
- Our Area Treasurer phoned to say there was not enough in our operating fund for our equalized expense. Once it was suggested, we had \$4,000 in six weeks in our operating budget. We have to do the foot work. If we ask for it, it will come. The Statement of Activities spreadsheet we received suggests that in 2013 the return on investments was \$67,900. It is important to take a long view of the market; it is not always going to be a 2014 loss. It is possible we may realize substantial income in the next few years, but it is not good to approve a deficit budget.
- The Finance Committee did not make this decision lightly and it was based on spiritual principles.
- People don’t carry cash any more. They use Apps on their phones to send money if they have their group account number. It is easier to do.
- In 1991 there were 66 employees at the WSO. Now there are 46. That concerns me that we are not bringing more people on board and the amount of stress there will be on employees at the WSO by not having three more people.
- We need to raise money consciousness. Connect gratitude to abundance. We owe it to our Areas, groups, and members to help them see and raise their consciousness. Contributions equal what literature sales are today and when we talk about money in our Areas, talk about what that money, energy, and gratitude buy for Al-Anon. What does a birthday gift create for Al-Anon? Add our Legacies to the Web site. I think we could reach \$3,000,000 in a short period of time.
- Do you want to have money taken out automatically? There is automatic withdrawal on the WSO web site and instructions on how it is done.
- I set up automatic billing “sos” payment every month to the WSO.

The Treasurer thanked everyone for their input noting that, “If we just contributed this year what we contributed last year and added \$25, we would have the money—\$3,000,000!”

A motion to approve the 2015 Finance Committee Report was made, seconded, and carried. (See Motion # 3, page 101).

2014 Annual Report

The 2014 Annual Report contains updates from various Board Committees, as well as World Service Office (WSO) departments. It was sent to Delegates prior to the Conference. It was their opportunity to review it and submit questions in advance to be sure they were clear before coming to the World Service Conference (WSC). Those questions and answers were distributed at the Conference.

Since the report was provided in advance, the Executive Director made only brief opening remarks before opening the floor for questions and comments.

- A member in my Area is on a crusade regarding phone meetings believing they are unsafe and the issue is distracting to the Area. The concern is that they are unsafe for newcomers because phone meetings are not in a geographical area so they don’t answer to any service structure. We need strategies to deal with it. Who can I contact for strategies?

Ric B.
Executive Director

The Director of Member Services can help with strategies to respond. The WSO conducted two conference calls with phone meetings with a total of 50 participants. We talked about obstacles to success and how to have a business meeting and welcome newcomers. We also clarified that it is the WSO service structure that they answer to. It is the same as with on-line meetings.

- Delegates are copied on e-mails sent to someone in their Area. The person's name and where they are located is blocked out in the Delegate's copy. If we are being asked to be mediators, why can't we know who is sending the question?

We don't expect the Delegates to be mediators. It is not in their job description in the "World Service Handbook." The response is sent so the Delegate does not get blind-sided. We tell the member to talk to their District Representative or Delegate. It is not the WSO's job to solve everyone's problems. We send them to the link of service that can help them. If they call a second time, we ask if they have talked to the people we sent them to. If they haven't, we tell them that after they call them to call us back, or we set up a conference call with the person and the Delegate and talk.

- Plans for additional e-Books are on hold. Is there any expectation about how much volume you will need to see before considering additional titles?

Not specifically at this time. We are moving forward. The Finance Committee has had conversations about where we need to go next. The Director of Communications has been in contact with an Area with a member who has a contact with a recording studio. They will be on site at the Area convention with a script provided by the Associate Director of Communications—Literature in order to record one of our books.

- In looking at the number of registered Al-Anon and Alateen groups, there has been a drop since 2012. Knowing and seeing how many meetings we are losing in one place would be helpful. Could we have a graphic showing the number of meetings over multiple years?

This is an Annual Report, but we will take your suggestion under consideration. It might be a suggestion for a future Conference topic. We did it several years ago when we were talking about Bell Curves. Maybe it is time to look at it. Please put it on your Conference Evaluation form.

- Why is meditation a violation of our Traditions when it is in our books and Steps?

Some Areas have had difficulty over the last several years with groups meditating during all of the meeting. We drafted a "Recurring Question" to try to assist Delegates with that information. We have had several more e-mails asking how long a "brief" moment of silence could be. We took it to the Policy Committee and, using the Steps as an example, it was pointed out that we share experience, strength, and hope about working the Steps during a meeting—we don't actually work the Steps during the meeting. We redrafted the "Recurring Question" and had the Policy Committee review it. They concurred that it is not within our Traditions to meditate during a meeting.

We don't write our Fourth Step inventory or share it with our Sponsor during a meeting. Meetings are supposed to focus on sharing our experience, strength, and hope.

"How to" is a teaching/learning technique. Telling someone to do something a certain way and saying this is how Al-Anon does it, is not a personal sharing. All ways are right. That is what the Policy Committee was clear about.

- We took a group conscience and have a meditation format that includes five minutes of meditation once a month. We read Conference Approved Literature about meditation and proceed with the meditation if everyone is willing. The WSO is a clearing house, not the boss.

If a newcomer came to the meeting and we told him/her that we will meditate for next five minutes, and asked, does anyone object? If they are new, are they going to speak up? They may wonder about us being a religious organization or a cult because we are doing things in the meeting that make them feel uncomfortable. Our individual group actions affect the perception of Al-Anon around the world.

- I cannot find where the revised "Meditation during meeting time" is posted on e-Communities.

It has been moved from archived documents to current documents. The WSO will have more consistent uniform posting strategy with AFG Connects, which will also include a search feature to find documents.

A motion to approve the 2014 Annual Report was made, seconded, and carried. (See Motion # 4, page 101). The complete report can be found on pages 103-121.

CANADIAN BY-LAWS REPORT

Paula B.

Chairperson, Board of Trustees

The Canada Not-for-Profit Act required all Canadian not-for-profits to restate their By-Laws in accordance with the provisions of the new law. The Canadian Board of Trustees of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters (Canada) Inc. adopted these revised By-Laws during its July 18, 2014 meeting in St. John's, Newfoundland, Canada.

The revised By-Laws were provided to the World Service Conference in accordance with Paragraph 10d. of the World Service Conference Charter which states:

"The By-Laws of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc., (sic) and any amendments thereto are subject to recall by the Conference by a two-thirds vote of all its members. All By-Law amendments will be presented to the first Conference to be held after their adoption by the Board of Trustees."

Unless the Conference wished to recall the By-Laws, no action was necessary. This information was provided in the spirit and intent of the Charter even though the Canadian Corporation isn't specifically mentioned in the Charter.

There were no questions or discussion regarding the Canadian By-Laws as amended.

(The Canadian By-Laws as amended can be found on pages 122-127 in the Appendix.)

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE FOR REAL PROPERTY MANAGEMENT TRIENNIAL REPORT

Jennie McC.

Treasurer, Board of Trustees

This is the seventh Triennial Report to the World Service Conference (WSC) from the Board of Trustees.

In 1994, the World Service Conference passed Motion #12, which empowered the Board of Trustees to purchase property for Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. This purchase of real property was for a trial period of 15 years and contingent on several conditions.

In 2011, the World Service Conference passed Motion #6, which ended the 15-year trial period and empowered the Board of Trustees to continue to own the current or subsequent property in the name of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. The ownership of property is contingent on conditions enumerated in Motion #6. (See *2011 WSC Summary*, pages 38-39; 82)

One condition set forth in the 1994 Motion #12 and the 2011 Motion #6 was that the Board of Trustees "establish a separate Executive Committee for Real Property Management in order to ensure that the management of the real property be done in a prudent manner and not interfere with the day-to-day operations of the spiritual parts of the program, i.e., service to the groups, individuals, or Al-Anon as a whole."

To fulfill that condition, a motion to create the Executive Committee for Real Property Management (ECRPM) was approved by the WSC in 1995 on a trial basis. The By-laws were amended in January 2012 to include the Executive Committee for Real Property Management and the Amendment was presented to the 2012 Conference. (See *2012 WSC Summary*, pages 22-23). This separate Executive Committee was preferred for its simplicity and the fact that it would cut down on additional forms needed to be filed annually with the Internal Revenue Service. This Committee was established to oversee the management of real property in order to separate property maintenance and management from the day-to-day operation of the Al-Anon fellowship. The Committee consists of three at-large Al-Anon members, the Chairperson of the Finance Committee, and the Director of Business Services. The Committee first met June 15, 1996 and has met twice a year since then.

Another condition contained in the motions to purchase real property was that the Board of Trustees would "report triennially as to the financial feasibility of the ownership of real property, the compliance with the spirit and letter of this resolution, and the negative impact, if any, that the purchase of property has had on the fellowship as a whole."



The Board of Trustees reports the following:

1. Has ownership of property been financially feasible?

The Board of Trustees reports that ownership of property has been a very good step financially. Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. received tax-exempt financing and thus a lower rate of interest due to non-profit status. A savings of approximately \$673,000 this year has been realized by owning property vs. leasing it in Virginia. *Now that the mortgage is paid in full, the gap between ownership and leasing continues to widen as costs of ownership decrease and costs of leasing increase.

2. Are we complying with the spirit and letter of the resolution?

The Board of Trustees concerns itself with ownership of real property to the extent that it insures that the ownership of real property is financially feasible and that the spirit and intent of the Steps, Traditions, and Concepts are maintained. The Board reports that with the management of the property being the business of the Executive Committee for Real Property Management, the property management is kept separate from the primary spiritual aim of Al-Anon Family Groups. The Executive Director is able to focus entirely on assisting the groups in the primary spiritual aim of Al-Anon—helping families and friends of alcoholics. The need for staff to be concerned with the frequent search for office space and to deal with the day-in and day-out maintenance of commercial property has been eliminated.

3. Has there been any negative impact on the fellowship as a whole?

After reviewing the last 18 years of real property ownership, the Board of Trustees has no negative impact to report. A small minority of groups attempted to tie the Alateen requirements established by the Board of Trustees to the ownership of property in 2004. The Board of Trustees clarified that the only assets it was protecting were our name and our children. The ECRPM is a Committee separate from all other committees. It operates separately from the work and business of the World Service Office (WSO), allowing the WSO to focus on the primary spiritual aim of the fellowship. This real separation is what allows ownership of property to function as well as it does.

*Please see budget line item “Occupancy” for the actual yearly costs of ownership.

INTERNATIONAL AL-ANON GENERAL SERVICES MEETING

The International Al-Anon General Services Meeting (IAGSM) took place in Virginia Beach, Virginia October 15-19, 2014. This was the 17th IAGSM. Summaries from 1980 to the present are on the Members’ Web site. The theme for the meeting was “Living Our Spiritual Principles.” The IAGSM is a biennial service meeting for structures outside of the World Service Conference Structure. The structures that attend have a General Service Office (GSO) or a national service structure registered with the World Service Office (WSO). The IAGSM is not a decision-making body.

The IAGSM is a service meeting and an opportunity for service structures to come together and share experience to strengthen their structures. The IAGSM Delegates participate by leading the General Sessions. They are often Delegates whose structure has experience with the topic. Workshops are intimate small group sessions and Delegate-led. Many structures use the World Service Conference (WSC) model and adapt it to their needs.

Since the IAGSM is an English-speaking meeting, the International Coordination Committee (ICC) strives to make certain that the Delegate presenters of the general session topics submit their presentations well in advance, so all the Delegates will have the opportunity to translate and discuss the topics with their service structures before attending the meeting so that they can be fully engaged and ready to share.

Representatives from 13 structures attended the 2014 IAGSM; unfortunately 23 structures did not send representation. Again, as was discussed at the 2012 IAGSM, a general session topic discussion was held to address the possible reasons why attendance seems to be decreasing to the IAGSM. Some of the possible reasons cited were finance, language, and the lack of knowledge about the importance and the benefits of connecting with one another in a face-to-face setting for those structures that have never sent representation to an IAGSM.

One Delegate commented during the meeting: “The podium with the flags bears testament to who is missing here. I want to see these countries (pointing to the flags of countries not present). I know how much we benefit from each other being here. There is a wealth of experience for our structure

Connie H.

*Chairperson International
Coordination Committee (ICC),
Trustee*

Debbie G.,

Co-Chairperson, ICC, Trustee

Marsha W.

*Associate Director
of Member Services
—International*



and our membership to tap into. How many of these countries are not here because of financial reasons and how many because they do not have structure support yet?”

As a result of the concerns expressed, the IAGSM Delegates made a recommendation to the WSO Board of Trustees to consider suspending an increase of the equalized expenses amount until 2018. The Board approved the recommendation and the ICC has been given the charge to develop a plan.

The following highlights from the meeting were shared by the International Coordination Committee (ICC) members.

The ICC Chairperson shared that there were nine general sessions and an open discussion at the microphone followed each topic. It was during that time that the distinctiveness of each structure was “visible” as they each shared their structure’s perspective. Topics discussed were:

- Communication in the Links of Service and Concepts One, Two, and Three.
- Attracting Volunteers as It Ties to the Spiritual Principles in Concepts Four and Ten.
- How Do We Use Our Spiritual Principles to Deal with Conflict?
- How Do We Maintain the Spiritual Principle of Anonymity When Using Technology?
- Finance: Accountability and Oversight.
- Inventory (a continuation of the 2012 discussion).
- Using Our Principles Expressed in Concepts Six, Seven, Ten, and Eleven, What is the Relationship of the Board with the Conference and Committees?
- Incorporation.

ICC participants in the IAGSM shared about the general and workshop sessions they participated in.

The Canada West Regional Trustee, representing the WSC Structure as the Canadian Delegate, introduced the conversation on using the principles in Concepts Six, Seven, Ten, and Eleven and the relationship of the Board with the Conference and Committees. She acknowledged that while we may be organized differently, the Concepts bind us together in unity as Al-Anon Family Groups continues to grow. She explained that in Concept Six, the Board of Trustees does not work as an authority, it consults widely and is always mindful of Al-Anon’s future. Our Legacies were discussed and the Board’s legal responsibilities. She shared that many structures have the same problems that our World Service Conference does, we are all equal in our traditional role.

The Chairperson of the Board of Trustees, representing the WSC Structure as the U.S. Delegate, introduced the topic, Incorporation, at the request of several General Service Offices (GSOs) as they considered whether they needed to incorporate. She talked about the benefits of incorporation and the challenges.

Delegates were reminded that the Twelve Concepts provide guidance on this topic. Since groups can’t perform legal action or establish policies for other groups, districts, or Areas, the traditional responsibility for policies has been delegated to the Conference. The Conference has delegated the legal responsibility to the Board of Trustees.

The reasons that service structures may choose to incorporate were shared. These include:

1. Incorporation limits individual liability of individual members providing service since lawsuits are against the corporation.
2. Incorporation provides continuity of the legal “entity” when there is rotation of service and planned/unplanned discontinuation of service.
3. Incorporation provides banks a legal entity to assess income taxes against dividends, interest income, etc.
4. Incorporation provides employees a legal entity for whom to work.
5. Incorporation allows an entity to take legal action to protect trademark/copyright. This drew a lively conversation and emphasized the importance for each structure to do their part to protect the Al-Anon name.

She went on to describe Al-Anon Family Groups and its service arms and the reasons that each may choose to incorporate:

- Beginning with groups, the Chair clarified that groups do not incorporate because they adhere to the Twelve Traditions and do not maintain membership lists.

- Since Al-Anon Family Groups make up districts and there are elected officers of the district, some districts may choose to incorporate.
- Districts make up Areas and there are elected officers of the Area who serve on the Area World Service Committee (AWSC). Therefore, Areas may choose to incorporate. However, the full AWSC and the Assembly are parts of the traditional arm so they are not incorporated. The AWSC serves as an advisory committee to the Board of the Corporation—the elected members.
- Al-Anon Information Services (AIS) and/or Literature Distribution Centers (LDC) are managed by a governing body and may choose to incorporate.

Some challenges related to incorporation include:

- The misunderstanding of a district, Area, AIS, and LDC on incorporating the traditional structure (the voice of the Group Representatives that give spiritual approval) with legal transaction of business (the responsibility of the elected officers that give legal approval).
- The lack of knowledge on the reasons why a service arm may or may not need to incorporate.
- Areas that are developing By-Laws for incorporation accidentally using incorporation By-Laws from another Area that did not separate the traditional from the legal as identified in Concept Seven.
- The legal fees associated with drawing up Articles of Incorporation and By-Laws are usually more than the service arms have budgeted.
- The definition of “member” in a service arm is difficult due to lack of membership lists and the spiritual principle of anonymity. For simplicity, the members of the Corporation are the members of the Corporate Board only.

ICC members shared their insights with the Conference.

- “I learned that when I say the Serenity Prayer each noon each day, at the same time the Delegate from South Africa is saying it in his meeting.”
- “I walked away with a greater knowledge of the worldwide fellowship. My eyes and heart were opened to so much more. I never considered the amount of preparation Delegates have to do in order to share themselves and about their Areas. Everything has to be translated to understand the points. For floor discussions, to listen in English, translate to their own language, then back to English to respond.”
- “I learned how to speak slowly, how to wait and listen, how to give Delegates time to collect their thoughts and come to the mic to share.”
- This was an example of loving interchange and sharing experience, strength, and hope from every structure represented.
- The way other structures look to our structure to strengthen their own.
- “I learned how small structures struggle financially to ensure they budget a contribution to the World Service Office.”
- Through formal and informal interchange, we struggle with some of the same issues, conflict resolution, lack of enthusiasm for service, and technology.
- It was a visual lesson in talking with each other.
- “I had a sincere desire to fix a problem and find just the right answer. After listening and thoughtfully considering, I realized, ‘I am part of something bigger than myself, and my answers will appear at the right moment.’”
- While I may not see these members again, we are walking the same path.

One of the duties of 2014 IAGSM was to select the site for the 2016 meeting. Delegates from Poland and Italy made presentations on why their structure would like to hold the IAGSM. The 2014 Delegates decided that the 2016 meeting will take place in Rome, Italy.

The ICC Chairperson encouraged Conference members to read the IAGSM Summaries and to carry back their enthusiasm to their groups and make it contagious.

INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION UPDATE

2015 A.A. International Convention with Al-Anon Participation Update

Barbara O.
Coordinator



Conference members were updated on the 2015 A.A. International Convention with Al-Anon participation that will take place in Atlanta, Georgia. Activities will begin on July 2 and end on July 5.

Al-Anon and Alateen workshops will be held during the day on Friday, July 3 and Saturday, July 4. Over 4,000 Al-Anon and Alateen members are expected. More than 2,300 members are already registered.

The selection process for speakers and workshop moderators was explained. All Al-Anon and Alateen members already registered were sent a link to a volunteer survey where they selected their preferred time and topic.

Waving a placard with Georgia peaches, the Georgia Area Delegate ran to the microphone to welcome everyone to Georgia for the International Convention to celebrate the 80th Anniversary of Alcoholics Anonymous!

2018 Al-Anon International Convention Update



The countdown begins! The next Al-Anon International Convention will be in Baltimore, Maryland, July 5-8, 2018. We want this to be our best Convention yet! The Convention is just 167 weeks away.

Conference members were reminded that now is the time to begin planning their budgets:

- Estimate travel expenses.
- Think about the cost of any extra vacation days before or after the Convention.
- Decide how many others to room with.
- Register early for the lowest registration prices.

Then total the estimated expenses and divide by 167. That will determine how much to save and put in the bank each week when you go to your home group meeting. Then, your name will be on a badge! Members were encouraged to talk to members in their home groups about making their budgets and to encourage those they sponsor to consider going too.

Then, carrying a placard with a crab, the Maryland Delegate welcomed everyone to Baltimore pointing out that it is a fun city with nightlife and restaurants with great food.



“MEET THE BOARD” EVENT

Debbie G.
Trustee, Task Force Chairperson

Barbara O.
Director of Member Services

The Task Force Chairperson began the presentation, “I’d like to share with you about the first ‘Meet the Board’ event that was held in July of 2014. The purpose was to take the Board of Trustees and Executive Committee members to a local Area, hold the Board meeting there, and then, on the last day, meet with local members. This event is an opportunity for everyone to interact on a more personal level and an opportunity to share with members about how the World Service Office serves the fellowship.”

She continued by sharing the following:

Nineteen Trustees and three Executive Committee members traveled to St. John’s, Newfoundland to attend the first “Meet the Board” event.

The room was filled with enthusiasm and energy, and it felt like a family reunion.

Feedback sheets indicated the day was a rousing success. It also revealed that:

- The average time of membership in Al-Anon was 14 years.
- The “newest” member had two months.
- The “oldest” member started Al-Anon in St. John’s and had 52 years.

The agenda was planned for 9:00 am to 5:00 pm. Most attendees pre-registered, and 20 registered on-site.

The program consisted of:

- Presentations and personal talks.
- Round-table discussions.
- Lunch.
- Gallery walk of WSO Committees.

The program began with a welcome message from the Chairperson of the Board, followed by three short talks by Trustees. Trustees shared about international visits, TEAM Events, and visits to Area Assemblies.

Round-table discussions on public outreach, challenges to the fellowship, and use of technology were held before lunch. Two personal talks by a Trustee and an Executive Committee member followed lunch.

A “Gallery Walk” included ten different stations with members rotating among tables to learn about the work of the Board of Trustees. Members then had time to ask questions.

One of the questions on the feedback form asked: “What was the most valuable information you gained?” Responses revealed that we achieved our goal of personalizing the World Service Office.

Members talked about a greater understanding of “what makes the organization tick” and how much more aware they were of all the work involved in world service.

Many acknowledged our common bond, as well as our common concerns throughout the world. It was gratifying to read such comments as “I can see service makes people more confident,” and “I am more aware of what I can do as a member of my group and Area.”

Members also made suggestions:

- The overwhelming response was to make the event longer! One member said to make it two days.
- Members loved the interaction and wanted more time for breakouts, as well as a time for questions and answers about the work of the Board.
- Members enjoyed the personal aspect of the event, but wanted even more personal sharing, mixing, and socializing.

In the future, topics and the program will be adjusted to consider the Area and its members.

The event was a wonderful celebration of recovery and outreach. Feedback from the St. John’s members was so positive and uplifting. The event truly was Al-Anon in action.

The Area hosting the 2015 event will be Edmonton, Alberta. The report closed with Delegates receiving invitations for the 2016 “Meet the Board” event.

The Director of Member Services shared details about the 2016 Event Request Form.

- The 2016 “Meet the Board” event will be held in October.
- A small registration fee covers A/V, handouts, and room rental. An optional lunch will be available.
- Deadline to submit the Event Request Form is September 14, 2015.
- An alternate city is helpful because frequently between the time of submission and when the hotel is contacted, space becomes unavailable. The more options the better.
- Some idea of a realistic expectation of attendance is needed. If it is underestimated, we may need to turn people away and if overestimated, it raises the registration fee because of the need to pay for a larger space.

Area responsibilities:

- Publicize the event. WSO supplies the flyer.
- Collect the registration fee.
- Provide transportation for the WSO from the airport to the hotel if, there is no shuttle.

WSO provides:

- Agenda

- Hotel financial arrangements.
- Establishes the registration fee and contracts for space.
- WSO is on site with the host contact.

The Director encouraged all Areas to submit an Event Request Form.

Delegates had the following questions:

- If an Area requests a TEAM event and is picked, and is selected for “Meet the Board” event in the same year, would one disqualify the other?
No.
- How many WSO staff/Board members would be transported from airport
Approximately 22 Board and Executive Committee members.
- Since this event is less of a cost-saving measure than originally expected, is the Board considering other ways of saving money for the July Board meeting?
Originally, we considered it as a way to save money for the July Board meeting. July is a holiday season in Virginia Beach. We discovered though that the rest of the country is on holiday, too. We discussed options addressing the July Board costs. The Board moving the meeting around is best for Al-Anon as a whole.
The event started as a discussion about cost-saving and evolved as a means for the membership to meet the Board and Executive Committee. We do everything we can to keep costs down.
We noticed in multiple places after TEAM events, that more people were interested in service. We thought this was a good way for members to see what we do.
- We are the smallest Area so we are asking the larger Areas next to us if they will submit for “Meet the Board.”
- What do you consider a modest registration fee?
The “Meet the Board” event in 2015 will be \$10, lunch is extra.
- This event was well received and bridged a gap in our Area. We were considering hosting a TEAM event, but after having had this experience, we will definitely host a TEAM event in the next few years.
- When this was instituted, it was on a three-year trial without any major changes.
In a trial, when we discover something is wrong, we make an adjustment during the trial and go forward. It is not rigid. The idea being that if something is wrong, we don’t have to wait three years to change it. We identified a problem, and we are solving it by moving the event to October.
- The Board sets the agenda. Does the Area have any input into round table discussions?
The agenda is slightly revised this year. We have added a spiritual breakout session of five questions posed to attendees. We take into consideration the Area we are in.
- How are the Board dates picked?
The October Board dates are typically the last week of the month which does not extend into the following month, with the meeting ending at noon on a Monday.
- What criteria do the Board use to determine what Area is selected?
All those that submit a completed form listing hotels with space that comfortably seats the expected attendance plus the 22 WSO Board and Executive Committee members, have Wi/Fi availability, and airport transportation go into the hat; whatever Area comes out, that’s it.

PUBLIC AWARENESS OF AL-ANON

Robert S.

Director of Communication
Services

What is Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism About?

Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism (AFA) is our most comprehensive public outreach tool designed to create an awareness of the benefits of family recovery among professionals and potential Al-Anon and Alateen members. The members’ sharings included in *AFA* are not typical sharings found in *The Forum* or any other Conference Approved Literature. Sharings that are requested offer hope,

understanding, and compassion to help potential members overcome the obstacles many of us face before we reach out for help.

Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism was created as an outreach tool for members to share with professionals during September Recovery Month in 2001. It began as a “special” edition of the *September Forum*. By 2007, it had evolved into a separate magazine. In 2001, members distributed 13,000 copies.

Conference members were astounded to learn that in 2014, 347,000 copies were distributed! They were asked to please go back to their Areas, celebrate this success, and thank everyone who is putting the Twelfth Step into action!

What more can we do?

A Gallup poll shows that 36 percent of the population says they are affected by alcoholism. We still have work to do.

- The Readiness for Step Twelve Survey (2014 World Service Conference Summary, page 26) revealed that distributing *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism* was the most popular public outreach activity. Members also waited the longest time to participate in public outreach of any service work. Time was the greatest concern among members in participating in service work. Distributing *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism* is an easy and effective way to carry the message.
- *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism* is a low-cost project that takes little time and experience in the program.
- We have to reach out to more people to get them to distribute *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism*.

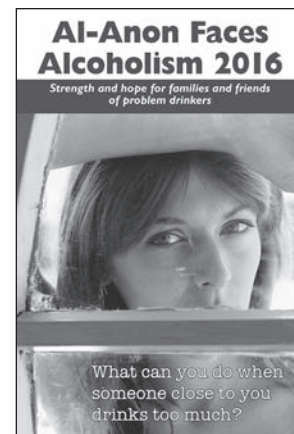
We can:

- ✓ Encourage members to carry our message.
- ✓ Challenge each group to distribute at least a box of 25 copies.
- ✓ Place them anywhere that is accessible to the public. It’s easy and fun!
- ✓ Remember to go back where you left them to replenish your stock throughout the year.

Why do we want to do more?

A letter from a member said it best: “...when I see a chair that stays empty throughout the entire meeting, I say a prayer for the person who needs but hasn’t yet found Al-Anon.”

—Jessica, Massachusetts



SELECTION OF TRUSTEES

2016 RCT Out-of-Region Delegate Selection

The Trustee gave an overview of the Regional Trustee Selection Process and explained the deadlines and roles and responsibilities in the nominating process. Each Regional Committee on Trustees (RCT) consists of the current Delegates serving the Areas of the Region, as well as Out-of-Region Delegates drawn by lot.

Joyce B.
Trustee

The Out-of-Region Delegates selected:

REGION	VOTING	ALTERNATE
US Northeast	Debbie H., MB/NWO, Panel 55 Yvonne de G., CAN, Panel 55 Elizabeth K., CAS, Panel 55	Janice B., NV, Panel 54 Vali F., AZ, Panel 53
US North Central	Joyce Y., TXE, Panel 55 Rosemarie K., MP, Panel 53 Sherry H., WY, Panel 54	Elizabeth K., CAS, Panel 55 Darcy N., ALNWFL, Panel 53
US Southeast	Ann B., CT, Panel 54 Marilyn B., CO, Panel 53 Kathleen A., SD, Panel 54	Linda W., MA, Panel 53 Mike D., MI, Panel 55

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 Northeast	Michele R., NYS, Panel 54	Ann B., CT, Panel 54
US North Central	Virginia B., IA, Panel 54	Mary H., MNS, Panel 55
US Southeast	Wendy R., FLN, Panel 55	Elin E., NC/Bermuda, Panel 53

Conference Committee on Trustees (CCT)

Rosemarie K.

Chairperson, Panel 53

Maritime Provinces

The Chairperson opened her report thanking the members who put forth their application for Trustees at Large (TAL) and positions on the Executive Committee for Real Property Management (ECRPM). The commitment of the applicants to serve our worldwide fellowship was inspiring and humbling.

She also thanked the members of the Conference Committee of Trustees (CCT) and the World Service Office staff for their diligence and work in completing the responsibilities during the last year. All who served showed a commitment to ensure the decisions made were completed with everyone's best effort and integrity.

The Conference Committee on Trustees 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, score each résumé based on skill sets, understanding of current needs of the Board, and the ability of each candidate to effectively answer the résumé questions. The CCT members also write 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 Trustee at Large and Executive Committee for Real Property Management. The Nominating Committee then notifies the CCT of the potential candidates the Nominating Committee 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 at the January Board meeting. At the World Service Conference, the Trustee at Large and Executive Committee for Real Property Management (ECRPM) candidates may be given Traditional Approval by the Conference, and may be elected by the Board at the Annual Board meeting following the World Service Conference.

The CCT Chairperson shared, "Living Our Spiritual Principles: Expanding Our Vision," the theme of this year's World Service Conference, was evident in each Committee member's service. It was a gift to work on behalf of our fellowship with trusted servants who practiced the principles of this program. We were able to do our part in the chain of service that seeks to provide our fellowship with qualified leaders with the skills to meet the current needs of the TAL and ECRPM positions.

"Congratulations to those TAL and ECRPM trusted servants who have been put forth as recommended candidates. We will be placing in your hands a trust that you will serve with our spiritual principles guiding your path.

“When I first learned I was assigned to the Conference Committee for Trustees, I was extremely disappointed. Feeling weak in computer skills, I wanted to be on a Task or Thought Force that used technology. But as I used the Serenity Prayer, I slowly warmed to the idea of being assigned to the CCT. I also remembered our Conference theme for my first year 2013—“The Spiritual Journey of Changing “Me” to “We.” I soon realized this was not about *me* and my wants, but instead about the *we*, the worldwide fellowship of Al-Anon.

“As in all my service experience, serving the fellowship as the Chairperson of the CCT has been an opportunity to grow along spiritual lines. Thank you for this opportunity. It has been one of my great honors in walking this spiritual journey. My humble gratitude and heartfelt love to each of you.”

Nominating Committee and Trustee Affirmation

Before beginning the affirmation process, the Nominating Committee 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. As the Concepts of Service developed, the process of the Conference affirming the nominees to fill the vacancies arose. In the mid ’60s, with the finalization of the Conference structure, the Board of Directors was converted to a Board of Trustees and a plan to add regional participation on the Board was developed. 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 concerning Regional Trustee candidates. Today, we will accomplish the next step as part of that tradition of affirmation, by giving the traditional approval of the whole Conference to the various nominees and officers. Friday, the Board may elect those nominees who receive this traditional affirmation. As a result of this process, the voice of the fellowship is heard, through the Conference, 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 members of the Regional Committees on Trustees (RCTs), and the Nominating Committee for their careful and thoughtful 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 brought forward 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 each year. Delegates and Area Chairs 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 the résumés for Trustee, ECRPM, and Committees. Trustee and ECRPM résumés are submitted to the WSO by August 15 of the year prior to possible election. Completed résumés and the additional written question are sent to the CCT and Nominating Committee for review and ranking. The CCT Chairperson tallies 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 additional 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 to the proposed nominees for each three-year term. This year, we also had openings for the remaining two years of two three-year terms. These nominees will also be presented for traditional approval. All of the nominees receiving traditional approval today may be elected Friday morning at the Board’s Annual Meeting.

“Candidates for Regional Trustee (RT) are selected by their Areas and their résumés are forwarded to the WSO via the Delegate. This year, these came from Canada East, Canada Central, and Canada West. At the 2014 WSC, their Regional Committees on Trustees were formed. Each RCT consists

Joan S.
Chairperson, Trustee

of the regions' Delegates plus one out-of-region Delegate and alternate who were chosen by lot. The Regional Committees on Trustees independently reviewed résumés and the additional written question. The scoring, comments and feedback from Delegates serving on these Regional Committees were submitted to their Chairs and then to the Nominating Committee. The Nominating Committee, with their own independent review of the résumés and considering the input from the Regional Committees on Trustees, 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 Canada East, Canada Central, and Canada West Regions. Today, you will be asked to give traditional approval to the proposed nominees, and then they may be elected by the Board at its Annual Meeting on Friday morning, as I previously explained.

"The Executive Committee for Real Property Management (ECRPM) was created by an amendment to the By-Laws—Article 12 by the Board in 2012. This Committee consists of the Chairperson of the Finance Committee (AFG, Inc. Treasurer), the Director of Business Services, and three at-large members. It 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 additional 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 nominees for Trustee at Large, Regional Trustee, the Board's officers, and the at-large member of the Executive Committee for Real Property Management (ECRPM). 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 was asked to leave during discussion of his/her candidacy.

The following Trustees and Board Officers were affirmed by the 2015 WSC:

Trustees at Large:

Tina B., second three-year term
 Karen W-P., second three-year term
 John McL., second year of first three-year term
 Sandi C., second year of first three-year term

Regional Trustees:

Thérèse S., Canada East, first three-year term
 Leona W., Canada Central, first three-year term
 Marilyn M., Canada West, second three-year term

Board Officers:

Paula B., Chairperson
 Joan S., Vice Chairperson
 Jennie McC., Treasurer

Executive Committee for Real Property Management (ECRPM):

Jeffrey K., three-year term

The Board announced Executive Committee appointments for 2015-2016

Bev A., second one-year term, Chairperson
 Roger C., third one-year term
 J.P. M., first one-year term
 Barbara O., WSO staff, second year of a two-year term

The Board announced the appointment of Carrie K. as the ECRPM Chairperson for 2015-2016.

TEAM EVENTS TASK FORCE

The last time TEAM (Together Empowering Al-Anon Members) events were discussed at the World Service Conference was in 2011. Since that time, there has been confusion about the responsibilities of the World Service Office (WSO) staff/volunteers team and the Area Host Committee, how topics are chosen, timeframes for WSO required presentations, and the time frames for submitting the Event Request Form. In 2013, the Al-Anon/Alateen International Convention was held in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. The Board voted to limit the TEAM Events that year due to staff and Trustee capacity. There were nine TEAM Events in 2014.

During the October 2014 Board Meeting, the decision was made to present an overview of TEAM Events to Conference members. The goal of the presentation was to clarify the confusion about the responsibilities of the World Service Office (WSO) staff/volunteers and Area Host Committee and to encourage future events, since staff and Trustee visibility to the fellowship is important.

The Task Force Chairperson presented the following background information: In 2006, the Board began to look at all of the Committee structures to determine if they were serving the needs of the fellowship in the best manner possible and, if not, what could be done to improve their effectiveness. Conference members who served on the various committees were given questionnaires to help them evaluate how the committees currently operated and what could be done to improve their connection to the fellowship. One of these committees to be reviewed was the Regional Service Seminar (RSS) Committee.

The comments and ideas that came from the RSS Committee were reviewed by the Board of Trustees. Following a lengthy discussion, the Chairperson of the Board appointed a Thought Force whose charge was to generate ideas on what a dynamic, flexible, nimble, and task-oriented RSS would look like. Based on those ideas, and after more discussion by the Board, a Task Force was formed to create an innovative service event that would better meet the needs of the Areas and their members.

From that discussion, TEAM Events were born. TEAM Events are geared to either large or small audiences and are focused on the interests of the members in the Area(s), just like with the RSSs. Area input into the preferred topics for the TEAM Event is accomplished by Area Delegates and Area Chairpersons having a discussion at their Area Assembly or Area World Service Committee meeting before submitting the Event Request Form to host a TEAM Event. TEAM Events may be held for one or two days and possibly tied to another event. There are many other details about hosting a TEAM Event that can be found on the Members' Web site.

In an effort to inspire Areas to have a successful TEAM Event, members of the Task Force presented a skit with several scenes demonstrating the process from deciding to hold an event to the resources available on the Members' Web site and locating the Event Request Form. The Event Request Form can be submitted any time, but not later than six months prior to event. Once the proposed or alternate date is confirmed, the planning between the Area and the WSO begins with a conference call six months prior to the event. The Delegate and Area Chair discuss all of the Area-selected topics with the WSO Task Force in order to customize the presentations to meet the Area's needs. Shared leadership is also discussed, providing opportunities for Area members and the WSO Task Force to work together. Delegates received a "TEAM Event Timeline" that can be used as a reference sheet to help them share the story of how TEAM Events have developed and a "Next Steps Action Sheet" which is a suggested planning worksheet. It can be helpful as Delegates share leadership with their Area Chairs. The worksheet can also be found on the on the Members' Web site along with other resources including sample agendas.

The floor was opened for questions and comments:

- We voted to plan a TEAM Event. We have a Host Chairperson and a Committee, but no action. Do we need to plan more than six months out?
Six months is the minimum. The further out, the better chance there is of getting the Area's first choice date.
- If it was at the same time as a "Meet the Board" event, would that be a problem?
It couldn't be on the same weekend, but an alternate weekend close to it could potentially work. It is important to have alternate dates and to ascertain that the WSO and Board members are available to go. The more space between the date and the alternate date, the better.

Terry F.

Trustee, Task Force Chairperson



- Group Representatives want to do one in 2016. Do we need to pick a hotel site or just the city? When we decide on a date, do we ask the hotel to hold the rooms, and should the venue be within walking distance of the hotel, if the event is not held in it?
Yes to all of the questions.
- My Area is small. Is there a minimum requirement for the number of participants if we have a date and site?
There is no minimum attendance requirement. The Area would want an adequate amount of members interested in attending the event when deciding to submit the form.

Delegates whose Areas have hosted TEAM events commented:

- We had the best attendance at our Spring Assembly because we had a TEAM Event the same weekend. We are thinking of doing another one.
- My Area held a one-day event at a community college. We held it on a Saturday and the Area Assembly was on Sunday, so we had the Board members there for the Assembly too.
- We are holding one the day before Assembly and our AWSC meeting.
- We had a TEAM Event five years ago. It dovetailed with the Area convention the day before. That gave us a chance to capitalize on the number of participants from throughout the Area. The Executive Director was a speaker for the convention and the TEAM Event.
- Two Areas that shared the same interests held the event together. They encouraged other Areas to have a shared experience of hosting a TEAM Event. This enhanced both of our Area's participation by working together.

The Chairperson thanked the Delegates for their participation and asked them to bring their enthusiasm back to their Areas and to help the WSO to help them to be successful in planning an event. "We are all looking forward to some great TEAM Events over the next few months and years!"

WSO SERVICE UPDATE

Ric B.
Executive Director

The Executive Director announced that he was going to discuss changes at the WSO.

1. A group made us aware of Spanish-speaking members going into Mexico to buy large print copies of *Courage to Change* in Spanish. We were asked why the WSO doesn't sell *Courage to Change* in Spanish. The cost had not been feasible. We have now found a way to do it. We are ordering 100 copies of *Courage to Change* as print on demand. It has to be in soft cover to allow us to print small quantities and not have to warehouse them. A notice will go out when it is available.
2. Spanish and French versions of the Members' Web site are almost complete.
3. All pieces of the *Using Al-Anon Principles to Resolve Conflict* kit (K-70) are available in Spanish and French.
4. Meeting locations from the WSO Web site:

In October of 2014, the Board of Trustees agreed to allow the WSO to provide meeting information from the WSO database. The Executive Director demonstrated how the program works. Searching a city will provide all of the meetings beginning with the day of the search and people searching for a meeting have the option of getting driving directions to the meeting location.

WSO has no policy to delist meetings so all groups registered with the WSO will be on the Web site. Members will be able to go to the Public Outreach site and click on "Find a Meeting." Electronic meetings and phone meetings are listed separately since a newcomer would have no idea what an electronic meeting was. Ultimately, this program will be translated into Spanish and French. We are not yet sure how to display the Area Web sites that are listed in "Getting in Touch" or the international meetings. Discussions will continue. We will wait to clarify these issues before launching the program.



The program will also adjust to fit the information on an iPhone and tablet. It was created to be that way to meet the needs of our members.

In the plan, eventually Areas will be able to link to the information in order to keep their meeting information current 24 hours a day. The program will be similar to the Group Records Application and will allow the Areas to download the data in some kind of format. In researching our options, we looked at 35 Area Web sites for information on what needed to happen in order to create this program.

5. The WSO has also signed a contract to buy an upgrade to offer Alateen chat meetings on mobile phones.
6. The WSO has heard your comments that e-Communities was not working well. We are going to introduce a new communication platform that has nothing to do with e-Communities and is known as AFG Connects. What will change:
 - We are not going to use the DR community as the announcement community.
 - All service members will be subscribed to the general announcements community.
 - You won't have to go look for documents. These documents will be attached to the announcement and also posted in the library.
 - At the same time we post a document, it will go into a library folder that has a search feature. You can then search and find documents within the community.
 - You can create your own login and password.
 - Videos to aid in use will be available as well as assistance from the WSO staff.
 - You can type a post from your e-mail and then send it to be posted into the appropriate community.
 - We plan to have the system fully operational by October 2015. It will be available to all communities.
 - AFG Connects will work with all smart phones and tablets.

WSO has had discussions that information is not getting to the members. Would the WSC allow the WSO to let individual members to subscribe to the announcement community for the service structure? There are still groups without Current Mailing Addresses (CMAs). Could we expand the links of communication to allow individual members who want to, to subscribe to the announcement community? It may be that the fellowship is further along in terms of willingness to receive information from the WSO than we think. The WSC sets the tone and can say "yes" or "no."

Comments/Questions:

- I am thrilled. People want to get into service and if we can give people access, I think we can attract more people into service. It opens the potential and we would not be keeping it a secret.
- This would be a more direct way for members to get information in *The Forum* etc., but this would be updated access to information and things to talk about with the service structure.
- Is the database of meeting information live right now?

The demonstration was a developmental site. When it is live, the link will be on the Public Outreach Web site.
- We have a delisted meeting in my Area. This will trigger conversation in the Area.

The WSO will not load anything into an Area's Web site. We are not telling anyone you have to take the data. As to delisting meetings, Areas have to have the conversation on how to get the meetings back on the meeting list, as well as how to take them off. Both discussions have to happen at the same time.

As the session ended, the Conference Chairperson asked members who still had questions to save them for the next Unanswered Questions session.

2015 Membership Survey Results

Pamela Walters

*WSO Marketing Information Analyst
Non-Al-Anon Member*

The Al-Anon Family Groups' World Service Office (WSO) has conducted a membership survey every three years since 1984. The 2015 Membership Survey marks the 11th study. It was conducted from January 9 to February 22, 2015, in English, French, and Spanish. One purpose of the Survey is to provide evidence-based data to help professionals feel more comfortable about making a referral to Al-Anon. The survey results are also shared with the fellowship, general public, and the media.

Survey Participation

The 2015 Survey had more member participation than any previous survey—8,517 participants in 2015, compared to 3,232 in 2012 and 1,775 in 2009. Because the survey sample was larger, it may be more representative of the fellowship. French-speaking members represented two percent of the 2015 survey sample; two percent were Spanish speaking.

When members were asked how they heard about the survey, 79 percent said they heard about it through an announcement at their meeting or through their Group Representative (GR).

Members' demographics and Al-Anon Participation

The average age of members is 60; 83 percent of the fellowship is female, according to the Survey. Eight percent of Al-Anon members are also members of A.A.

The average length of membership is 13 years, and 75 percent have been members for at least five years. Seventy-one percent of members reported that they have a personal Sponsor and of those, over half communicate with them weekly. Forty-four percent sponsor a member themselves, and the majority of those sponsor two or more members.

Members' relationships with drinkers

Eighty percent of members reported that they had been in a romantic relationship with an alcoholic. That is down from 84 percent in 2012. There was an increase in the number of parents coming to Al-Anon because of a child's drinking. Nearly all respondents (99 percent) attend at least one face-to-face meeting per week.

Forty percent said they joined Al-Anon because of a person with a drug problem, up from 34 percent in 2012. Eighty-five percent of these members also reported that they later discovered that someone else's drinking had affected their lives.

The impact the drinker has had on members' lives

Thirty-two percent reported having been professionally diagnosed with a mental health disorder. Of those, the most common were depression (80 percent) and anxiety disorder (42 percent). Abuse from a problem drinker was experienced by 57 percent of members.

Professionals referred 46 percent of respondents to Al-Anon and 64 percent of these followed through with the professional recommendation.

The impact of Al-Anon on members' quality of life

Members report treatment, counseling, or therapy affected their lives more positively, after attending Al-Anon.

A significant number of members rated their mental, physical, and emotional health improved in their daily functioning and on the job as well as in other areas where they had been experiencing problems.

Seventy-six percent of respondents said they had a personal spiritual inclination before coming to Al-Anon; 95 percent of them said the quality of their spirituality improved after coming to Al-Anon.

An open-ended question was added to the 2015 Survey, asking respondents: "Do you have any comments about how Al-Anon improved your life?" Thousands of members said the same thing: that Al-Anon saved my life.

Summary of Findings

- A professional's referral was a significant influence for many new members to try their first Al-Anon meeting.
- The majority of members who joined due to someone else's drug use, later discovered that they had been affected by someone's alcoholism.

- Continued outreach to younger people and minorities who are affected by someone else's alcoholism is essential.
- Ninety-two percent said Al-Anon affected their life very positively.
- Percentage of parents in Al-Anon increased.
- Members' physical and mental health problems improved after Al-Anon according to their self-assessment.
- The majority of members reported improvements in their treatment, counseling, or therapy after attending Al-Anon.

The floor was opened for questions and comments:

- Will these results be published somewhere that counselors/therapists can see?
The results will be published at al-anon.org in the "For Professionals" section.
- Could our Area get data for just that Area?
If we are directed to do it, it is available.
- The abuse question showed that 48 percent feared for their physical safety, but 57 percent experienced abuse. Could you clarify that?
Not all of those who reported abuse indicated that they were afraid for their personal safety.
- I would not participate in a future Membership Survey if the results were broken out by Area.
We don't maintain data by Area. If we start breaking the data down by Areas, the sample size gets so small that statistical values degrade depending on the size. A larger version of the Survey results will be posted on the Public Outreach Web site and available to professionals. The Public Outreach Department will look at different ways to provide the data, including talking points and checklists for when there is not much time. If there are more questions than time allows, you can refer professionals to the bigger Survey. Now, Public Outreach and the WSC Marketing Information Analyst are doing news releases three to four times a month. The data will be used in those releases to give validity to some of the points and to coordinate with a Gallup Survey that identifies the willingness of people to admit that alcohol is a problem in their lives. That will make our releases more newsworthy.
- When the next survey goes up, please make sure my Area is aware of it. I see that the numbers to reach a diverse crowd are up and that it is not just those in service, so it is more representative. The Membership Survey is every three years which makes the next one in 2018. If there are other surveys in between, we need to advertise them in *The Forum* and any other communications we have available. The flyer reached a lot of people this time.
- Percentages upset me. I am a victim of abuse, and I have been in Al-Anon for 24 years, and it is just recently that I have told anyone. This may be under reported because the members taking the survey don't know who is going to see it.
- I am one of the nine percent who did not report being afraid of abuse. I was never afraid until I saw it coming at that moment.

2016 WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE SITE

The dates selected for the 2016 World Service Conference are Monday, April 11 through Friday, April 15, 2016. 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.

Following the World Service Conference, there will be a 65th Anniversary celebration on Saturday, April 16, 2016. More information on the event will be provided at a later date.



Suzanne M.

*Associate Director of
Member Services—Conference*

AREA HIGHLIGHTS—WSO NEWSLETTER TASK FORCE

Tom C.

Associate Director of
Communications—Literature



The presentation began with an historic overview of the *Area Highlights* newsletter through the years against a backdrop of images from those decades.

In April 1965, the Policy Committee approved sending periodic bulletins that contain items of interest regarding service activities to all Delegates. The first issue of the *Area Highlights* newsletter was mailed in September 1965 to all Delegates. It stated, “It is the hope that this quarterly newsletter will serve to carry the message of our Third Legacy (Service).”

By the 1970s, trusted servants throughout the world were submitting newsletter articles and reports to the World Service Office (WSO) about service activities for inclusion in the *Area Highlights* newsletter.

A Means for Delegates to Communicate with Each Other

In 1976, the Board of Trustees passed a motion to use the *Area Highlights* newsletter as a means of communication among Delegates in sharing Area experiences. Also that year, to encourage unity, the name of the Delegates-only meeting at the World Service Conference (WSC) changed to “Sharing Area Highlights.” Although similar in purpose, this session, which continues to this day, is not the same as *Area Highlights*, the newsletter.

Spreading the Message

In 1977, the World Service Conference passed a motion to send *Area Highlights* newsletters free to all groups. Within a year, this motion was reconsidered, as the cost of printing, postage, and staff to mail the newsletter to all groups was no longer advisable or feasible. However, the mailing list for *Area Highlights* gradually expanded, so that more and more members in service positions received it, with the intention of copying and distributing it to members in their Areas. The primary source of content for the *Area Highlights* newsletter continued to be gathered by WSO staff from Area newsletters mailed to the WSO.

In 1999, French- and Spanish-language pages were added to the *Area Highlights* newsletter.

In 2001, with the development of the Members’ Web site, all WSO newsletters, including *Area Highlights*, were posted in pdf format, in addition to the 2,710 copies of each issue being mailed. Throughout the decade, as more Area newsletters became e-mail-only or Web site-only, fewer newsletters from the Areas were mailed to the WSO. The contents of Area newsletters also changed, as fewer members shared about service projects and experiences. Area newsletters often only repeated items from the WSO verbatim, without including the Area’s perspective.

Area Highlights Goes Completely Electronic

The summer 2011 issue of the *Area Highlights* newsletter announced that it was the last one to be printed and distributed through postal mail by the WSO. Since the fall of 2011, the *Area Highlights* newsletter has only been available in digital format on the Members’ Web site.

Where Do We Go from Here?

Throughout 2014 and early 2015, each edition of the *Area Highlights* newsletter on the Members’ Web site was visited by an average of 159 members.

The current “Statement of Purpose” of the *Area Highlights* newsletter is to “provide service-related news from Areas to all Delegates, Coordinators, and District Representatives in order to communicate, motivate, and inform other service-minded members. The articles are compiled from Area newsletters and reports from the links of service. Please encourage members in your Area to share their service projects and experiences.”

The Conference Chairperson then opened the floor for discussion of the following questions:

How interested is my Area in using the *Area Highlights* newsletter for sharing its service experience, strength, and hope with other Areas?

The Conference members responded:

- As Literature Coordinator, I had never heard of *Area Highlights*. I took information from it and when members asked where I got it, I thought it was out of a WSO publication.
- I thought it stopped because I can’t find it on the Web site so I can’t tell others.

- In the 1990s, I was excited when I saw an article in it from my Area. Our Area newsletter is gone now and I am afraid that speaks to the fact that the Area doesn't support getting information into *Area Highlights*.
- I never heard our Past Delegates talk about it. Where is it on the Members' Web site?
It is on the Members' Web site in "District Resources" and "Area Resources" under the "Service Structure" tab.
- This deserves a media campaign. The presentation and a skit hopefully accomplish that. Our Area Web site is full of information and sometimes overload. Delegates can educate them about using *Area Highlights*. We need to make it easy to get to it. Let's see if we can get the word out before changing it.
- I was aware of it in hard copy, but not electronically. Is it appropriate to bring to the Group Representative (GR) or CMA level? Can GRs use it as they see fit?
- My Area is barely interested in Area news let alone WSO. They are only interested when something is going on and they don't know what to do with it. Is it too high a level for DRs and GRs to be thinking about?
We post the notification on the DR e-Community, which is where everyone at all levels of service receives information.
- I suggest a different name for it.
- People get information to solve problems on the Discussion Boards in e-Communities. Technology is changing the way we get information and to know where to go for it.
- A good way of getting the attention of the person who receives *Group e-News* would be a big, brilliant notification that *Area Highlights* is out.
- I love *Area Highlights*. When I have a question, I know where to go. But when I want ideas, I go to it—I "steal" ideas. It is valuable. I want to read things I haven't thought about.
- I need exciting ideas. In time of information overload, send out two sentences that catch my attention and I will go to it. If I have to scroll through a lot to get to it, it loses my attention.
- I used to use it as a printed document. Rotation has something to do with people not knowing about it. Information is not passed on.
- There is not much interest in my Area. Just 159 "hits" on the electronic version suggests no interest. No input from Group Representatives and District Representatives (DRs) to the electronic version says there is not much interest there.
- It is reasonable to say the resource served us in the past, but we need to be realistic now. It eats up WSO resources searching for ideas that no one reads.

What would make *Area Highlights* more useful to members in my Area?

- I would rather continue to put effort into other publications like *The Forum* that speaks to some of the issues *Area Highlights* was designed to cover.
- We cannot have a full conversation when many are not even aware of it.
- I see Al-Anon Family Groups as a living organism. Any time one part is flawed, every part of the organism has to be healthy, and e-Communities is flawed. I have DRs that keep saying they can't get on e-Communities yet. One hand helps the other.
- There is great value in the articles in it. It is just getting the membership to be aware it is there. Education is needed.
- In my Area, not all members have access to e-Communities. We need education about how to navigate the Web site. We had a workshop and took computers and showed them. Have a campaign to promote and highlight the Web site.
- As Delegate, I would not want to lose an opportunity to inspire service members in my Area. I know that is what *Area Highlights* does. In our discussion today, it is news and a lack of awareness of the availability and how we deliver the news. If I get mail, I read it; if I have to seek it, I won't do it. Give us time to take this back and expose them to it and come back next year with feedback.

What changes can my Area make to contribute information to the *Area Highlights* newsletter more consistently?

- *Area Highlights* is a two-way communication. The WSO uses information from Area newsletters for our work and communicates through *Area Highlights*. An example of how we used your information: There were members from the Areas on a Group Services Task Force looking at a Beginners guideline when I read two issues in Area newsletters that helped with that work. Your sharing content helps other Areas, but it is also a significant contribution to WSO work as well.
- I share a lot of information about WSO resources in Coordinator conference calls and ask that it be shared with each other.

The difference between Area Highlights and Coordinator conference calls is that only Coordinators get to participate, but with Area Highlights others can find out the information and could benefit if they are not hearing the information through the Coordinators.

We get Public Outreach calls about how to do projects. Members would much rather get information from those who started a project. The WSO asks those who did a project to write a summary and send it to the WSO to share in Area Highlights.

- I looked for ideas in it when I was doing the newsletter. Coordinators are not sharing what is going on in the Area.
- We need to let them know it is there and can be shared. I owe them an amends that I didn't do it earlier.
- For my Area to contribute was a surprise. I thought we sent the Area newsletter but didn't get anything for it.
- We will have to start the Area newsletter again. Before it was discontinued, we were posting it on our Web site. Would we send notice of posting to the WSO? Send a link to it or a print copy?
We will take it in any format that is convenient. Those that are password protected, please let the WSO know how to get a password.

The Conference Chairperson thanked the Conference for participating in the discussion and noted that the Task Force will take the information back to the WSO.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES' BIG QUESTION

Judy K.

Task Force Chairperson, Trustee

Marilyn M.

Task Force Co-Chairperson, Trustee

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?

The Task Force Chairperson introduced the topic by sharing a story. "On a recent flight to Virginia Beach, I was flipping through a magazine when the title of an article caught my eye: 'How Airlines See the Future.' I was thinking of Al-Anon, knowing our Big Question for Conference was about the importance of looking ahead and planning for our future. Last year, the Conference discussed Al-Anon and its resources in 2051. This year, we are continuing a variation on that theme with a focus on our vision of responsible service leadership. Background information, and the relevance of Concept Nine for the Big Question, was given to you in advance.

"That airline article began with the line: 'If crystal balls could predict the future, there would be a crystal ball in every airline cockpit and on the desk of every airline dispatcher.' The writer went on to say, however, that there is no magic in real life. Airlines must rely on human ingenuity and advanced technology to do that predicting. Personnel need to know the current weather and where the storms are, but also where storms will develop in the future. This knowledge is essential for safe and reliable service. Isn't that fairly similar to us? We too must make good estimates, both for the immediate and for the more distant future."

"Last year, in all conversations, five themes about Al-Anon's future emerged. We must:

1. Maintain our singleness of purpose.
2. Use the Three Legacies as spiritual guides.
3. Embrace technology as a communication tool.

4. Continue to be fully self-supporting financially as well as personally, giving of ourselves.

5. Remain open-minded, avoiding, ‘That’s the way we’ve always done it.’

“This week, we have an opportunity to talk about our vision of leadership in service. Together, we can assess our current climate and consider future climate changes.

“Seated here today are hundreds of years of experience, strength, and hope, our most precious resource—ourselves.

“We have 67 Delegates with varying years of membership and experience in Area service.

“We have three non-voting representatives from Germany, Mexico, and the UK and Eire.

“We have 21 Trustees and Executive Committee members who each have a minimum of ten years in Al-Anon.

“We have approximately seven staff members with longtime membership and service to Al-Anon, daily serving members in Bermuda, Canada, Puerto Rico, the United States, and around the world.

“Who is more qualified to address our future than we are? Approximately 100 experienced members are gathered here. Wouldn’t it be inspiring if during this week we came up with a hundred good ideas—just one per person?

“In a sense, we who sit here today at this 55th World Service Conference are Al-Anon’s flight crew. We are the pilots entrusted with envisioning Al-Anon’s future route. It is we who must predict and plan. It is our leadership responsibility to do so. That is why we are occupying these seats. With that said, let us consider our future. Please make sure your seat belts are securely fastened. We’re off to the future.”

Keeping in mind the essay on leadership in Concept Nine, Conference members were asked to vision and consider the possibilities for the virtual Conference of the future.

Conference members were asked to wrap their minds around the idea: In five short years our WSC will need to be virtual. Five years, that’s 2020 and just around the corner. A virtual event is highly interactive.

The Task Force Chairperson asked: “Did you have a vision flash of what a virtual Conference might look like? What would it look like? Thinking big is about ideas, it does not require details. It is about heading in the right direction for the future.

- What would we want a virtual Conference to look like?
- What would we insist upon for its success?
- What would we need to be successful?
- What would be most important?
- What would we be unwilling to give up?

“This is not in our plan today, we are simply expanding our thinking.”

As Conference members considered the questions, they were reminded to only consider the vision, not the details of how to make it happen.

Members of the Task Force moved around the General Session room with roving microphones as Conference members shared:

- All Conference members would have electronic devices to download automatically.
- I think the future is Skype.
- My vision would be regional locations to cut down on travel.
- Alateens have camaraderie in Chat Rooms so they see what the moderator is doing on a screen.
- Virtual conferencing with Adobe Connect allows a visual for everyone in the meeting via video—can see, but can’t touch everyone.
- Do some work via Webinar at different times during the year to shorten the Conference.
- With video-conferencing, we gain the experience of being in the Conference and feeling like we’re in it. Younger people are sharing that experience now.
- It needs to be inclusive to be successful. It would mean access to technology infrastructure wherever we live.

- Many of us had anxiety when choosing to do service work at all levels. Fear can hold people back and they need to be encouraged. We need to make sure everyone is included if they are willing to do service work whether or not they are technologically advanced.
- Web cams help me feel like I'm in the room with others. While technology is more personal today, we can't lose that personal touch. Many actively participate in the Conference, while others participate just by being here. How would that work with technology?
- We could have meetings quarterly or bi-monthly so the Conference would be more responsive to the needs of the fellowship instead of cramming in the agenda with no time to talk or have fellowship between sessions. Lois and Anne thought the idea would be to go back and forth and bring ideas in a timely manner.
- A hologram so all of us would be together, but video-conferencing would enable the rest of the fellowship to watch and increase the frequency of interaction.
- More frequent meetings would be good. We would come together more regularly. Once business is well in hand, we could relax and learn more from the wisdom of the group.
- In the spirit of inclusivity, I would like to see virtual translation so we are all participating on equal footing.
- Reconnect the fellowship to its Conference and the Structure. Have a C-Span-type Conference connecting the fellowship to its Conference. They would see their representatives in action. There would be transparency so there won't be a feeling of information coming up and down a ladder. It would help members to see and visualize the Conference and be part of it. This was named the World Service Conference by Lois. She had a vision—opening it up and creating only the walls we choose.

Many Conference members said they were unwilling to give up:

- Hugs
- Fellowship
- Links of service—we need that representation.

The Task Force Chairperson concluded the session reminding Conference members that the purpose of the activity was to think ahead; the footwork will come later. The visioning was tied to our spiritual goals and principles of unity, participation, equality, and responsibility. The Chairperson added, "We all have a vision—we just don't know it. We need to prod ourselves with help from a Higher Power and to remember that members and potential members are counting on us."

The Board's "Big Question" presentation was broken into three parts: Introduction of the topic; workshop sessions where service leadership topics were considered; and a final session about participants' reflections on the workshop topics.

The workshops addressed aspects of service leadership in Al-Anon over the next three to five years. Participants were asked to keep in mind Al-Anon's spiritual principles as they considered their hope for Al-Anon's future and what they want it to look like. Participants reflected on the following questions to help identify the three most important ideas brought to mind by the topic question.

- How could you use this approach in considering your Area's future?
- What seemed to be most effective for you personally in this planning session?
- Was there a spiritual principle or a "why" that seemed paramount to your discussions?

The final session focused on the group discussion process, how participants arrived at their three most important characteristics necessary for future leadership and the spiritual principles related to them. Conference members shared their reflections on the workshop topics.

Relying on the ideas in Concept Nine, what can Areas do to inspire members to grow and develop as future leaders?

- We are going too quickly in the Area. The key is pausing and slowing down to have the conversation around ideas instead of jumping to solutions. The spiritual principle is equality.
- There was so much enthusiasm sharing around what service has done for us. Good leadership principles help me apply ideas of informing, inspiring, and motivating people. We do not set

goals for the Area. I want to take back the idea of Area dreams and ask the Area to think of the future and to think for ourselves. The spiritual principle is Step Twelve and carrying the message in an inspiring way.

- The common thread is communication; the intent to share and to respond. Along with intent comes the action of doing it so that it becomes the automatic reflex. Developing leaders is a technique. It is in person, face-to-face, and phone calls—it is personal. To develop fabulous leaders, we must communicate by example, live and in person.
- The spiritual principles in the last sentence of the “Essay on Leadership” are the attributes for leaders now and for the future—tolerance, responsibility, flexibility, and vision.
- We can help members overcome objections, fear, and low self-esteem through information, encouragement, and enthusiasm for service. We stand beside them throughout, demonstrating the “we” of the program and removing barriers that we put up ourselves.

What is our vision of a World Service Conference embodying spiritual principles that meet the needs of all Conference members?

- I heard from people who are not speaking from the mic say that they feel more comfortable sharing in a relaxed and less formal small group. We have small groups in the Area to have discussions. We need to use a “let’s see how we can make this happen” attitude. I was also struck and inspired by concerns and what people think are needs. Spiritual principles of hope, abundance, mutual support, and participation.

What skills, talents, and abilities will the World Service Office need of its administrative staff leaders in the future?

- Skills of WSO leaders: Visionary, innovative, tech savvy, willing to learn, ambitious, and possesses Al-Anon communication skills. Hire staff summer interns with Al-Anon backgrounds.
- Talents: Ability to inspire and engage. Be good listeners no matter the question, they will find the answer. Spiritual principle: Demonstrating how to work the program.

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?

- Having the opportunity to hear what other Areas do. Spiritual principle: Equality.
- I am amazed at the collective wisdom of everyone. Through Task and Thought Forces, I am struck by the great ideas I never thought of myself. Stop thinking right/wrong and think healthy/unhealthy. I resist technology, but I use it, and I am amazed at what I don’t know.
- I love to see the Area get into curiosity. “Hot spots” opened communication within the Area and the districts. Spiritual Principle: Trust. Look to get “out of the box.” Barrier: Don’t let them stop the conversation.

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?

- In discussing what worked and what didn’t, it was evident that adults had taken over and we need to give it back to Alateen if it is going to succeed and not just get carried along. Alateen needs to be responsible for what they want it to be. Put it back where it belongs. Spiritual Principle: Responsibility.
- When we are asked to dream, how quickly we say it won’t work. Anything is possible in God’s world. Being restricted to negative ideas prevents me from thinking beyond. With Alateen we may need a new model.
- How can we make Alateen successful? The goal is more understanding of Alateen and what teens want. Let’s ask them, not assume. Spiritual principle: Concept Four and participation.

How can we as leaders encourage individual Al-Anon members to personally expand public outreach efforts?

- Inspire. I want to take back the way people in the past have inspired me. Use more current language. I want to pay it forward in my activities and take that back to the Area. Spiritual principle: Gratitude.
- Encourage groups to do projects, don't wait for Area projects. It can be as basic as greeting and supporting newcomers to dropping off literature in our travels and sharing our stories in public when appropriate. Inspire and show enthusiasm in service positions and in outreach projects—it is infectious. Spiritual principles: Worth, participation, and “Let It Begin with Me.”

The Task Force Chairperson concluded the 2015 Big Question presentation by thanking Conference members for their thoughts about service leadership in Al-Anon. All of the ideas from the workshop sessions will be shared with the WSO staff and the Board of Trustees. The best thinking of the World Service Conference members will help ensure a strong future for Al-Anon.

BOARD TASK FORCE: CONCEPTS EIGHT AND ELEVEN

Marilyn M.
Chairperson, Trustee

Concept Eight

The Chairperson of the Task Force for Concept Eight presented proposed changes to some of the language for the descriptive text of Concept Eight. The Board wanted to include information about the Executive Committee for Real Property Management (ECRPM) in terms of who comprises this Committee and their oversight responsibility.

As background, the Chairperson briefly took Conference members back to 1994, when the World Service Conference passed Motion #12, which empowered the Board of Trustees to purchase property for housing Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. The following year, the Conference gave traditional approval to a trial By-Laws amendment to Article XII creating an Executive Committee for Real Property Management for a 15-year trial. (Motion 5, 1995 World Service Conference.) The trial period of the purchase was ended in 2011 with Motion #6 (2011 WSC Summary, pages 38-39; 82-83). Motion #6 required the Board of Trustees to amend the By-Laws by 2012 to establish a separate Executive Committee for Real Property Management in order “to ensure that the management of the real property be done in a prudent manner and not interfere with the day-to-day operations of the spiritual parts of the program, i.e., service to the groups, individuals, or Al-Anon as a whole.” The By-Laws were amended in 2012 to include the ECRPM.

In April 2013, a Task Force was assigned to add a section to the descriptive text of Concept Eight to include the Executive Committee for Real Property Management.

The Board of Trustees agreed to take a minimalist approach to the amount of history on the formation of the ECRPM. The detailed information about the formation of the ECRPM is readily available to all members in the *Conference Summaries* which can be accessed through the Members' Web site. The Task Force consulted the By-Laws and the *Service Manual* to determine possible content and placement within Concept Eight's descriptive text.

At the January 2015 Board of Trustees meeting, the Board approved the clarifications to the descriptive text of Concept Eight in “Al-Anon's Twelve Concepts of Service.” The text was updated to reflect the current World Service Office structure while preserving information that is helpful to Areas and international structures that continue to use the former structure.

In February, Delegates received the draft text and were given an opportunity to provide input. Several Areas provided input and the Board reviewed all comments. Delegates were asked to communicate the following clarification and changes with members in their Area who may have provided feedback.

To clarify:

- A member was concerned that there was conflicting requirements for the members of the Executive Committee vs. the ECRPM. It is correctly stated that the members of the Executive Committee are “preferably not” on the Board of Trustees. It is also correctly stated that the three members of the ECRPM are not on the Board of Trustees. This ensures separation.

- The By-Laws state that the Executive Director and Chairperson of the Board of Trustees are ex-officio members of all Committees. However, we needed to make clear that they were not ex-officio members of the ECRPM—again to maintain separation. If the ECRPM needed to communicate directly with the Executive Director and Chairperson of the Board of Trustees, these two positions would be invited with limited voice pertaining to a specific topic or topics, but no vote.

The Board received the most feedback regarding in terms of the composition of the ECRPM. We wanted to emphasize the intent of the original Motion was to form the ECRPM separate from the Board of Trustees (BOT) and the World Service Office (WSO), while identifying the manner in which the ECRPM members are selected.

- We further clarified that the three Al-Anon members are the *at large* members to ensure it is understood that they are not Trustees, again to maintain separation.

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

Is it accurate?

Does it provide clarity?

Can you live with it?

- A member asked for clarification noting that in 1954 there was no Board of Trustees, but a Board of Directors. Concept Eight talks about the Board of Trustees as created in 1954. Also, a separate three-year trial makes it seem like the WSC didn't exist in 1961. The WSC came into being 1961. It seems odd ignoring the first three years of the Conference.

The WSO has been reviewing the By-Laws from 1954 because members have asked when it changed from Trustee to Director and why. Originally, the By-Laws in 1954 called the Board the Board of Trustees and not Directors. It was changed in the amendments to the By-Laws to Board of Directors then changed back with Lois's direction after the World Service Conference (WSC) came about after the trial period. Once the WSC became permanent, it was changed to Trustees. Although we can't find her thinking, based in Archives research, the language in Concept Eight is accurate. The years 1961 - 1963 were a trial. The WSC was not a permanent part of structure until 1964.

- Another member requested clarification of the composition of the ECRPM.

It was explained that there are three at-Large members whose names are submitted through the résumé process. The at-Large members of the ECRPM are not members of the Board of Trustees and are not staff. The Director of Business Services cannot be an Al-Anon member and cannot be Chair. The Chair of the Finance Committee is on the ECRPM as the only Trustee on the Committee to maintain the separation. The Chair of the ECRPM can only be elected from the three at large members.

- A Conference member asked for clarification of the term “ex-officio” as it pertained to the relationship of the ECRPM and the Executive Director and Chairperson of the Board.

It was explained that the term “ex-officio” means membership by virtue of holding a specific office. This language clarifies that only if the Executive Director or Chairperson of the Board were invited, could he/she attend and then he/she would have limited voice, but no vote.

Conference members were reminded that the World Service Conference Structure provides an example to service structures around the world to follow or adapt to their structures as they grow.

After reviewing changes in the descriptive text of Concept Eight, 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 Eight on pages 196-198 in the 2014-2017 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual, Al-Anon's Twelve Concepts of Service section. (See Motion #7, page 102).

Concept Eleven

The descriptive text of Concept Eleven is being updated to accurately reflect the current structure and to further clarify the text. It provides an example to service structures around the world. While some Committees are no longer in effect in the World Service Conference (WSC) Structure, a brief description is maintained in the section since it may continue to be utilized by other structures. If

Marilyn M.
Trustee

sections are deleted or changed, those Amendments appear at the end of text so that we can always know where we came from or return to the previous structure if necessary.

Prior to Conference, Delegates received a draft of the proposed text and were asked to take it back to their Areas in order to clarify it for their members.

Conference members asked:

- Why not write the text for the World Service Conference Structure and use a separate section for other structures?
The Service Manual is used by Al-Anon members around the world. It is confusing to cross-reference in multiple places. The World Service Conference Charter says, "...This World Service Conference is now the senior conference." (Service Manual, page 171). What we do is often seen as the model for service structures around the world.
- Could a structural chart be provided?
"Al-Anon's Twelve Concepts of Service" is not a procedural manual. It is not the place to outline roles and duties. Committees have guidelines for that.

The paragraphs with text changes were reviewed paragraph by paragraph.

Discussion of the bulleted list entitled "Selected Committees"

- Please explain the deletion of Canadian Public Outreach.
This subcommittee was suspended for a three-year trial since Canadian interests were being met by the World Service Office Public Outreach Department and the subcommittee recommended that it be dissolved.
- Members of the Canadian Public Outreach Subcommittee looked at the work they were doing and realized Public Outreach at the World Service Office was already meeting the needs of Canada and they asked the Board to disband the Subcommittee.
- Why are we still including Regional Service Seminars (RSS) when we now have TEAM events?
There are other structures still holding RSSs and they reference the Service Manual for information. The Board did not want to eliminate this entirely, but the double asterisk means it is no longer used in the WSC Structure. There is a specific Task Force for each TEAM event, which is why TEAM events aren't included.
- Please explain the double asterisks.
It means the Committee is no longer used in the WSC Structure, but may be used by other structures outside the Conference that look to us for guidance.

Discussion of the proposed changes in the paragraph that begins "the Admissions/Handbook is a"**

Prior to the review of the paragraph, the Chairperson of the Board noted that the Conference Leadership Team is charged with Admissions and the Board of Trustees oversees the "Handbook."

- If we no longer have the Conference Committee, why is it included?
The Conference Committee is used in other structures, so we can't change the name because it is continuing to provide guidance to other structures.

Prior to the review of the Finance Committee section, the Chairperson of the Board noted that the proposed new text is based on the identified or specific needs in the budget for the service structure. If contributions were our primary source of revenue, the pricing of literature could be decreased.

Prior to the review of the Nominating Committee section, the Chairperson of the Board stated that there was some concern about the phrase "refuses to accept," saying that it is not spiritual. The Board considered this language, and experience *demands* a strong statement to ensure we get the best recommendation possible.

Conference Committee on Trustees (CCT) Discussion:

- Did the Task Force consider renaming the CCT because they are also responsible for reviewing the résumés of at large members of the Executive Committee for Real Property Management, who are definitely not Trustees?
We did not consider renaming it.

- As a member of the CCT, I had that same question last year and realized that the title of the sub-committee was not really relevant to the tasks that may be assigned to me from the Board. So I accept an assignment from the Board which may not necessarily be clearly reflected by the title of the sub-committee to which I belong.

Discussion of the Regional Committee on Trustees (RCT) section:

There was some discussion about clarifying the composition of the Regional Committees on Trustees that are formed at the World Service Conference. It was noted that the RCT guideline clarifies the composition.

As time on the agenda for the session on Concepts Eight and Eleven ran out, the Chairperson of the Board thanked Conference members for their feedback and asked the Task Force to look at the suggestions for the RCT section. Discussion will commence at the RCT section along with the remainder of the proposed changes at the 2016 Conference.

CHOSEN AGENDA ITEMS

Prior to this year's World Service Conference (WSC), the Conference Leadership Team invited Conference members to submit Chosen Agenda Item topics that are general in nature and pertain to Al-Anon worldwide for discussion.

Before the Conference, the submitted topics were combined into a single document. Each Conference member was asked to select two topics. The two topics receiving the most votes were placed on the agenda for 60-minute floor discussions.

First Chosen Agenda Item Discussion

Topic:

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

The importance of this topic and how it could shape Al-Anon as a whole:

In Bill W.'s "Essay on Leadership," he speaks of revisiting past decisions to see how they're working out. Much has changed in society since the advent of Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements. Cellphones and texting are now the norm for teen communication, background checks (and the administrative costs associated with them) are common, and schools, once welcoming, are now reluctant to deal with us for fear of litigation over the inclusion of the Three Legacies. In short, is Al-Anon wasting resources maintaining the current model of Alateen? If so what changes should be made?

Topic:

In some Areas, what is stopping our kids from coming to Alateen?

The importance of this topic and how it could shape Al-Anon as a whole:

I would like to see work done for Alateen to:

1. Get Al-Anon members interested in being Sponsors, Coordinators, and Al-Anon Area Process Persons (AAPPs).
2. Get teens interested in Alateen and service they can do.

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

- I would like clarity on the use of the word "fear."

Because the Legacies refer to God, and schools have interpreted the separation between church and state to the extreme saying people can't mention God in any way, people are afraid the Legacies would be prohibited. Supreme Court states that an outside meeting can take place on school premises and as long as parents agree and attendance is not mandatory, then the use of the Legacies is not prohibited.

- We talk about Alateen everywhere in our Area and we have no Alateens. It seems like Alateens are coming first, rather than our common welfare. It is an emotional issue, but at what point do we say enough?
- No one is in our Al-Anon meetings between the ages of 21 and 45. They are the ones who have kids. We need to attract younger members into the program to get Alateen up and running.
- We have insisted on dividing Al-Anon and Alateen. We have created a separation, and in the process have escalated an emotional issue.
- Perhaps the name “Alateen” discourages younger people from attending, but that is the age of those who come and stay.
- If we start younger, kids are not worried what their friends think. Transportation is a problem.
- Are we promoting Alateen? Districts feel pressured when there are no kids.
- It seems like *we* make Alateen happen, and *kids* make functions happen.
- There is no support at home, so teens don’t attend for fear of their parents finding out. They are fearful of social repercussions.
- In an Area discussion, we learned that A.A. members were the ones willing to bring Alateens to Assembly. Al-Anon members don’t want the responsibility of transporting Alateens to Assembly.
- Alateen is not their meeting—Al-Anon members have taken over. In the 1960s, the teens wanted their own meeting. We need to empower Alateens to take over their own recovery.
- There is a lack of knowledge about Alateen. There are policies in place, and we need to educate at the group level.
- We build in hopes that they will come. Ask kids what they prefer. On-line meetings might lack the meaningfulness of face-to-face meetings. Can we assure the safety of our members? Circumstances change. We need to do something.
- Kids who are committed to the program get a lot out of it. I have talked with the kids. The reasons they are not going: Transportation, weather, schedules, resistance to the idea of God, religion. It is face-to-face versus technology. We need to modernize. There is a lot going on with kids. They need more centralized communications. There is not enough balance—either too many or too few Alateen Group Sponsors and Al-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service (AMIAS).
- I have no concept what Alateen should be. There is a lot of control, but no love and concern for the kids.
- We need more Alateen Group Sponsors. Our Alateen Coordinator is going to groups trying to get Alateen meetings started. Kids want them. We have an Alateen who is a Group Representative and an Alternate District Representative whose dream is of being Delegate in six or seven years!
- Members need to bring kids to Alateen. Outreach is about the benefits. More Al-Anon members need to become AMIASs.
- We need to ask the question—should Alateen be a separate entity? We need to attract in ways that are appealing to teens today. In technology, do we look at what fits the needs of teens? Keep the dialog going to find solutions.
- It is a learning experience for adults. Kids just want to play ball. Another learning experience for adults: A.A. members provide the most encouragement for kids to get into Alateen to improve their relationships with their kids. Al-Anon members are afraid their teens are going to talk about them.
- If Al-Anon recovery is so precious to adults, why would we want to deprive our kids of it?
- Our Area Alateen Coordinator was ignited by her experience at an Alateen convention. It was their third, and now they are looking for a bigger venue. We are working to educate an Alateen standing committee investigating aspects of the Alateen program. In my Area, there was an Alateen roundup for years that we thought was sponsored by the Al-Anon Information Service (AIS) office, but insurance doesn’t cover it. They learned of things going on in the Area they were unaware of.

- I want to keep talking and find solutions. There are advantages to meetings in schools (transportation) and advertising it with A.A. and Al-Anon meetings. The advantage there is that parents can bring their kids.
- School meetings are still struggling for Alateen Group Sponsors.
- Background checks in rural areas are difficult. Alateens want to work the Steps when they are all new. Peer pressure is fear-based in schools. Our Alateen Coordinator thinks kids feel safer on-line or in Alateen Chat rooms.
- We have more Spanish-speaking Alateen meetings than English-speaking. Alateen doesn't meet at the same time as the Al-Anon meeting. We set up an Alateen introductory meeting at a detention center and an Al-Anon meeting in a women's recovery center. We are taking panels to schools with a meeting once a week after school.
- We supply Alateen literature to schools and we have a traveling meeting with a meeting in a suitcase. When we get called to a school to do a meeting on wheels, we give information to the mental health worker in the school.
- Alateens don't feel welcome at Assembly. Some Al-Anon's don't want them there.
- We took Alateens to a convention. They came back and got others to go. The meeting is now growing. Teens now have their own Assembly at the same time as ours. We struggle with not having enough AMIASs.
- My kids were in Alateen before I found Al-Anon. My grandchildren don't want to go to Alateen meetings. They haven't lived in active alcoholism. I can be an example of what Al-Anon is and live my principles. They know where the program is and what it is. Alateens need peer sharing; they have tablets so they don't need a book.
- Alateens are not pets. They come to Assemblies. They have meetings in schools. They don't want to make plans. Teens do their own meeting. Sponsors are going through the Steps with them. Alateen Sponsors have an R & R with AMIAS. Every meeting is different. We talk about big things. Sponsors support each other.
- We have local AMIAS training. We established an Alateen Thought Force to address issues. We want information on Chat Rooms. Once a month, we have a face-to-face Alateen meeting so kids get to meet each other. A dad brings pizza and someone brings cookies.
- It was difficult when the Board of Trustees made the minimum Safety and Behavior Requirements, but it turned into an onerous list of tasks to protect teens, but now it is to protect the adults. Areas instituted additional requirements as if the WSO was making them. We are not protecting teens. You don't get kids to participate if adults keep talking in their meetings. When the teens know that it's their meeting and we don't continue jumping in and teaching, they will do what they need to do to make the meeting work for them.
- Streamline requirements at the Area level. Make it easier for adults to become Alateen Group Sponsors. I have been at training meetings where Sponsors share how they let kids have fun and run the meetings. My Area kept background checks because the teens asked for them for safety.
- Is the current model the best one? The benefits are right, but is the model? Chat Rooms hopefully will lead kids to face-to-face meetings.
- An AAPP spoke at an Alateen conference. It hit me, if they are there and reaching out, I must make a bigger effort to work with the Alateen Coordinator to be part of something that will help. Problems were keeping members from serving as Coordinators. This year we have two Coordinators. It is helpful. They are not babysitters, but are there to help kids with their problems.
- We are trying to fix the kids. That is not our job. Kids know and have come to expect that we give them too much.
- I thought transportation was the problem. We started a Chat Room, but no one is coming. There was an on-line questionnaire asking what Alateens said they want. I never heard the results of the questionnaire.
- We don't respect them and are not treating them with respect. I will ask for an Area-wide inventory about Alateen.

Following the session, a Delegate summarized the discussion:

- In many areas our current Alateen model is not working; in some Areas Alateen is strong and doing well.
- Some reasons why Alateen may not be working include:
 - ✓ Ongoing liability and safety issues.
 - ✓ Current approaches do not appeal to teens, our model is too structured, not technological enough.
- AMIAS certification process too cumbersome.
- Family dynamic and the Al-Anon/A.A. relationship have changed: fewer opportunities for A.A. members to bring kids with them to meetings. Al-Anon members afraid the kids will be talking about them.
- Sponsors fearful of dealing with kids and/or under trained.
- Find ways to attract more Alateen Group Sponsors; train them.
- Empower teens to seek/work their own recovery.
- Keep this conversation going.

Second Chosen Agenda Item

Topic:

How can we clarify our primary purpose while welcoming members who need our program who may have a drug addicted friend or family member?

Explain the importance of this CAI and how it could shape Al-Anon as a whole:

Many people are coming into Al-Anon affected by others having problems with both alcohol and other substances, or sometimes only other substances. Our primary purpose is to help families of alcoholics and our only requirement for membership is a problem with alcoholism in a relative or friend.

Some groups respond by stating Al-Anon is for families of alcoholics and addicts, although that is inconsistent with Tradition Five. If groups do not have strategies to welcome newcomers in a manner that protects Al-Anon's focus while encouraging them to determine for themselves if they belong, we risk Al-Anon's ability to offer recovery.

Topic:

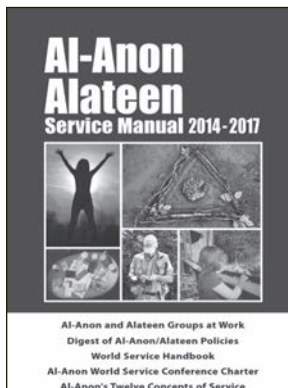
Is Al-Anon becoming friends and families of addicts? Is the focus more on addiction than alcoholism? Are we diverted from Tradition Three and Tradition Five? How can we support groups and maintain Al-Anon's primary aim? Is the Al-Anon program being diluted?

Explain the importance of this CAI and how it could shape Al-Anon as a whole:

I continue to hear more talk of addiction instead of alcoholism at all service levels and within the groups that I attend. Our responsibility is to ensure Al-Anon's survival as a resource for families and friends of alcoholics. How do we ensure Al-Anon's survival as a fellowship for families and friends of alcoholics? There are many different types of addiction and we risk our program being diluted more and more as different types of addiction are entering our meetings.

Following the reading of the topic, Conference members responded:

- Alcoholism is an addiction. It is not my job to determine why people are in Al-Anon. If they are comfortable coming, let them be and they will figure it out.
- If a teen says a parent is on drugs and an Al-Anon Member Involved in Alateen Service (AMIAS) refers to Traditions Three and Five, we are missing an opportunity to change a life.
- Allow people to self-select. It is not my business to decide who belongs to a group. Some take longer than others—leave it up to the person to decide.



- We are powerless over alcohol and people, places, and things. We can share that Al-Anon not only works on alcohol but co-workers, neighbors, and in any aspect of our lives. The program works the way we make it work in our lives and a member could use a substitute word for alcoholic. The actions are much the same.
- Membership is defined in the literature. The group needs to maintain the integrity of the meeting and stay focused on Al-Anon issues—that keeps the boundaries.
- A member stayed for two years in a beginners meeting. I asked her why and she said it was because she was told so strongly that Al-Anon was for the families and friends of alcoholics, not drug addiction. I told her it was up to her to make a decision whether she belongs in Al-Anon.
- This issue was brought up at Assembly. A Group Representative (GR) was ready to walk out of the room hearing that she did not belong.
- If people are insistent that only drugs are in the family, I offer to help them start a Nar-Anon meeting.
- I didn't know who, or what, or if I had an alcoholic in my life. I couldn't identify an alcoholic for four years. If I had stuck to not being able to identify the alcoholic, I wouldn't be here today.
- It is more common today to come to Al-Anon not being able to identify the alcoholic. A Past Delegate suggested we think about how we share in meetings. I have no desire to be the Al-Anon police. We have only one meeting that is a resource for family members and friends of addicts in our Area. I hate to see families out there suffering.
- My home group does introductions after the opening and asks if there are newcomers. As they introduce themselves, members say, "We're glad you're here, you're in the right place." I need to be cautious not to say sorry you don't qualify for what we have to offer. I try instead to talk Al-Anon and say, "We speak in Al-Anon about the family disease of alcoholism. How you hear this is your business, take what you like and leave the rest."
- A friend whose primary addiction was drugs came to Al-Anon. She told me she learned in the rooms to focus on solutions rather than the problem so there is not an issue. She said she could learn about recovery in Al-Anon, but they are not exactly the same. It may be a disservice to indicate to drug-addicted family members and friends that Al-Anon has everything they need, especially if other programs are available.
- Tradition Three says "... The only requirement for membership is that there be a problem of alcoholism in a relative or friend." That sentence stopped me in my tracks and kept me silent for two years because I knew I didn't belong although I felt loved and cared for and was given opportunities to share, I wouldn't. I heard what I was feeling from them. That attracted me. I had enough respect for the program not to share what brought me in. I am grateful the program allows us to come in and find out why we're here.
- On page 26 of the "Groups at Work" section of the *Service Manual* (P-24/27) talks about our obsession. We forget about that word. We have our obsession with the person, whatever the addiction. In my group, we have two mothers who are minorities; both have sons with drug problems. They do not tell us so they can't share openly. They do have Spanish-speaking Al-Anon Sponsors to work the Twelve Steps.
- My Area's view is to keep apples with apples and oranges with oranges or there is dilution. The "Groups at Work" section of the *Service Manual* has tools asking us to keep other programs out. In our meeting, we discovered there needs to be a yes or no answer for clarity, but not to bring black-and-white thinking to come to it. That is rigidity, control, and righteousness. We want to use the spiritual principles of patience, tolerance, and gentleness. So in my home group, we explain to the newcomer after the meeting the need to keep the focus on Al-Anon. As a newcomer, I didn't hear anything.
- Longtime members say "my addict," or "my qualifier." I qualify—it is not someone else qualifying me. It is important to keep the focus on ourselves. Other things come along with alcoholism.
- My daughter and I were at a hospital in another Area, and I desperately needed a meeting. My daughter who is not in Al-Anon called and found one. The lady told her there was one in

the basement of the hospital where we were. She told my daughter, “You are welcome to go, too—we will not turn you away.” How would I have handled it if they had told my daughter she couldn’t come in?

- *How Al-Anon Works* (B-22) addresses this issue. Those who have not actively seen drinking, such as adult grandchildren, we call the “skipped generation.”
- A WSO survey showed that 65% of members are in touch with professionals and received services from professionals before coming to Al-Anon. Most services don’t separate alcoholism from drug addiction; they are lumped together. People don’t know the difference when they come to Al-Anon. The U.S. government tracks those who receive treatment for alcoholism. Forty-eight percent of alcoholics are also addicted to drugs. This is a different time than Bill W.’s. The WSO works with national organizations and has a good relationship with Nar-Anon which has 600 groups in the U.S. and 60 in Canada. We all want peer support, but the numbers are stacked against finding it. There is a sense of responsibility when chairing a meeting to bring the focus back.
- An on-line meeting I attend keeps it to Al-Anon. There is little mention of drugs. A member shared an experience of trying to go to a face-to-face meeting. Older members tried to fix her. They were also talking about their drug addicted children and grandchildren. She said she felt out of place.
- We do not need to keep families of addicts out. Allowing those potential members in does not dilute the program. Al-Anon members with issues around boundaries dilute it. We can welcome anyone who resonates if we keep boundaries. We all have common roots. Any addiction can relate to in Al-Anon. We, as members, have to educate, inform, welcome, and share, but keep boundaries around our spiritual principles. We need to help them have them too so we can all recover together.
- In my Area, we asked “How can we clarify our primary purpose while welcoming members who may have been affected by other addictions?” It is important to use spiritual principles to set boundaries and rules of discussion in order to have the conversation. It got quickly in to black-and-white thinking. We shared statistics. The responses included if a meeting is healthy, members rarely say who the alcoholic is and rarely focus on the problem drinker. However, many meetings are “hijacked” by members of A.A. choosing not to honor the Traditions, but groups adhere to spiritual principles when interacting compassionately with these members.
- When we have members coming in although not specifying for alcoholism, we tell them there is good information they can use to make life easier. Some say that when alcohol quit working for the problem drinker, they used drugs. So it can go either way. Stick to the principle of take what you like and apply it to your life.
- In home groups, we try to be respectful—people are just looking for help. Encourage people to get help, respect the Al-Anon program, and respect that people are trying to find help that is not readily available in rural areas.
- One of the most important pieces is “Understanding Ourselves” in the *Service Manual*. When we talk about why alcoholics drink, it discusses their addiction. We have been talking of addiction in the literature since the beginning of the program. You taught me that I needed to clean my own sidewalk and what you did with yours is none of my business. I can’t be healthy if I’m focusing on every “gimmick” that comes down the road. When I talked about a “qualifier,” my Sponsor told me to look in the mirror. I never knew anyone who used drugs who didn’t use it with alcohol, it was always there.
- The *Service Manual* sub-section, “Drugs/Narcotics/Prescription Medication” helps me. When I was in need of help with drug addiction, I needed to go to someone who could talk to me about drugs. I appreciate that Sponsor who sent me to outside help. It is a disservice when members are unaware of this page.
- Our group had a bus driver come into the rooms who told us she was just waiting for the members of A.A. she drove from a treatment center. She had been told she couldn’t stay in the A.A. meeting and was sent to the Al-Anon Newcomer meeting next door where she was welcomed. I saw her recently and she celebrated one year of sobriety. She said it was in those Beginner Meetings that she realized where she really belonged.

Following the session, a Delegate summarized the discussion:

- It is not my job to determine who belongs in Al-Anon.
- Helpful information can be found in the *2014-2017 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*, pages 25, 40, and 124.
- If we turn people away, we might miss an opportunity to save a life.
- Let people know we keep the focus on ourselves and our recovery.
- It may be years in Al-Anon before we identify alcoholism in our lives.
- Language is important—avoid the terms “my addict;” “my qualifier;” “my alcoholic”.
- Dilution comes from a lack of boundaries.
- Apply the spiritual principles of Patience, Tolerance, Understanding, Kindness, and Respect. Educate with compassion.
- Al-Anon can’t be all things to all people.

FINANCE COMMITTEE PRESENTATION

For the past several years, the Finance Committee has developed a presentation that the World Service Conference (WSC) members could take back to their Areas to increase members’ knowledge and understanding of Al-Anon money matters.

Jennie McC.
Treasurer, Trustee

This year, Conference members were asked to expand their minds to the limits of their dreams to achieve the Board’s vision:

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

To achieve big dreams and make them a reality, they first need to be conceived. Conference members were asked to share ideas that will move the Al-Anon fellowship forward based on our spiritual principles and to see the Traditions as expansive, rather than restrictive, and to look at ideas without prejudging what can work. Later, if it is found that an idea violates any spiritual principle, we will go back and see what is possible within our principles.

In each of six breakout rooms, Conference members selected a dream and identified the necessary activities and resources to move from dream to reality without having the dream die for lack of a plan.

In a general session following the small group breakouts, the Treasurer asked Conference members to share what their experience was like:

- We talked about how to raise so much money that it lowered the price of literature. I now have the tools to go back to my Area and change the conversation from consternation and fear about literature being priced out of reach. It was powerful to go through the process and come out with practical tools.
- We talked about Public Outreach. My first inclination was to think small and practical. It took time to think we were going to fix the world. We developed a plan and the action steps to achieve it.
- If every member in my Area gave 25 cents a week to the WSO, that is \$13,000 a year.
- I thought a TEAM event would inspire active, healthy service. I realized the real dream is to have healthy groups available worldwide. It expanded my dream and vision by sharing with others.
- We talked about this at our Area World Service Committee meeting, but didn’t know how to do it. I learned and heard to trust the process. I didn’t know how the process worked, but did what I was told. It was awesome. I am a visual person and saw a visual way to look at dreams and hope.



- We talked about making Al-Anon better known than A.A. I am a person who likes to go from A to Z, not stopping between to realize I had not planned. I need to slow down, look at the plans, and talk to each other. Most of all, I learned to have a little humor and not to give up.
- I had trouble thinking big enough, but the members in the breakout room helped with that. The process is easy to bring to the Area. If every group donates \$250 to the WSO, we wouldn't have to worry about money. There are things I could do that will lead to fulfillment of big dreams. I made a commitment to be certain, for the rest of my life, that my group donates that much every year. "Let It Begin with Me."
- I realized that if a beer company says drink responsibly, what about the people who are not being responsible? Then, I realized that if we got a commercial, we would need staff, a bigger building, teleconferencing with staff working at home, and a project manager. We have to have a process for how to get from A to B with our dream—not to do details, but to look at the process.
- I haven't been able to stop thinking about my experience since we did it! My breakout group planned to have enough money to exceed the entire WSO budget. We are going to put a "donate button" on the front of the Members' Web site right away. It is about "we." In dreaming, we pass the ideas out into the universe and dreams start to become possible. We shared ideas that will grow roots to make become reality.
- We had a giant dream that every group have an abundance of recovery so that all newcomers would remain. We brought it back down to the groups asking, "What is my home group like? Are we welcoming and understanding with a beginner meeting?" We each need to be an attractive Al-Anon member. It begins with me bringing the idea to the Area, districts, and groups.

Conference members received a "cloud" placard as a gift to take home to remind them to keep dreaming. The Treasurer reminded everyone that we have to put our dreams out there for them to happen.

FORUM EDITORIAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

John McL.
Trustee Liaison

Robert S.
Director of Communication
Services

In July 2013, the Forum Editorial Advisory Committee (FEAC) began to discuss the possibility of developing a book based on sharings published in past issues of *The Forum*.

After much discussion and careful consideration of the pros and cons, FEAC agreed to bring this proposal forward for Conference approval for two reasons:

- FEAC believes that *The Forum* regularly publishes important and thoughtful sharings that represent the diversity of the fellowship today. These sharings have insight into Al-Anon recovery that is not currently available elsewhere in Al-Anon's literature. The best of these sharings deserve to be read for years to come, but they are likely to be lost and forgotten in the continuous flow of new *Forum* stories published every month, unless they become Conference Approved Literature (CAL).
- FEAC also believes that this book may help a wider cross-section of the fellowship to become aware of the value of the magazine. *The Forum* plays a vital role in communicating the benefits of participating in Al-Anon service and promoting Al-Anon unity, but is read by only a relatively small proportion of the fellowship.

FEAC followed protocol and presented the results of the five Knowledge-Based Decision-Making (KBDM) questions to the World Service Conference (WSC) for consideration.

This process follows the precedent set by four previously published volumes of *Forum Favorites*, according to which FEAC would ask the Conference for conceptual approval to develop a book based on previously published *Forum* sharings. Also following previous precedent, FEAC proposes to develop the book and then submit it to the CAL process: namely, review by the Literature Committee, a Policy Review, and approval by the Executive Director.

In addition to providing the answers to the five KBDM questions before Conference, FEAC provided some background information regarding *Forum Favorites*, which is now out of print. The third and fourth volumes in this series were approved by the Executive Committee and the World Service Conference in 1989. Volume 3 was printed in 1991. Volume 4 was introduced in 1993. The World Service Conference rejected a proposal for a fifth volume in 1994 because Volume 4 had been produced so recently.

The Director of Communication Services shared, “Ten years ago, before coming to World Service Office (WSO) I was troubled by a daughter raised in an alcoholic home. The *Forum* had a story about the experience of a child of an alcoholic and I found it so helpful and illuminating. I haven’t seen it before or since. I wouldn’t want it lost because it appeared so long ago and no one knows its there. I have not seen the difference between attraction and promotion explained clearly in a long time, but personal sharings can do it clearly and directly and the fellowship at large should be able to look at it again. We talk about our need and desire for greater diversity, sharing for men, grandparents etc. We have those in the *Forum*. The cream of the cream is something worth reading again. It is editorial judgment, but that is what the FEAC and *Forum* editor has to do. Quality and content should define the size. They should be sharings worth keeping. We cannot know in advance how big the publication would be.”

Conference members shared their thoughts:

- I love the idea of it being big with lots of sharings and well indexed. It would be a great resource in one piece of literature.
- If a sharing is still understandable and in touch with the needs of fellowship today, how rigid will you be about archaic language?

The criteria would be, can the reader relate to the sharing? It would be considered archaic if the reader could not.

- There are diverse sharings in *The Forum*. Last year, the Conference gave conceptual approval for a book on diversity. Is this repetitive or redundant? There are good *Forum* sharings for the book on diversity.
- I hope you will retain the sharing in Volume 2 on the Lord’s Prayer.
- We have young families at on-line meetings asking how they can help their children. There is a lack in our literature today. I hope they can find literature to relate to that.
- Could it be accessible on-line with a search feature?

We update the index for The Forum annually in December. It is now available on the Members’ Web site where it is updated monthly and kept for two years.

- Do you need to get permission from the member who wrote an article to republish and how far back do you go?
- This discussion took me back to when I was a newcomer. I found the sharings intimate and I could identify with them. We look at it critically. Newcomers hang onto words. I found it simple and could relate.

Sharings sent to The Forum become the property of the World Service Office (WSO). Assignment of the copyright to the WSO gives us the right to edit and publish it wherever.

- I have a sponsee who has adult children with issues. I use *The Forum* to share the message with her. Because of the Forum Coordinator before me, I love to go back and look at them. We have not reinvented the wheel of alcoholism. It is the same as 20-30 years ago. Rereading them will help me.
- It was a lifesaver for me. It is a focus for newcomers. When getting people into service, the benefits are valuable.
- My home group is on the Steps and Traditions and we read from all the literature. It would be exciting to have sharings on the Steps, Traditions, and Concepts.
- This is an opportunity for Spanish- and French-speakers because it is translated and they probably have not seen most of these articles. Just for them, it would be wonderful.



- I have a concern. We are saying members don't read *The Forum* (see 2014 WSC Summary, pages 31-33), but we'll pick the best and put it in a book. My group has *Forums* and offers them to members and newcomers. I don't follow the logic. We produce books and no one buys them except those subscribing to *The Forum* already.
- We have a large amount of material at the WSO. It seems like an onerous task to research it and put together a book.
- My understanding of the proposal is they would do a first round of screening and FEAC members would be given a vast number of sharings. Once satisfied with the content, it would go to the Literature Committee to review. WSO staff would then become fully engaged with editing. Ultimately it would go to the Executive Director to read for content and tone. If the Conference agrees to do this, it would not be a huge drain on the staff because the material is already there.
- I am looking for clarity. *The Forum* is a publication, but not Conference Approved Literature (CAL), and no one said the project would be CAL.
It will go through the process that makes it CAL.
- Why was *Forum Favorites* (B-9a-d) discontinued?
Al-Anon's Favorite Forum Editorials was published in 1970, and contained many of the editorials written between 1954 and 1969 by Margaret D., the first Editor of *The Forum*. In 1982, the book was divided in half and published in soft cover as *Forum Favorites, Volumes 1 and 2*. Volumes 3 and 4 were published in 1991 and 1993, respectively. Volume 3 contained editorials from 1974 through 1987 by three of Margaret's successors. Volume 4 contained favorite *Forum* stories from 1954 through 1979 selected by readers.
The Forum Editorial Advisory Committee and Literature Committees I and II recommended discontinuance of all four volumes of Forum Favorites to the Board in 1998. Low sales indicated minimal interest from the fellowship. Additionally, some Committee members noted that they did not consider the volumes to be timely, responsive to identified needs, or reflective of the current membership.

Following discussion, there was consensus to move forward with a motion.

A Motion was made, seconded, and carried that the 2015 WSC give conceptual approval to develop a piece of CAL based on member sharings published in past issues of *The Forum*. (See Motion #6 on page 101).

POLICY DISCUSSION

Judy K.

Chairperson, Trustee

Harriet T.

Co-Chairperson, Trustee

Robert S.

Secretary, Director of Communications

Memorial Contributions

The Chairperson began with a summary of the 2013 and 2014 World Service Conference (WSC) discussions to bring new Conference members up to date on the conversation.

Conference members had requested clarification on the definition of "family" and "member" and whether there would be a limit on the memorial contribution. 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 that the conversation continue. (See 2013 WSC Summary, pages 48-51).

At the 2014 WSC, Conference members discussed "what is a member" based on Al-Anon Traditions and "what is a family member" based on research on what the world sees it as today. Today, family also includes close family friends. (See 2014 WSC Summary, pages 58-60). Conference members requested that the conversation continue at the 2015 World Service Conference with discussion of safeguards and limitations on contributions.

Since the last Conference, many of the Delegates discussed this issue in their Areas. Several reported resistance to a change in the Policy, while other Areas were in favor and a few were undecided. Before beginning the discussion, Conference members asked the following general questions:

- How do Areas, when they get checks, know if they are a self-defined family member?
When the WSO receives a check, there is a procedure to ensure the check comes from a member or member's estate. If we change the policy to allow non-member contributions, we would

check that the member being memorialized was a member and the person writing the check was a family member as well. It is unlikely we will get checks from a member who does not meet those requirements.

- If a one-time only contribution is received, is there any tracking in place to ensure that only one contribution is received and not to permit an annual contribution?

That would be part of the procedure.

- Could I make more than one contribution if I have more than one family member in Al-Anon?
*If you are a non-member, you could make one contribution in memory of one Al-Anon member.
If you have ten friends in Al-Anon, you could make one contribution in each name when they die.*

- Would it be considered solicitation if a family member posted in the obituary to give donations on behalf of a certain group or Al-Anon member?

Based on spiritual principles, you would advise a family member ahead of time not to post such information. If a statement is in an obituary to donate, we would consider it solicitation, but that is outside the boundaries of this conversation.

- I am concerned about the obituary issue. It reminded me of Traditions Eleven and Twelve and that Lois didn't want her picture glorified. I have no control of what others do, but I do have with family. I will ask them not to put it in the paper, but tell them, I want *you* to donate money in my memory to the WSO.
- This issue boils down to Tradition Five and whether or not we need this kind of opportunity for family members to honor what Al-Anon has given deceased family members. It is an especially poignant time to give comfort and consider them an extended part of the family in the same way we would accept flowers. Accepting a contribution is a way of giving comfort to families of alcoholics. It is not about money.

Most contributions come in \$25 or \$50, so it is not influencing the program. It is about being ethical and principled about donations and not telling someone to give a donation under the table by giving it to a member to make the contribution.

As the 2015 discussion began, Conference members were asked to consider:

Are our safeguards adequate?

Are there other safeguards that should be considered?

What kinds of limitations would we like to put on the amount if we accept them?

Conference members were asked:

Do we want to limit contributions?

- If we decide to accept contributions, it makes sense that families would be receiving comfort from it. My Area's idea is that while limits are complicated, they are prudent.
- From the beginning of this discussion, I could support a change in the policy, if it had a reasonable limit. There is a different principle here. Trying to honor family members willingness to say "thank you" to Al-Anon for what it has given them as family members, whether they joined or not. It should be a modest amount and a decision of the Conference. If there is no limit, I can't support changing in the policy regardless of the goals. It is not what we are trying to do here and the pioneers supported the idea of modest limits.
- Here's an example of why we have the Seventh Tradition written so there can be no strings attached: A member in my Area with a large income wanted to donate and we had to turn it down. If there were no limits, there are people who could buy Al-Anon.
- My impression is that we get confused about the difference between a bequest and a memorial contribution. I can request that a portion of my trust go to Al-Anon. That is a lot different than my neighbor wanting to give something in my memory. We need a limit. Is it solicitation when Alateen members are selling cookies to go to a conference and not asking if the purchaser is a member? If someone wants to give freely because they realize what has been gained, they should be allowed.
- Keep it simple. Have a limit. Choose a percentage of the budget that would change year to year.

- We discussed this in my Area. There was a lot of opposition and some support. Have a limit of no more than what we can, as an individual, give.

The Policy Task Force Chairperson asked Conference members whether they would favor a limit on contributions if the Conference moves in that direction. There was a clear consensus to have a limit.

To put things in perspective before continuing the discussion, a Task Force member provided information about previously limited dollar amounts: In 1962, it was \$100; in 1974, it was raised to \$400. The current value of the previous limits is \$790 in 2015 dollars. As an example, one percent of today's budget is approximately \$50,000 or one-tenth of one percent is \$5,000. Conference members were then asked:

What kind of limitations would you like to put on the amount if we accept?

- I am leaning toward approval with a limit. \$500 seemed reasonable, but looking at what we have done in the past, one percent could change over time and seems reasonable.
- We can give up to one percent to show gratitude. If my child could give on behalf of the value of what they have seen that contributed to their lives because of Al-Anon, one percent would be reasonable and keeps it simple.
- Consider that Areas, groups, Al-Anon Information Services, and General Service Offices around the world may look to this policy for guidance. If we put a dollar amount, it may be way out of their range. Using a percentage allows others to look at this as a guideline.
- I would favor a dollar amount. Have a level where we don't need to bother to check. For example \$100. Time used checking would not be necessary.

Once the discussion on safeguards, dollar amounts, percentage limitations, and what direction to take limitations had been concluded, there was a clear consensus to move in the direction of limiting contributions. The discussion was adjourned for the day to give Conference members time to consider all of the topics related to this conversation:

- Proposed safeguards to ensure no outside influence.
- No earmarking of monies to the General Fund.
- No solicitation.
- Contributions from self-defined family members.
- One-time only contributions.

When considering the topics, Conference members were asked to keep in mind that the Al-Anon structures around the world consider us the model and look to us for guidance.

Later in the Conference, the conversation resumed. The Conference Chairperson announced that a group of Conference members had drafted a floor motion with language that reflected allowing Al-Anon Family Groups to accept donations from family members that represent one percent of the budget.

Having had time to think about the earlier discussion, Conference members were asked:

Do you have sufficient information to begin the conversation on language for a motion?

Conference members were invited to share their thinking:

- It is premature to bring a motion because we need language to consider.
Policies are interpretations of our Traditions. They are a way of promoting harmony. To arrive at answers that are consistent, loving, and helpful takes time. There is no need to rush forward, but in the interest of the fellowship as a whole and what is best for the fellowship, that is what we need to consider today.
- If we add a percentage, it would be helpful to take back to my Area.
- I don't feel I'm ready to move on with a motion. Friends of mine, an Al-Anon/A.A. couple, were approached recently by a non-Al-Anon member of their church group. She wanted to give them \$2,500 so it would be easier for them to carry on their Twelfth-Step work with

others. My friends thanked her for her generosity, but declined the donation because they were thrilled to share with her that our work with others is for fun and for free and we do *not* accept outside contributions. Many of us were not self-supporting at one point in our lives and much of our sense of worth now comes from the fact that we are. I think that allowing memorial contributions from non-members would lead to an unfortunate erosion of the Seventh Tradition. The Seventh Tradition is a clear statement. Changing the Policy involves interpretation of Tradition Five. I believe we cannot erode one Tradition in order to satisfy our interpretation of another.

- I was a Delegate in 2004 when we discussed Alateen safety. It was emotional. Folks were upset not realizing the conversation had been going on for years. I have a concern about moving to a motion now. Have all Delegates had the conversation in the Area so that you know the voice of your Area as you bring it forward?
- I would like to go to my Area to continue the conversation at that level. They have an awareness it is going on here, but it has not carried out to the Area or district level.
- It was brought up at Assembly. A significant number were against it. It is premature for a motion. We want people to understand that it is not about the money which is what I hear now in my Area. I would like to take it back to my Area and explain it in light of Tradition Five.
- It was briefly mentioned last year. There is not a full understanding of the issue in my Area.
- As a member, when I came to Al-Anon and at the WSC, I got stuck on words. In 1984, I was running around thinking that the Board was insane to think of purchasing property because I had read Tradition Four and knew what it said. The difficulty with Tradition Seven is that some have taken a look and said this would not be self-support. Lois thought it was self-support to take from family members because she drafted it. In 1984, the WSC had no discussion, the office listened to tapes.
- My Area has discussed it, and I am prepared to vote to change it.
- I am prepared to vote, but now I need to be more clear on the wording of the safeguards. There is not unanimity in my Area based on the discussion there.
- The Timeline is an eye-opener. From 1984-86, I was a Delegate. I heard the conversations at that time from the perspective of representing my Area. Since then I have listened to discussions at the WSO. Contributing money is only one aspect of this. I know if it got out of hand, we would report to the Conference. There are other ways to memorialize and contribute. I would like to see other ideas such as the purchase of literature to donate to facilities.
- Rarely have I seen an issue more thoroughly discussed. We did discuss it in the Area and they are in favor with a percentage and .01 percent is satisfactory.
- My Area discussed it. They have adequate information. I showed the Area all the information. There is no way I can fully explain and empower District Representatives and Group Representatives about what the WSC has discussed for three years. I told them, you send trusted servants—do you trust me to prayerfully consider this? They agreed that they trusted me. I don't take that lightly.
- If the information given is open to interpretation, and we are going forward with a motion and Policy has not had an opportunity to review, can I have further information on how Policy would handle that?

We are receiving WSC input and if we were to draft language, what would be the priorities to draft in that language? The Policy Committee is a service arm of the Conference and the largest group conscience outside the WSC so we need your input to carry on our mission.

The Task Force has been going step-by-step and you are ahead of us. Page 95 is about contributions of members and the wrong place to change it to non-members. We need a new section on contributions that says family members. We don't want to commit to changing page 95; that is not the right place for this.

If the Conference decides that we want Policy to go forward, it does not mean we say change the policy back to the way it was before. If we say we are allowing the possibility that language may be drafted, that is one option open to the WSC.

- I want language drafted. I would never want to say “non-member.” What I need is language. There are many taking contributions from non-members and putting it in the basket. I would tell my mother to give it to my friends to give to Al-Anon. I don’t want that to happen anymore. It was not a memorial contribution, which is different. I don’t want them to know Al-Anon says, “No you can’t.”
- I live alone and others consider me family. To think they would want to give to Al-Anon because they know how much it meant to me! I am disappointed that there is no vote yet. I see the wisdom to allow Policy the time to come back next year. I trust you with the vote.
- Although I support the motion presented today, I would like to support waiting.
- “Outside Contributions” on page 97 of the “Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies” needs to be modified. In the meantime, do what others do to skirt this until Policy puts something together.
- My Area had this discussion for four years. I had hoped for a decision this year. I am happy to hear that a motion has been presented for consideration. I also see the wisdom to allow Policy to craft wording making it clear and linking clearly to the spiritual principles driving this conversation. The step in moving forward is to let Policy craft wording to bring next year.
- This is not to be for “Fund Raising” (page 97). “Bequests” (page 96) is not right either. We need to find a new place.

Currently, the Task Force is looking at this section going through and incorporating spiritual principles to our practices, moving things and looking at new headings. It is like ripping up the carpet and seeing how bad the floor is.

- If the Conference decides to ask the Policy Committee to draft language, it would be helpful to include the conversation in the Timeline and how to apply the Traditions to the questions.
- In thinking about Tradition One and the number of members in the world, the WSO receives three to ten requests yearly to contribute. We may be experiencing more requests at the Area or district level. Are we in danger of making serious changes in Policy for a small number, not the greatest?
- Tradition Three speaks to membership and the definition of family is from Policy. When we come in, we get to decide whether we are a member. The definition of family member decides who can give a contribution. I have faith in the second largest group conscience, and I would be in favor of moving forward.
- It would be difficult to vote for the motion without knowing the language.

After a reading of a proposed motion, the Chairperson asked for a consensus of the Conference whether it wanted to continue with the motion, have the Policy Committee draft language to bring to the next Conference, or stop the discussion and go no further with it. There was a clear consensus that Policy language is being requested.

Conference members asked that when specific language is being considered, that it include:

- Definition of an Al-Anon member and family member as written in the background information.
- That a safeguard be that contributions should be earmarked for Public Outreach use only, so there is no question that we are trying to raise money for the General Fund. It could only be used to reach other families and friends of alcoholics.
- We need to have a limitation. A percentage of one percent is reasonable. Is telling people it will be just for Public Outreach earmarking?

The World Service Conference can earmark funds. People making contributions can’t. The Conference has authority to create, for example, the Relocation Fund. We would not be telling them what they can do with their money, but the Conference is telling the World Service Office what it can do.

- Restrictions, such as one-time contributions, be included.
- Policy Committee will see what other areas this would impact in the “Policy Digest.”

- It is vital that the spiritual principles discussed be included, so there is no doubt when a member reads the *Service Manual* that this is not about money, but giving comfort to families and friends of alcoholics.
- This is about non-members who want to contribute in memory of a loved one.
- Spiritual principles in financial matters. What is the timeline to bring it back? Will it all be available next year, or just memorial contributions?
- I would like the impact on other structures around the world to be considered.

The Task Force Chair thanked the Conference members for their input, insights, thoughts, and serious consideration of this matter. "The spiritual principles were at work throughout the discussions. We trust that you will trust the Policy Committee to draft language. You have the right to review it and, once again, decide in the best interest of Al-Anon as a whole. It is important to go through the process to be sure we are making the best decision we can with the information at the time."

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS (PSAS)

The Associate Director of Communications—Media announced to Conference members that Al-Anon placed 22 in the number of airplays out of 1,900 organizations that produced public service announcements (PSAs) this past year. Al-Anon PSAs were broadcast over 105,000 times and reached an estimated audience of over 700 million people, according to the Nielsen rating service. This means that Al-Anon PSAs ranked in the 99 percentile during 2014!

The 2015 PSAs address two major obstacles that can cause people to resist coming to Al-Anon. One issue is money, because people might think we charge expensive dues or fees to attend Al-Anon meetings. The other issue is religion, because when people see where our meetings are held, they might think we are affiliated with churches. It was noted that the actors in the PSAs are not Al-Anon members.

The primary target audiences for the new PSAs are parents and young people and the minority audience is the hearing-impaired. Closed captioning in English, Spanish, and French has also made our PSAs available this year for airing in elevators, taxi cabs, and on-line newspapers.

The Conference members previewed the two 60-second PSAs in all three languages. Each Delegate received a DVD with all the versions of the PSAs (English, Spanish, and French) to take home to share with their Area's Public Outreach Coordinators. The Associate Director of Communications—Media noted that this DVD was not broadcast quality, but could be copied and viewed within the fellowship. The final broadcast version in high definition video will be mailed to selected television stations this fall. Individual copies for Area distribution to other TV and cable stations will also be available. The PSAs will also be posted on the Public Outreach Web site.

Following the presentation, the Associate Director of Communications—Media asked Conference members to remind members of the importance of thanking stations when they air our PSAs. For stations that are not airing our PSAs, Conference members were asked to remind members to take a few minutes to send an e-mail or pay a personal visit to a station and give them a copy of *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism* and to let the station know what percentage of their audience is affected by someone else's drinking. In addition, those stations could be reminded that they would be performing a valuable service to their communities if they aired our PSAs.

Conference members had the following questions:

- My Area could not figure out how to play the DVD provided.
Send an e-mail or call the WSO and we will walk you through it. The software being used makes a difference so procedures may vary. Because closed-captioning is available, some PSAs have subtitles on the screen. This can be eliminated for you if know what software is being used.
- We are using the letter in "The Best of Public Outreach" when we send letters to TV stations. How do you tell when "recently received" is?
The WSO informs the Area Public Outreach Coordinator when PSAs go out initially along with a distribution list. Then beyond two months, they receive an airplay report. There is excellent help in the Public Outreach Department with French- and Spanish-speakers to help out.

Patrick Q.

*Associate Director of
Communications—Media*

Donna E.

Liaison to Board of Trustees



- I like the perspective of the parent and young person. Even when there is no out-of-control drinking, it does affect me.

We were trying to make an emotional connection with the audience.

- I liked the young and old perspective and addressing religion. Any ideas for Alateen? Would it ever be addressed?

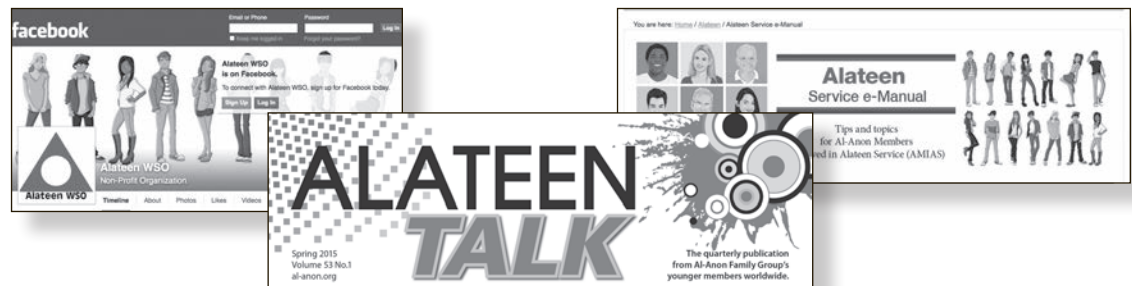
We have many ideas. The decision is made elsewhere at the WSO and we do the best we can with available resources. The difficulty is that we only have 1,000 Alateen groups. Some have clusters of groups and some have only one or none with no one attending. We continue to look at it, but also balance our resources looking at what would be the resources most likely to attract Alateens. In the Alateen survey, we asked and they said Facebook so the WSO is using our Facebook community page to attract Alateens and get them to move forward. We are doing more to put a link for the Alateen Chat room with a mobile phone feature in places that are easier for teens to find because newcomers can't get to the Members' Web site. We hope by getting them in a Chat Room, it will stimulate more meeting attendance. We'd like Conference members to carry the message back to the groups that the WSO is trying to do its part to expand our circle of hope for Alateen.

TASK AND THOUGHT FORCE PRESENTATIONS

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 have been given the option to serve on a Committee, Thought Force or Task Force each year.

This year, some Thought and 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 Force presentations resulted in the Conference supporting a specific strategy. Other Thought and Task Force discussions may be considered further by the Board of Trustees in order to determine possible next steps.



Task Force: Create Ways to Raise Awareness of the Tools Available for Alateen

Bud S., Chairperson
Panel 53
Vermont

Though there are many tools available for the Alateen program, both for Alateen members and Alateen Group Sponsors, many members are not aware of them. There is a need to create numerous ways to let the fellowship know of all the materials available to them. The Task Force was charged with creating several ways that tools that are currently available can be presented or shown to the fellowship so they become aware of the many resources that are available.

The Task Force developed vignettes and PowerPoint presentations that can be used in the Areas to help members become aware of all of the tools available for Alateen, and Alateen Group Sponsors and can inform the fellowship.

An overview of the tools, where to find them through the use of technology, and suggestions for using them was presented in a skit with “Tool Time Tim” and “Trusty Servant Al.”

In the skit, they revealed an amazing array of tools for Alateen. Most of the material can be found on-line for easy access. For example:

- The Alateen Web site for Alateen is on the Members' Web site
- *Alateen Service e-Manual* can be accessed using the Alateen navigator tab on the Members' Web site.
- Tips for Al-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service (AMIAS).
- Literature compiled from sharings of Alateen members with valuable materials for Alateen meetings.
- Information for getting an Alateen meeting started, including the *e-Manual* and Alateen Sponsor training modules.
- Alateen Chat room and how to register.
- Alateen WSO Facebook page—"liking" it does not mean giving up anonymity.

The vignettes and presentations were designed to be used on their own or combined in many forms using one's imagination.

The Task Force concluded its presentation reminding members: We share our tools so our tools can shape us. Just like in Al-Anon, a tool that's left in the tool box isn't really a tool, it's just a paper weight. Having great tools that can help in a variety of situations is a big step in making them easier to pick up and use.

Then, just to make sure everyone went away knowing about the tools, the Task Force had an "Alateen Tool Quiz" for the audience.

- Do you know where there is an Alateen meeting in your Area? Where do you find the information?
- How does an Alateen meeting get started? Where is the information?
- Who is eligible to be an Alateen member? Where would you find the information?
- Have you ever used Alateen literature to chair a meeting? Where would you find the literature?
- How can we keep the "Spotlight on Our Teens"?

Discussion opened with the following questions:

What tools are used in your Area?

Based on the presentation, what tools aren't you using?

How can we keep the spotlight on our Alateens?

Conference members shared:

Tools being used:

- In my Area, we use the *Alateen Service e-Manual*, the Web site, and an abundance of literature.
- We are using on-line Chat at meetings in schools. We are taking a meeting to juvenile detention centers in the cities. We use the Web site tools, and I keep lots of literature in the trunk of my car.
- The summary of modules in outline form is helpful for AMIAS training in the Area.
- Start with an enthusiastic Area Alateen Coordinator, AMIAS, and Sponsors.
- We have a dynamic Alateen Coordinator. We hold an Alateen Group Sponsor training and recovery weekend. The kids have an Alateen Conference. We have a Chat room. We also have training done as a Webinar. It is broken into four two-hour segments and districts get together for it.
- We have 23 Alateen meetings and we include the Alateen members in skits and events. We have three Alateen GRs that we also include.
- We use the training modules with AMIAS in Sponsor meetings all year. The literature goes straight to the heart.

Tools not being used:

- I learned about the Alateen Facebook page in this presentation.
- The Alateen Chat room.
- We discussed a link on the Area Web site for a Chat room.
- Alateens are not using the Chat room.
- We are not using kids to do some of the work. We will ask Alateens to consider getting table cards for the groups with some of the money the Al-Anon groups have given them.
- I was unaware of the *e-Manual*. We set up an Area Chat Room. Teens don't know how or say it is difficult to get into. It might be a matter of instruction.

Keeping the spotlight on our Alateens:

- The newest tool is the skit. It will be a big part of my Delegate's report.
- A Roundup in my Area has Alateen members come and share stories at meetings.
- Teens made a decision that they wanted a meeting. It is time for Alateens to let us know what they need.
- My spotlight will be asking Alateens to do something.
- We do lot to support the Alateen Conference, but I need to ask the Area how much adults are doing for the kids that they could be doing for themselves. We want to help, not enable.
- Alateens are having their first convention along with Al-Anon's convention with their own meetings, and workshops. One of the draws is food, especially pizza.
- A juvenile detention center welcomed girls and guys, and now there is a regular meeting they can go to when they get out. We are setting up meetings in schools.

Questions and suggestions:

- If we are concerned about Alateen, why go through to the membership page? If we want them to find it, it should be on page one. Why do they have to go so far to find it?
It is on the Public Outreach page and there are links on the Public Outreach page to Alateen Chat.
- Will the skit be available?
Yes.
- Is there more the WSC would do? Is it a good time to ask the organization as a whole, is the current model of Alateen working? Is that appropriate to work on here?
That was one of the Chosen Agenda Items this year.
- Do we bring it to the Area level?
The point of the Chosen Agenda Items is so you can take it back to have the conversation. The wider audience is the members in the Area.
The WSO just spent substantial money to upgrade the Alateen platform so teens would be able to participate. They are now able to use phones with the new platform. Please take that to your Area and let people know the resources are out there.
- I hope that in addition to taking it back to our Areas, the WSC will continue to discuss the future of Alateen. It is vital that the Conference continue the conversation.
Chosen Agenda Item topics are a way to vote to continue the conversation in the Chosen Agenda Items venue. You can submit Alateen questions as Chosen Agenda Items next year and Delegates would have to vote in sufficient numbers to ensure that it is on the agenda.
We have heard that some members don't want to continue it.
- We now have an Alateen Coordinator who worked in facilities and is enthusiastic about doing Alateen in the Area. At Assembly, the Coordinator asked for time on the agenda to talk about what is working for Alateen. It would help to know how to improve participation and help them with their recovery.

- We had a substance abuse counselor who begged for a meeting but just one teen showed up. Other Areas seem to be doing better. It would be helpful to hear from those Areas what they are doing to attract kids.
- I'd like to see a task force or questionnaire form submitted to teens on-line or at meetings asking them these questions. We want their feedback.
- I want to hear from more than my Area.

There could be a discussion group on e-Communities.

The WSO did a survey last year and had plans for getting teens involved. The Conference could ask to create a task force which could develop a questionnaire but you would not receive it before 2016-2017 and would not reach the teens before 2018. Concept One reminds us of the ultimate responsibility... It's the groups where it has to start. The Areas could get together and start the process on the Alateen Coordinator Discussion Board asking Coordinators to submit questions to the WSO. Once we have the questions, we can create the survey and figure out whether to put it on the WSO Web site or send it to the Areas for their Web sites. If it is to move quickly, it has to start locally.

- We can ask our Alateen Coordinator to start it on Alateen e-Communities.
- I see the value to continue at the WSO and at the grassroots. Can we do both?
We would create a Thought Force to ask what would a different model look like.
- This needs to go down. Up moves slowly. However, I propose that we rethink the opportunity to get together. Could we spend two hours working together in some type of format that does not take away from Conference time but adds time? Could we use the Sharing Area Highlights time more efficiently?
As the session's Chairperson, my hope is that the time next year will be completely interactive; an exchange of ideas rather than reading reports. I will communicate with you and ask what you want.
- Assign task forces to meet during the next Conference so a group of people can talk about Alateen and why teens are not showing up. In reading reports about viewership and how to get information and how to reach teens, the #1 way for kids was through TV.
- We encourage having a panel of kids sharing at Conferences. Between being kids and being afraid of breaking their own anonymity, they wouldn't let anyone know where they went but they wanted to let other kids know. So the Alateen members did their own public outreach. They addressed envelopes and sent meeting information to every school in the Area to the attention of the school counselor.

The Chairperson of the Board summarized the ideas from the discussion: Use the Alateen Coordinator Discussion Board to create a survey and a Thought Force on what a new Alateen model would look like. There was also a consensus that Delegates would like new ways for the Sharing Area Highlights time to be used and would like to submit Alateen questions as Chosen Agenda Items to keep the conversation going.

Task Force: Identify, Gather and Present Practices that Demonstrate a Healthy, Thriving Group

Connie W., Chairperson
Panel 53, Montana

The Task Force was asked to define a healthy, thriving group, then gather material on the practices and present the material in a format for groups to use to be healthy and thriving.

"Thriving" may be characterized by success, or prosperity, or flourishing. In a healthy group, members join local groups which have a welcoming atmosphere, where the Al-Anon/Alateen program is shared and where members participate in service. The Al-Anon and Alateen members usually consider one group as their "home group." By regular attendance, friendships are established, and growth is acknowledged. In a home group, members and newcomers find a place where they feel accepted, no matter what. There may be time before the meeting where all members and newcomers are greeted as the room is being set up; refreshments and beverages may be available; and time after the meeting for more conversation and sharing on a one-to-one basis. Tradition Five ensures the group will be safe, friendly, welcoming, and non-judgmental. As always, our Higher Power is present in all meetings.



Members of a healthy, thriving group:

- Show up early and/or stay late.
- Commit to weekly attendance.
- Encourage all members, including newcomers and long-timers, to return.
- Encourage the use of Sponsors.
- Demonstrate willingness to be available to newcomers.
- Avoid outside issues.

A healthy group:

- Has a meeting protocol.
- Has a structured weekly group format.
- Uses the Preamble, Opening, and Closing from “Al-Anon Alateen Groups at Work” section of the *2014-2017 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24).
- Remembers that “Al-Anon is spoken here.”
- Maintains the anonymity of group members at all times.
- Enthusiastically encourages service work and is self-supporting through members’ voluntary contributions in order to cover rent, purchase of literature, support of trusted servants, and Al-Anon’s service arms.
- Rotates service positions regularly.

A thriving group:

- Has regular business meetings at times chosen by the group.
- Practices Tradition Four; “Each group should be autonomous, except in matters affecting another group or Al-Anon or AA as a whole.”
- Has literature available for a variety of group members.
- Is mindful of the use of acronyms, especially when talking with newcomers. For example, *One Day at a Time*, instead of ODAT.
- Uses the wealth of Conference Approved Literature (CAL) and available service materials.

Member Participation in a healthy group:

- Share their experience, strength, and hope about recovering from the effects of loving and living with alcoholics.
- Keep their sharings focused on their recovery in the meeting, and may share details with their Sponsors or others on a one-on-one basis.
- Support Alateen members transitioning into Al-Anon groups.
- Listen actively and attentively during member sharings without other distractions.

Group Problem-solving in a healthy group:

- Use the group conscience process to make group decisions.
- Conduct group inventories at regular intervals.
- Use available Conference Approved Literature, such as “Using Al-Anon Principles to Resolve Conflict” kit (P-70).
- Review the “Three Obstacles to Success in Al-Anon.”
- Practice principles above personalities.

The Task Force proposed the following questions to the Conference for discussion:

**What do you see in your Areas that demonstrates thriving, healthy groups?
Is there information you would like to see added?**

The floor was opened for discussion and the following comments were made:

- There is no chanting at meetings.
- Diversity in a mix of ages and why they came to Al-Anon showing up in our surveys. How can we statistically validate that groups are growing? My dream would be to find ways to identify which groups are diverse and growing and what they are doing to make themselves successful.
- The dominance of longtime members is intimidating. They have difficulty in letting go. Yet, without longtimers there is no experience; without mid-term, no stability; without newcomers, no future.
- The most diverse meetings seem to be the most aware of being inclusive, are careful not to talk about outside issues, talk in inclusive terms, and attend multiple meetings for sharing of ideas.
- Practice attraction rather than promotion. We are always happy, asking the newcomer's name, and clapping. Group members go to other functions. There is no gossip or criticism.
- When I give, I receive. God gave me a van, and I pack it when I go to Assembly. I invite newcomers to go with us. Some members can't afford to go to Assembly. I tell them, get in my car, stay in my room. We always have the biggest representation at Assembly. Share the room, share the money.
- I do service because someone suggested it. I often ask someone, would you be greeter for me next week or next month? It gives them a reason to be there.
- We had just two or three members who kept showing up. We had a special meeting to decide whether to close or continue to struggle. We decided to share on a Step, Tradition, and Concept weekly and the meeting grew. It is now up to 60 members weekly.
- The Budget presentation talked about changing perspective. I will use this topic and add financial information and invite groups to share the qualities that make it strong. This deepens trust and gives a feeling of safety. Groups are declining in some places because the population is declining. We have a meeting on communication twice a year.
- To be thriving, a group has to be visible. We realize it takes courage to come to a church door, so we cut out footprints and wrote AFG on them, and put them from the door down hall to the meeting door where it says "welcome." We welcome them and have a temporary Sponsor for them.
- One healthy group has gone through the work to clarify boundaries using spiritual principles on outside issues. They wrote a carefully worded introductory statement that is read in a respectful and inclusive manner.
- Dominance vs. longtime experience. I was encouraged to get a longtime member to sponsor me. She told me that when she doesn't do something, she gets stale. Encourage members to work the Steps with a Sponsor and encourage longtimer members to not get stale but continue to sponsor and share at meetings.
- Greeters are important. Al-Anon members who are also members of Alcoholics Anonymous can be greeters. I wouldn't have stayed if someone was not at the door to welcome me.
- Finding a home group was a fateful event. I went to the meeting place, but the doors were locked because no one had a key. So we went down the road to a café and had a meeting. Another time, we had a meeting in someone's van since we had the materials. We have a thriving beginners group that meets for a half-hour before the regular meeting. Newcomers usually learn what Al-Anon is and what it is about there and stay and become part of the group. They can still attend the beginners meeting too.
- We read the Three Legacies along with the Steps, Traditions, and Concepts weekly. Why do we do that? Because it works. Get personal in meetings to let people know that just because we've been there for a while, not all is great but this is how I work through it.
- Meetings involved with service were the answer for me. Now I see complacency in meetings.

There is no exchange of new ideas. I want to take this discussion back home. I think the meeting will be great.

- If you don't think your home group is the best, something is wrong. The constant is the meeting and the core group of members who adhere to Al-Anon principles. We do the things on the presentation worksheet so there is recovery in that meeting. It is made strong and thriving no matter the number with some sort of activity after the meeting—coffee, dinner etc. The fellowship we experience is so great that members show up from other meetings too.
- I don't feel like my Area is thriving. Many members are just satisfied with feeling better. I try to share what it is like to be challenged and to grow and expand. My district includes many counties and a small number of groups. Nearly half are clustered in my town. A lot of counties are so rural they do not have a group in them.

Suggestions of information to add:

- Healthy and thriving can be mutually exclusive. One can be thriving, but is it healthy? Characteristics of members: They study the Steps with a Sponsor and choose a home group. Groups encourage working a program.
- Information about sponsorship, group service positions, resolving group problems, etc. is in "Groups at Work" (P-24). Questions could be included in the Group Inventory Guideline (G-8a/b). The G-8a/b is a resource to guide them.

Following the discussion, the Chairperson of the Board asked Conference members if they had sufficient information. There is currently a Task Force working on a presentation for the 2016 on meeting types. Other resources are in the *2012 WSC Summary* and a Thought Force presentation on the "Importance of a Home Group" (*2014 WSC Summary*, pages 60-63) as well as a presentation on "Welcoming and Retaining New Members" at this year's Conference. Knowing those resources are available, Conference members were asked where they wanted to go with this.

Conference members had the following comments:

- Can the presentation be available to more than e-Communities in a more formal way such as a guideline?
Delegates are encouraged to send it forward through e-Communities to groups in their Areas. There is also the possibility that Member Services will use it in their work.
- I would love to see it as part of the "Group Inventory Guideline" (G-8a/b); the combination would be powerful.
- Things included on the list, but not on the guideline could be added.
- Create a brochure about meetings that pulls everything together in one place.
- What are the meeting types we are talking about—Alateen, Institutions, meditation meetings?
The charge is on e-Communities. For instance, having meeting over lunch, meeting through cell phone because of lack of access to regular meetings.
- Develop a list of potential types of meetings, then develop workshop acceptable to the group conscience.
- Include recalled binder for new groups. When I call a person from a new group, I am amazed at how little they know about what goes on in a group. They receive a packet. It is easy to refer them to the Web site but they do not know where to go or what to look for.

The New Group Binder was discontinued. As a replacement, Group Records and Group Services send each group three packets. The first is "Groups at Work," a meeting format, meeting topics and other information from the binder. It includes information on how to use the materials in the packet and encourages them to connect with their district. Six months later, packet two is sent with information to help the group grow, attending district meetings and Assembly and electing a Group Representative (GR) and officers. Around the time of the first anniversary, the group receives a Service Manual (P-24/27), and it is suggested the group hold a public outreach meeting for their anniversary meeting to continue growing. The idea is to nurture the group throughout the year with "baby steps" to be connected and grow. Delegates receive notification of new groups in their Areas.

- Include any principles missing from the Inventory. Gather and present information on a healthy thriving Area. What does that look like? Our Area is interested in resources to do an Area inventory.

The WSO heard you that you want material in a more compact or easily found place. The ideas might be included in “Groups at Work” when it is revised. We need to stress to groups the importance of using “Groups at Work.” My groups all have copies. Using it allows us to connect to worldwide unity. In “Groups at Work” the “Basics for Group Meetings” sub-section (page 40) is new wording and it is highlighted.

The Chairperson expressed to Conference members that they had been heard and their ideas will be taken back to the office.

Thought Force: Create Strategies to Help the Membership Welcome New Trends into the Fellowship

Linda W., Chairperson

Panel 53

Massachusetts

In Al-Anon, change is often slow and incremental. Sometimes, however, it is sudden and quick. And sometimes, it can feel messy, like spilled ink.

We need to be prepared for the misperceptions that can come with new ideas.

“With the help of Al-Anon, my Sponsor, and my Higher Power, change need not be so scary. If I don’t at least make an effort, I may never know how much I can accomplish.”

—Hope for Today, p. 278

This presentation is about **change**—looking at what scares us about change and thinking about how we can welcome it!

The Task Force charge was to identify the difficulties that keep the membership from considering, and perhaps embracing, new ideas and create strategies that could help the membership welcome new practices into the fellowship that are consistent with our spiritual principles.

Conference members were asked to write down a new practice in Al-Anon that they initially resisted and think about:

- Why did you have difficulty?
- How did you overcome the resistance?
- What spiritual principle(s) supported this new practice?

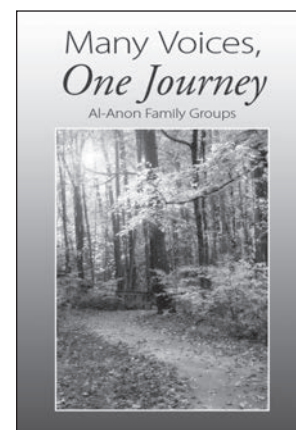
As part of our Thought Force process, we brainstormed around why members find change difficult and might resist implementing new practices. These are just a few of the ideas we came up with:

- Desire to control and keep things the way it has always been done.
- General fear of change:
 - ✓ Fear of risk—losing what is already working.
 - ✓ Fear of dilution of the program.
 - ✓ Fear of not being able to adapt to changes.
 - ✓ Concern about going against the Traditions.
 - ✓ Apathy or inertia.
 - ✓ Focus on personal recovery, not the larger Al-Anon family as a whole.
 - ✓ Difficulty trusting the process of change.

The Thought Force looked at examples of changing practices in Al-Anon over the last 30 years. They identified following three examples of change:

- Alateen safety requirements (1986-2004)
- Ownership of property (1990s-2011)
- Electronic Communication (1997-present)

Using information from *Many Voices, One Journey* (B-31), members of the Thought Force shared the stories of how the fellowship recognized the need for change, came together to examine and dis-



cuss the repercussions, and ultimately accepted these new practices to the benefit of Al-Anon over many years.

New practices are still challenging us in the present. Thought Force members presented three entertaining monologues with a history of the issue and references to the Traditions, spiritual principles, and other resources in Al-Anon literature.

- The Al-Anon Declaration.
- Social media—Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn.
- Telephone meetings.

Following the monologues, the Thought Force presented the following suggested strategies:

Create communications/workshops

- Structure a workshop/meeting on literature that addresses change.
- Create a presentation on technologies and how they can be used for member, group, or business meeting communication.
- Create tools/messages/presentations/workshops on the history of Al-Anon to help members visualize change; understand the difference between “tradition” and the Twelve Traditions; and put change into context through a timeline, historical representation, or a visual graphic that would demonstrate the evolution of the program in relation to new approaches/practices.
- Give a presentation using different technologies, demonstrating how they can be used for Intergroup/member communication, or business meetings—demonstrate how texting can be used, or Skype, or Apps—but without endorsing any of the companies or technologies.
- Encourage workshops and meetings on change.
- Highlight new practices embraced in the past—create a timeline.
- Create a sharing sheet for meeting topics on changing attitudes, technologies, and the face of Al-Anon.

Encourage discussions about change

- Create communications/workshops.
- Explore technology as a means of encouraging change.
- Consider ways to find meeting places that don’t imply affiliation.
- Create sharing sheet for meeting topics on changing attitudes, technologies, face of Al-Anon.
- Encourage use of service tools that address overcoming resistance to change.

Technology

- Use new technologies to keep members up to date.
- Encourage members to be proactive and open to new ideas.
- Help members gain access to technology.

Innovative Thinking

- Encourage innovative thinking and expansive brainstorming at all levels.
- Use new technologies to keep members up to date.
- Help members gain access to technology.
- Offer methods for withholding judgment during discussion.
- Create environment and atmosphere of dreaming big, envisioning Al-Anon’s future without limiting thinking.

Conference members were then asked the following questions:

1. Which of these strategies do you think would help Al-Anon members overcome fear of change and embrace new practices?
2. Can you apply one or more of these strategies to a current difficulty in your group, district, or Area?
3. Would you like to share the personal experience you wrote at the beginning of the presentation about initially resisting a new practice?

- We have A/V at Assembly to increase participation. We set it up in our Media Café and we access the WSO Web site and take the members on a tour of it. We went to the WSO Membership Survey and encouraged members who were not used to technology to try it as we guided them. We showed them how to look up meeting lists in their district and Area. We have a link on the Area Web site to Alateen Chat and electronic meetings. There is some resistance to phone meetings.
- Members of my small rural home group sometimes call in to another member's cell phone during our meeting and we put them on speakerphone. The meeting agreed before we did this. One member had "preemie" twins and called in so she was able to participate weekly by phone. We knew the members were at home in a room by themselves and no one else was listening.
- Our Alternate Delegate is familiar with technology and is doing a presentation on the tools on the Members' Web site with new DRs and GRs at Assembly.
- When first started in our Area, the Alateen Safety Guidelines were a new practice. They were done without asking any Alateen Group Sponsors or Alateen members for input so many were not involved. I became more active and involved in Alateen as a result, and kept praying about it and became elected Delegate.
- I like the workshop idea. When the new "AFG Connects" is available, the first AWSC meeting will be a technology demonstration of it for everyone.

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

Thought Force: Create Strategies to Show the Spiritual Connection of Being a Registered Group

In many Areas, there are groups that do not feel there is a benefit to being registered with the World Service Office (WSO); other groups have multiple meetings, but only elect one set of officers; and some even feel that if they were to register, it somehow implies control by the WSO. Just as many of us before and even early in the program remain convinced we can manage on our own—potentially hesitating before reaching out to an experienced member to be our Sponsor—some groups are unaware of how the spiritual connections of the program are strengthened and enhanced by being registered with the worldwide Al-Anon fellowship and structure. Those who have had the opportunity to be part of a strong, registered home group understand the value of being connected to the whole. Perhaps they learned of opportunities to attend conflict resolution workshops which help individuals and groups grow in unity, or to understand how groups internationally blossomed, despite having only one book available in their language because together they took accountability for their Area or country connection. For those who have never experienced such a group, fear of the unknown and the ever-present draw of isolation can be strong motivators to remaining unregistered.

Spiritual principles/core values of being a registered group

The Thought Force started its journey by identifying a list of the spiritual principles or core values that were enhanced by being a registered group:

- Unity
- Participation
- Accountability
- Responsibility

Vali F., Chairperson
Panel 53, Arizona

The Thought Force included this list in all its notes to remind the members of the Thought Force of their goal: to create strategies that demonstrate these spiritual connections. The strategies were reviewed to identify the principles underlying each. They were also brainstormed from the perspective of districts, Areas, and the World Service Office (WSO) that might implement the strategies.

The Thought Force identified three types of unregistered groups and considered what might be appropriate strategies to reach the different categories of groups from the perspective of who might be implementing the strategies:

- Groups that do not know about being registered.
- Groups that do not want to be registered.
- Groups that do not understand the benefits of being registered.

A PowerPoint presentation was developed on strategies that show the spiritual connection of being a registered group.

Strategy 1: Create a group outreach tool focused on demonstrating the spiritual connection a registered group has to the Al-Anon Legacies.

Both Traditions One and Ten emphasize Unity:

- *Paths to Recovery* (B-24) (p. 135) states of Tradition One: “Within a loving, spiritual community, each of us has the best chance for personal progress and Tradition One sets the foundation for creating and maintaining that community.”
- A recent *Forum* article suggested of Tradition Ten that “having no opinion on outside issues is a source of unity.”

Tradition Four outlines the need for Accountability while enjoying Autonomy:

- *Paths to Recovery* (page 165) suggests, “Sometimes groups don’t live by the principles ... because members are unaware of the history and experience behind them. A member familiar with the Traditions then has the responsibility to speak up and inform the group of its options.”

Concept One reminds us “The ultimate responsibility and authority for Al-Anon world services belongs to the Al-Anon groups”:

- *How Al-Anon Works* (B-22) (page 129), describes responsibility and authority this way: “Each group has equal responsibility and authority. If a group accepts responsibility by choosing and supporting a Group Representative, then it is in position to exercise its authority.”

Concept Four defines a democratic way of making decisions through Participation:

- From the *Service Manual* (p. 189), “Thus in the participatory method of doing business, there are no superiors and no inferiors.”

Strategy 2: Create a workshop or presentation that demonstrates the spiritual connection of being a registered group. Emphasize that Unity is enhanced through being part of the group conscience.

The spiritual tools of the program help to increase Participation:

- District and Area meetings, run according to the principles of the program, can create a safe environment for sharing concerns and gaining experience, strength, and hope.
- Having access to service tools such as *Conflict Resolution Using Our Twelve Traditions* (S-72), *Taking a Group Inventory Guideline* (G-8a/b), *Members Interested in Speaking Guideline* (G-1), and *The Forum* support groups demonstrating Responsibility and Accountability to their members and Al-Anon as a whole.

Strategy 3: Offer a workshop or presentation on Unity. Being connected and joining the Al-Anon fellowship by registering draws a group more closely into the triangle of Al-Anon’s three Legacies, enhancing the group’s spiritual connection while enabling each group to maintain its own personal flavor.

Group Unity is shown in the Concepts, especially in Concept Twelve, General Warranties of the Conference Three, Four, and Five:

- Warranty Three—that all decisions be reached by discussion, vote, and whenever possible, by unanimity.
- Warranty Four—that no Conference action ever be personally punitive or an incitement to public controversy.
- Warranty Five—that though the Conference serves Al-Anon it shall never perform any act of government; and that like the fellowship of Al-Anon Family Groups which it serves, it shall always remain democratic in thought and action.

Strategy 4: Propose ways for groups to support one another. Show the spiritual connection of being a registered group by demonstrating the principles of Accountability, Responsibility, and Participation through action.

Groups within districts or Areas could consider:

- Initiating a buddy system to support new or struggling groups and to guide groups through the registration process, etc.
- Creating a task force to meet with non-registered groups to invite them to participate in a workshop or to share the presentations developed through Strategy #2 or #3.

5. Modify the *Starting an Al-Anon Group Guideline (G-12)* to include either a statement describing spiritual connections of being a registered group or an example showing how being a registered group can be spiritual for all group members.

The guideline currently highlights some of the material things each group will receive from registering but it does not show how doing so will improve the spiritual connection for the member or the group. For example:

- Opportunities to participate in one's own recovery.
- Personal growth of group members by being informed.
- Information needed to make informed group consciences.
- Connection to worldwide Al-Anon.
- It might include the statement "Congratulations, you are on your way to spiritual growth!"

6. Introduce spiritual concepts wherever possible in the instructions for completing the *Al-Anon Registration/Information Form (GR-1)*.

Spiritual principles could be included in the instructions for completing the "Al-Anon Registration/Group Records Change Form" (GR-1) to help groups understand the link between completing the paperwork and how their group could.:

- Improve group Unity through access to the greater group conscience.
- Increase newcomer and new member Participation with the publishing of group meeting details at the World Service, Area, and district levels.
- Grow in personal recovery by demonstrating Responsibility and Accountability for keeping group contact and meeting information current so the newcomer and longtimer alike can find a meeting whenever and wherever they might need one.

7. Create a skit (or other such option) comparing a) how an individual's actions such as attending meetings, choosing a Sponsor, and offering to be of service help achieve greater spiritual connection b) how a group's actions such as forming a group and going from being unregistered to registered help achieve greater spiritual connection.

Conference members were asked to discuss:

Which of these strategies could help your Area's members convey the spiritual connection of being a registered group?

- Groups can look for other sponsorship from districts or the Area. It could be a way to pull in groups not participating.
- I did not like the idea of local groups starting and operating alone. They needed connection with a district. The Area contacted them and got them registered.
- Our Area has a guideline for a group not registered for three months. We support and encourage them and put out flyers to get the word out about the meeting and encourage them to come to district meetings which are monthly.
- Some internal publications may not reach unregistered groups and reaching out to them is productive.
- I like Strategy #4. I am concerned that groups in my Area that are not registered have been in existence for years and are adamant about not registering.
- Other groups have multiple meetings and only one set of officers. How is that negative?
It is not good or bad but allows less participation in the links of service if groups have two meetings and one set of officers.
- We have 136 registered groups in the Area. Our Group Records Coordinator was determined to track down all unregistered groups. It was not easy because in visiting these groups, they all had ideas about the WSO and one group tried to use Tradition Seven and self-support as a reason why they did not need the WSO, but we got them to realize the advantages of registering.
- I like Strategies #5 and #6. It would be helpful if we have an organized, clearly articulated response for groups who don't see why they should be registered and what the benefit is and have it published so all have the same answer.
- Congratulations line could be edited to "on the way to growing along spiritual lines." That is a zinger that could be put into a tag line and I'd like to see it come up in our literature. I am going to take the idea back to my Area and see if the Group Records Coordinator and Webmaster can create a "pop-up" when they get a group registering or updating information.
- We have a group with five meetings, one per day, and they have one GR. When I was DR, I went to a couple of the meetings and talked about the benefits of having a GR. They elected one and the GR came to meetings. The problem is in communication, and I sowed a seed for more GRs.
- I liked Strategies #4 and #6. We support new and struggling groups. We keep contact information current. We also have *Starting an Al-Anon Group Guideline* (G-12) as the front page of our Web site instead of having to go into the Members' site. That way, if a group wants to start, it can register from the Public Outreach site.
- I know groups are registered but don't remain connected to the district and Area. Are there strategies to let them know? Can we create something to support them once they apply to be registered—not just physical support, but spiritual support? They see the value of the physical connection, but not the spiritual connection.
We have been revising the "Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies" with spiritual principles. Page 81 of the Policy Digest would be a place to put spiritual principles.

The Chairperson of the Board asked if there were other strategies Conference members would add. Their suggestions were:

- Create a Task Force to follow through on Strategies #4 and #6.
- Have a "buddy" system related to Strategies #4 through #6.
- Expand to groups participating in the service structure.

The Chairperson of Board thanked the Thought Force for their work and the Conference members for their comments and suggestions. The comments on the Guidelines and groups talking together and sponsoring other groups will be taken back to the WSO.

Thought Force: Create Strategies to Show the Importance of Abundance and Spirituality in Money Discussions

Rich M., Chairperson
Panel 53
New Jersey

At the 2012 WSC, there was a discussion regarding abundance. It was brought to light that many of us are not comfortable or familiar with thinking about abundance in our lives. (2012 WSC Summary, pages 46-48). Successive Conference themes have focused on the spiritual principles found in our program and our attempts to apply these principles and to grow spiritually. Previously, many financial discussions focused on lack and scarcity rather than abundance. It was hoped that we, as members, could move forward in applying spiritual principles to these financial discussions and to investigate what keeps us from being able to do that; or how to be more consistent in our thinking, and talk about abundance and be able to share that insight.

Our concern was not centered on how to inspire people to give more freely or in larger amounts, but rather to think and talk about financial matters in perhaps a different way, a way that includes these spiritual principles that we hear so much about. Bringing in ideas about gratitude, unity, and abundance may strengthen our connection to our worldwide fellowship and extend to the Twelfth-Step work we all find so important.

In this presentation, we'd like to discuss the importance of abundance and spirituality in discussions about money, finances, some of the barriers which make those conversations difficult, and suggest some strategies to help us overcome those barriers. Connecting the ideas of abundance and spirituality to our giving will enable us to make connections with worldwide Al-Anon and with the principles that we need to continue to make available to those who still need to know of our fellowship.

The Thought Force believes that members can learn to connect abundance and spirituality to discussions of financial matters if they are given some guidance, direction, examples, and tools.

The charge was to create strategies that show the importance of abundance and spirituality in money discussions. We first identified barriers that could keep the membership from connecting abundance and spirituality to discussions of money. Then strategies to overcome those barriers and show the importance of abundance and spiritual principles in financial conversations were developed.

Barrier

When we are unaccustomed to discussing finances in a spiritual way, we become fearful and mistrustful at the very mention of the subject.

Strategies

Encourage members to share their experiences of gratitude, giving, and abundance in financially-based discussions at all levels of our service structure.

Create skits that demonstrate typical financial discussions versus spiritually-grounded financial discussions. Sometimes, humor helps our ability to listen to difficult subjects and to be more open to what is being suggested. We would envision one discussion being fear-based and skeptical about any thought of abundance while the other conversation would demonstrate the ideas of abundance, trust, gratitude, and giving based on a trust in a Higher Power.

Barrier

It takes time in Al-Anon recovery to make changes and move to a place of gratitude and abundance. When we first come to Al-Anon, many of our attitudes are not grounded in gratitude and abundance. Some of us didn't know what spiritual principles were, let alone how to apply them to our lives.

Strategy

Lead meetings and workshops on gratitude, abundance, and spirituality and share how our thinking has evolved on these topics. So much of what we have learned in Al-Anon was by listening to the experience, strength, and hope of others.

Barrier

Many of us may not understand the principle of abundance and where it is found in our Legacies.

Strategies

Discuss financial challenges using Al-Anon's spiritual principles found in the Steps, Traditions, and Concepts. The more we hear of financial challenges being made manageable by the application of spiritual principles, the better we will be able to apply them to discussions of our own financial difficulties.

Create a pamphlet that describes and defines the spiritual principles and relates them to the discussions of financial matters. A "timely reprint" (based on articles published in *The Forum*) could provide perspective on abundance as a spiritual principle.

Barrier

Many think it is improper or uncomfortable to discuss money due to cultural or social attitudes.

Strategies

Talk about the reasons we have for our discomfort. When it comes to talking about money. Is it not polite? Is it crass? Is it about control? Is it embarrassing? Did our parents or family members scold us for bringing up the subject?

Suggest money and finances as a topic at meetings as a means to open doorways to discussion. With a greater awareness and information of the obstacles and barriers to such discussions, and a greater understanding of how to apply spiritual principles, it is hoped that these discussions would become more comfortable, commonplace, and helpful.

Barrier

Some members have a fear of financial insecurity. Alcoholism takes its toll on families, and has left many of us devastated financially. To discuss a financial matter can be like opening a wound until we learn how to apply the spiritual principles. In Al-Anon we learn to face our fears, to discuss them with a trusted friend in the program, and to turn them over to a Higher Power of our understanding

Strategy

By working the Steps and applying them to our fear of financial insecurity, we learn to face all our fears within the framework of the Twelve Steps, Traditions, and Concepts, including the fear of financial insecurity.

Barrier

If we perceive that some of our members are struggling financially, we may, in our caretaking mode, feel uncomfortable discussing anything financial. In discussions of abundance, the amount is not important. What is important is that we are open to the possibility that we have enough and are being cared for by a Power. What matters is that each of us contributes in whatever way, in whatever amount that is comfortable for us.

Strategies

Gently discuss financial matters by holding meetings on the Seventh Tradition. There are many great readings in our literature that offer hope and suggestions on how to apply the spiritual principles found in this Tradition.

Suggest meetings on Responsibility, Trust, and Faith as a means to further our understanding of these principles. There are many references in our literature about these principles.

Members could share on how the program has changed them financially. We learned, as we applied the Steps, that believing, and turning our lives over to the care of the Higher Power, that we will be okay. We began to see the abundance in all areas of our lives.

Through the Knowledge-Based Decision-Making process, we became aware that discussions of money are often done with little mention of abundance or spiritual principles. We hope that as members deepen their understanding of the connection between Gratitude, Abundance, and Spirituality in discussions of financial matters that this relationship will allow them to talk openly about it with other members.

The Thought Force asked Conference members:

What barriers did we miss?**What strategies do you think would work?****Conference members responded:**

- I never thought about discussing financial matters with love and abundance. I have so much more in my life now than I ever had.
- I use the spiritual principles to encourage thinking about how grateful I am. How I express gratitude in my personal life—instead of buying an item, I express it in a financial gift to say thank you. Many organizations can receive money from other places. Tradition Seven says, in Al-Anon we receive only from ourselves. How deep is my gratitude?
- We have to become comfortable with expressing our truth in a safe place. A workshop divided into small groups with no notes creates less fear and is more comfortable. If you are comfortable, it is easier to hear the spiritual principles for sharing in a discussion of money.

- Look at Birthday envelopes in gratitude.
- My goal as Delegate is to help members understand the principle of abundance. In my Area, I encouraged a budget. As a result, we got more money. I'd like to see a workshop and skit that creates excitement.
- I have a very abundant Area. God has plenty of money. It starts with us. My Area is never resistant when I say, "Let's increase our contribution to the WSO."
- This is about shifting a mindset of lack/scarcity to abundance. Some in my Area need concrete facts: if they can't see where we spend the money, why distribute it. When they see details, it's easier to give. Using words like generosity and abundance helps. Using the idea as a meeting topic, I can find way to make it work. I will be doing this with GRs at Assembly.
- The strategies make me think about gratitude. Talking at my group on a personal level can lead to achieving that dream and goal. Working the Steps and Traditions, we come to discover the reverse of that. Sharing personal experiences and Steps Five and Nine we realize our part. Its not someone else's fault—get responsible and make it possible.
- Some groups in my Area were hoarding. We needed to presume goodwill and "Let Go and Let God." We decided it's "God giving away" that needed to be a topic. At the end of the weekend with 350 people, it took just one hour to get a vote. It was the most spiritual moment at Assembly: Voting to give away to the WSO.
- We already have the Seventh Tradition pamphlet. As a newcomer, it felt dull and factual, not speaking to my heart. Can we fatten it up to be attractive with spiritual principles? Can we turn it into the most read pamphlet?
- Balance generosity with prudence in the equation; then I can look at giving abundantly.
- I realized my Higher Power had granted me only what I asked for when I came into Al-Anon. I used to attend five meetings a week and put in \$1.00. Now I attend three meetings a week and put in \$2.00. I have short-changed myself if I don't put in more than \$2.00. I am going home to redo my budget.
- I have a sponsee who doesn't like the perceived control Al-Anon puts on finances. I told her we all need a budget and prudence but God does provide. It is not my responsibility to hold my fingers on that money. Money doesn't fix everything or give me recovery, but I get money because I have recovery.
- Someone told me that you can always tell what is important in someone's life by their calendar and their checkbook. I take that idea with me when I go to a meeting. In all my groups, I make sure to read the suggestion about passing the basket. According to Tradition Seven, "We are encouraged to contribute in gratitude for what Al-Anon/Alateen has given us... we give whatever we can." (2014-2017 *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*, "Groups at Work" section, page 21). I pull the topic into a meeting using Step One and unmanageability. This is where I practice Trust and Faith to have what I need.
- A barrier in my Area is the idea of scarcity—not having enough. We have districts hoarding without passing it up. I am talking to District Representatives individually, asking if they think money is necessary for the success of Al-Anon. This is to change attitudes and open a discussion about money. I will offer a budget worksheet to help them develop an ample reserve so they can feel comfortable letting go of the rest.
- We are the barriers. Our Treasurer wanted to invest our money to bring in more money. We talked about abundance and where the money goes and how to put it out in outreach.
- I will take this back and talk about the \$52,000 needed at the WSO.
- Reading the "Passing the Basket" section in "Groups at Work," (page 21) increased our funds.

Following the presentation and discussion, the Chairperson of the Board asked Conference members if they wanted a workshop or skit to bring to their Areas on the spiritual principles in financial matters. There was a consensus to create a Task Force for that purpose. The Seventh Tradition pamphlet (S-21) will go to the Finance Committee for review. Conference members were reminded that the Finance Committee presentation on creating a budget can be found in the *2014 WSC Summary*, pages 52-53.

UNIVERSAL UNDERSTANDING OF RECOVERY WORK GROUP

Sandie D.

Chairperson, Trustee

In 2004, the Board of Trustees of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. developed the Board Mission and Vision Statements to help keep the Board focused on increasing the visibility and accessibility of Al-Anon Family Groups. Developing a definition of family recovery as it relates to Al-Anon Family Groups was initiated. The membership helped to create a definition through four progressive surveys, each one using input from the last to further refine and clarify the statement. The resulting statement was tested with professionals and then retested after minor refinement to be sure that the statement would be useful in the professional communities.

A definition of family recovery as it relates to Al-Anon was presented at the 2014 World Service Conference (WSC). During the discussion at the 2014 Conference, a second definition was proposed. To allow time for Delegates to take it back and talk with their Areas, it was decided to continue discussion at the 2015 WSC. This is a continuation of that discussion.

Keeping in mind feedback from their Areas, members of the Conference were asked:

Does the fellowship, as expressed through the voice of the World Service Conference, need or want a definition of family recovery?

The floor was opened for comments:

- I understand the question came from communications from some Delegates. Why encourage the Board to take a step back in this process? Please expand on the motivation for this.
When the Board goes into an Area, it listens to what members and Delegates say. I attended an Assembly last fall and there were extremely strong negative voices at that microphone regarding even having this discussion. The Delegate did a good job and encouraged us to bring the discussion back. Are we involved in an outside issue? We were hearing that loud and clear. A report on the visit was done so it was brought to the Board's attention and we talked about it at that time.
- My Area feels strongly that we don't need a universal definition of recovery. There is a strong feeling that the beauty of recovery is that each person defines it for themselves. With a written definition, there is concern that we will forget what recovery means personally, and that the definition will be flat instead of dynamic to professionals.
- My Area has done a total turnaround from when the Chairperson of the Board attended our Assembly. They now understand that the audience is the professional community. The majority now wants the definition.
- I received e-mails from members and the majority wants it. They do not see the need or want to define it, but understand it is for research. Does this conflict with our primary spiritual aim?
- People think the missing word is Al-Anon.
- Those involved in public outreach and working with the professional community saw the benefit of having a statement. Those not involved question whether we are trying to define Al-Anon and want us to stick with what we have in the literature.
- Feedback in my Area was overwhelmingly positive in that it would help at treatment centers where the family could gain recovery as well. It is one more avenue to get the family connected.
- My Area welcomes this but felt we should clearly define it as the Al-Anon definition not universal.
- This definition is for people outside the fellowship. We know what Al-Anon is because it is close to our hearts.
- My Area was opposed. Who are we to determine a universal statement?
- There was confusion in my Area over who the audience was.
- It was well received in my Area. It was the first time we had no controversy over an issue.
- The background information refers to numerous surveys. I have to trust that the trusted servants before me were doing it for a purpose. I don't have to understand everything that goes on in my world. Trusting us to move forward and have faith that a Higher Power can use our work. We can always undo what we do. I can't break Al-Anon, and I can't fix it.

- Is there any reason not to change wording to “Al-Anon Family Groups believes” or “Al-Anon recovery?”

The primary reason is that when we asked the fellowship, which is where the definition came from, ideas were debated in the beginning. The Board’s Mission Statement is that “All people will find....” It isn’t our job to say where that recovery comes from. There’s a difference between defining what Al-Anon recovery is and what we need to communicate to professionals regarding defining that family members are hurt by alcohol. We don’t want to say this is a definition about Al-Anon because we don’t have one. I would say to professionals that this is a definition developed not only with members but with professionals, and here is what Al-Anon members tell us about recovery. This definition heightens our ability to carry the message and add personal experience. We were trying to be fair when we were asking if the Conference wants a definition to use when it talks to the professional community. It is a definition to then build your Al-Anon message on. This definition would allow the WSO Marketing Information Analyst to talk to the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Addictions. This definition has been developed with Al-Anon members and professionals. It can be used with Al-Anon member sharings from The Forum and Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism to show what Al-Anon members tell us about recovery.

- At Assembly everyone seems to understand why it was being developed so there were no questions. I took my granddaughter for a doctor’s appointment and in the examining room there was a poster saying if you are having trouble with someone in your family who has a drinking problem, make an appointment and we can get you some medication!

When the time on the agenda for this session ended, the Conference Chairperson asked for a consensus on whether the Conference wanted to continue the discussion. There was a clear consensus to continue the discussion. (See Floor Discussions on page 99.)

VHS COPY PROTECTED CONVERSION TO DVD COPY PROTECTED

Before the Conference, the New Mexico/El Paso Delegate submitted a framing, answers to the five Knowledge-Based Decision-Making (KBDM) questions, and a proposed motion to the Conference Leadership Team (CLT). The CLT included time on the agenda for the Delegate to present.

The framing included the following information:

In October 2014, the New Mexico/El Paso Area created its first Media Café during the Fall Assembly weekend in November. Specifically, the Area wanted to broadcast all the various podcasts and public service announcements (PSAs) in English and Spanish that the World Service Office Web site had to offer. The Area wanted to reach a wide range of Group Representatives (GRs) and other members of the fellowship who were arriving on Friday night for the business weekend.

In the process of organizing the Media Café with other members from the Area, the Delegate discovered two historical items available for rent from the World Service Office (WSO) for \$25 each—*Lois’s Story* (AV-1) and *Lois W. and the Pioneers* (AV-24). The difficulty was that both films were on videocassette (VHS). No one had a VHS player, and the members were unsure whether they could connect a player to their computers and/or a projector so the films could be screened by a large number of people at once.

The Delegate checked with a local video company that said it would have no problem converting the films to DVDs. The Delegate sent an e-mail to the WSO asking for the two VHS tapes to be mailed and stating that the Area would pay for the conversion of two DVD sets. The Delegate planned to return one set immediately with the VHS tapes, and keep the other DVD set to show at the Media Café.

The Delegate received a reply from the WSO stating that *Lois’s Story* and *Lois W. and the Pioneers* are only available in the VHS format. The reply included the explanation that when the Conference gave permission for these films to be made, and later when it authorized the films to be transferred to videotape, the Conference was very specific that these were for use only in the fellowship. For that reason, a copy-protection system was included on the tapes, and they were only available for rental. The reply also noted that the WSO does not have a DVD rental version of these tapes since so few members and groups rent these materials, producing a very limited number of DVDs with a copy-protection system is not cost-effective at this time.

Jud L.

Panel 54

New Mexico/El Paso



The Delegate asked that the Conference give permission to the World Service Office for *Lois's Story* and *Lois W. and the Pioneers* to be converted from copy-protected VHS to copy-protected DVD for rental purposes, and that the availability of the DVDs be included in *Group e-News*, *The Forum*, and other publications. The Delegate believes that the cost of the conversion would be offset by the rental dollars when groups, districts, and Areas learn that they could view two pieces of our history for a nominal rental fee. The Delegate truly believes that the New Mexico/El Paso Area is not the only group of members who would like to view a piece of our history.

The Delegate's answers to the five Knowledge-Based Decision-Making (KBDM) Questions included:

What do we know about our members' or prospective members' needs that is relevant to the subject?

- *New Mexico/El Paso was truly disappointed to hear that we would not be able to see two pieces of our fellowship's history.*

What do we know about the resources and our vision for the organization that is relevant to the subject?

- *There are resources available from replication companies that make a Glass Master which contains the copy protection and then the DVDs are stamped from the Glass Master and not copied. Also, our Conference theme—"Living Our Spiritual Principles: Expanding Our Vision"—speaks to the future, and replication of our history would be a benefit to the worldwide fellowship.*

What do we know about the current realities and evolving dynamics of the world and our fellowship that is relevant to the subject? What are the pros and cons?

- *The world is no longer videocassette (VHS) based. It is currently based on higher and more complex forms of video transmissions.*
- *The pro would be to convert our history in the near future to the current mode of video transmission.*
- *The con would be the cost of conversion, which may or may not be offset by the rental income.*

What are the ethical implications of our choices? In other words: Will our decision be consistent with our spiritual principles?

- *Yes, most especially since they are the words of our cofounder and the pioneers.*

What do we wish we knew, but don't?

- *Exact cost of the replication, and how many groups, districts, and Areas would be interested in viewing these videos now and in the future.*

The Delegate's proposed motion:

MATTER UNDER CONSIDERATION: VHS Format Copy Protected Conversion of *Lois's Story* (AV-1) and *Lois & the Pioneers* (AV-24) to DVD Copy Protected

WORDING OF SPECIFIC MOTION TO BE MADE: Request the Conference to give permission for the conversion

The Conference Chairperson opened the floor for discussion:

- We need to be sure to keep things in a format that can be used in the future. We need to convert while we still have the capability to do it.
- Does it need to be rented or purchased by Areas and have ownership of them at the Area and district levels?

The World Service Conference (WSC) can do what it chooses. The thinking of the Archives Committee when it brought the Motion in 1992 was that it was hesitant to create a VHS about Lois in keeping with what Lois's wishes were. The WSO only sells photos of Lois and Anne at the World Service Conference. The photos are not available for sale at any other time because Lois did not want to be a personality in the fellowship.

The films show the early pioneers full-face and with their full names. We want to have access to the information, but it is up to the WSO to control who has ownership. There is no desire for the films to

be loaned to Alcoholics Anonymous or anyone outside the fellowship. If every Area has one copy and they lose it, is the WSO going to keep stock of the DVDs in case of loss? The Area does not have to keep track of the DVDs if the films are rented. The rental charge covers only the cost for mailing to the Area and back to the WSO. The WSO is not interested in making money off these. If the Conference decides to go forward and the technology is available, rental would be set based on the cost to mail a DVD to an Area and back.

- We don't need to make the films available to the world if Lois didn't want it. It is good for young people to see what Al-Anon was like.
- My home group was unanimous that they are very interested in viewing the films on DVD.
- I agree with rental within the fellowship. DVDs may become the technology of the past. We need to be visionary and look past that.

A staff member who worked on the Lois and the Pioneers film responded. She shared insight into the issue that it was understood that the film would be for rental and copyrighted. Then the process was replicated on Lois's Story. When Lois's Story first came out, it was in 16mm format for rent—and could not be duplicated. She ended by noting that we need to remember not to lose our history. We are distancing ourselves from our history and need to be careful not to lose our path.

- The joy of learning our history has stayed with me during my years of service. I showed the films years ago, people were excited, and the visual of these people is helpful. It is showing what happened when ordinary people put recovery into service. It inspires. It was cumbersome having just VHS to show the films. We did it, and people in the Area were stunned. They had read books and seen pictures, but to see them talking was stunning. Is this a big expense?

One of the advantages to getting a floor motion to the CLT in advance is that it allows the staff to do research and make decisions based on facts, not guesses. Until recently, it was hard to find a vendor who could do it. We found a vendor who could convert the original 16mm film (to give a clearer image) to DVD. The first reel is a seven-inch diameter reel and would cost \$172.00 and we can get up to 25 copies for \$27.00 per copy in English. If more than one reel, the second reel is \$112.00. We don't know at this time if they would treat Lois and Pioneers as a second reel. To produce the films in Spanish or French, we would need to first have a script. Someone would have to listen, transcribe the film into English, and then translate it. It would cost \$1,000.00 per language to add captioning. If we were to do that, we would also include English for the hearing impaired. The prices quoted today may not be the same by the time the project could be done. The WSO would use its best effort to protect the films. That is the best we can do. VHS was protected at the time, but no longer. There would be no staff time costs associated with this.

- Who were you imagining in the Motion would pay for the conversion? How many other VHS or 16mm films might we have in the Archives?

We were envisioning that the WSO would make the purchase and the cost would be made up in rental fees if advertised heavily.

As far as I am aware there are two films.

- Thinking of the future, I would like to see them preserved. My vision: Put them on a format that can be Web accessed to rent off the Web.
- I love these films. History is wonderful. I would like to see these films shown. How popular were these films when VHS was popular 20 years ago?
- No one else cares about our history. *Many Voices, One Journey* (B-31) is not selling as compared to other books.
- These films would be valuable. Lois made them available in the technology of the time.
- Converting just means taking them to the next level of technology today.

The Conference Chairperson asked Conference members whether they wished to proceed to a Motion, continue discussion at a later date, or discontinue any action. There was a consensus to proceed with a Motion.

A Motion was made, seconded, and carried to request the Conference to give permission for the conversion of *Lois's Story* (AV-1) and *Lois and the Pioneers* (AV-24) to DVD copy protected. (See Motion #5 on page 101).

WELCOMING AND RETAINING NEW MEMBERS

Member Services

Some of the most frequently asked questions at our World Service Conference (WSC) have been about the priorities of the Board's Strategic Plan. One of those priorities is: "to empower the Al-Anon fellowship to be vibrant, inclusive, and flexible." Questions about this priority include:

- How do we empower the Al-Anon fellowship to be vibrant, inclusive, and flexible?
- How can we help our groups to grow?
- How can we keep new members coming back?



Variations of these basic questions have been discussed at the Conference and other service gatherings for many years. In the Member Services Section, we began thinking about this and decided, as a part of the Board's Strategic Plan Priority, to launch a blog at the 2013 International Convention that took place in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. The question asked was:

How can we keep new members coming back?

We received 65 responses to our blog, including:

- Offer a Newcomer Packet with a meeting list and/or other Conference Approved Literature (CAL).
- Spend time during the meeting acknowledging and welcoming the new member.
- Initiate one-on-one contact before or after the meeting.

After reviewing the replies, we decided to continue the conversation with the District Representatives (DRs). They were invited to share on their e-Communities Discussion Board on the topic:

How do thriving groups in their district welcome new members?

There were only 14 responses to this discussion question, including:

- In my district, all groups follow the same procedure for newcomer meetings. Each new member is welcomed as soon as they arrive and encouraged to "come in and join us."
- Our district has two meetings specifically to welcome newcomers. In those meetings, seasoned Al-Anon members follow the guideline for *Beginners' Meetings* (G-2).
- We have a very strong and active district. Once a newcomer has been identified, several of the groups will ask a member to read Step One from a piece of CAL, often from the pamphlet, *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* (P-17), and then perhaps comment about their own experience.

The Member Services staff realized that more information was needed. They decided a survey would be the best way to "glean" further information. The purpose of the survey was to obtain additional information about what thriving groups do to welcome and retain new members because we believe this is what ultimately supports the growth of the fellowship. So, in September 2014, the first World Service Office (WSO) survey directed to DRs was launched. They were asked to share their experiences in retaining new members. We asked for feedback on the question:

Do you think a discussion about how to retain newcomers might be helpful for your groups?

There were 221 responses from 30 of the 67 Areas. The top three responses were:

- By bringing the idea to the table, we get an opportunity to examine what we do to see if it is working.
- It might give some Group Representatives (GRs) options to try when they hear what other GRs and groups are doing to meet the needs of the newcomer.
- Some groups are struggling with keeping members and providing on-going information. It may encourage them to do more.

The report was followed by a skit of a district meeting having a discussion about how to keep new members coming back. It is intended as a resource to have the conversation at a deeper level—in our groups—and to share those conversations with each other at district meetings.

Conference members were asked:

How can we encourage growth and keep newcomers coming back?

How will you take this information back to your groups and district?

- When we have discussions in the Area, people in the district forget when greeting a newcomer to gauge where he/she is. Some are overzealous, forgetting that some newcomers don't want to be hugged, while others hug everyone. Develop a sense of what the newcomers need and are asking for. I seek balance. I have to remember that with newcomers.
- We have a Beginner Meeting series. Each week, a beginner participates. That gives them an opportunity to meet new people. After six meetings, we ask the newcomers if they would like to help in some way.
- We try to get the newcomer's telephone number. If he/she is comfortable giving it, then we can reach out to the newcomer.

Conference members were asked to take the information about welcoming and retaining new members to their groups and districts and have the discussion.

Al-Anon guidelines

The Shared Experience of Al-Anon and Alateen Members.

Beginners' Meeting G-2

Beginners' meetings are an important part of our Al-Anon Family Groups. The purpose of a beginners' meeting is to introduce newcomers to the Al-Anon program in a welcoming and comforting manner, in an environment where they have an opportunity to ask questions and discuss their feelings with longtime members. Experienced members share about the disease of alcoholism and inform the newcomers about various pieces of Al-Anon Conference Approved Literature (CAL). Newcomers are encouraged to attend regular Al-Anon meetings as well.

Registering a beginners' meeting:

Some Al-Anon groups host a special beginners' meeting in conjunction with the group meeting. The usual length of time for a special beginners' meeting is 30 minutes to one hour. These special beginners' meetings are registered as a part of the hosting Al-Anon group, which has a Group Representative (GR). The formats for these meetings range from one to six weeks; this is up to the autonomy of the hosting group.

Districts and Al-Anon Information Services (AISs) may also host special beginners' meetings that may or may not be in conjunction with a district or AIS meeting. Groups in the geographical area that the district or AIS serves provide leaders/chairs for the meetings. The formats for these special beginners' meetings range from one to six weeks; this is up to the autonomy of the hosting district or AIS.

Some Al-Anon groups register as beginners' meetings as a way to attract newer members. These groups may include "Beginner" as part of their group name. The group's format focuses on beginner topics, such as the first three Steps, in order to introduce newcomers to the Al-Anon program. These groups register as Al-Anon groups and have a Group Representative.

Things to consider before starting a beginners' meeting:

- How many beginners' meetings are there currently in the local area?
- What are the days and times of current beginners' meetings?
- Are there enough newcomers attending your group to start a special beginners' meeting?
- How many weeks will newcomers attend the beginners' meeting?
- Are members willing to make a commitment to support a beginners' meeting?
- How will potential members get information about the meeting?

Chairing a beginners' meeting

Beginners' meetings are conducted by an Al-Anon member who understands the spiritual principles expressed in the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. When chairing a beginners' meeting, members simply share the experience, strength, and hope that they found in the Al-Anon program of recovery. Patience, tolerance, and the ability to listen and explain the Al-Anon program to families and friends of alcoholics are important qualities for those who conduct beginners' meetings. It is a good idea to have two or three other Al-Anon members present to share their experience in applying Al-Anon principles in their own lives and respond to questions that may arise.

Remember, newcomers are looking for help, for themselves as well as the alcoholic. They may want to talk, but are hesitant to do so. It is important to explain our spiritual principle of anonymity so that members feel safe to share both during the meeting and when speaking one-on-one. Explain the meeting's procedure for sharing (wait to be acknowledged by the Chair, raise hand, etc.) and how our loving interchange of ideas works.

Remember,

newcomers are looking for help,

for themselves as well as
the alcoholic.

DELEGATES (PANEL 53)

Darcy N., Alabama/Northwest Florida

When I arrived at my first Al-Anon meeting, I was full of blame, shame, and guilt. I was born into a family where both parents drank alcoholically. The family secret was sexual abuse and incest on both sides. So you can imagine where I have been. When I found Al-Anon Family Groups, you told me it was not my fault. What a gift of relief I received that day. I was “shanghaied” into service early in my recovery. Accepting me for who I was, is a feeling I had never known before. Teaching me that God loves me was a concept I never learned in church. Al-Anon taught me that concept through my Sponsor and Service Sponsor.

Alateen was there for my seven year-old daughter then. She stayed until she was 12. At the age of 15, she was sent to her dad in Michigan. What a gift I was given when my daughter returned home with three grandchildren after being gone 14 years. You, Al-Anon Family Groups, along with many close friends all over the United States, surrounded me that day with your prayers, love, phone calls, support, leading, guiding, caring of me, when the call came that my daughter had been arrested on two counts of kidnapping while I was in California—so powerless. What a devastating blow that tried to rob me of all my hope during the year 2013. Service kept me focused. I watched as my daughter lost custody of her two boys that year, being reminded it was not my fault and not my battle to fight. What a gift I received this past Christmas Eve when I was a witness to my daughter’s engagement to a wonderful man.

Al-Anon gave me such support when my son called to say he had been in a bar fight and received a DUI that cost him everything he had. The gift I was given this past November was being able to spend 20 days with him and his girlfriend because of the birth of his first baby, a girl, whom I miss holding very much. I will see them again in July.

Staying married to my husband “Just for Today,” is a miracle in itself. Now that our professional lives are leading us on to a possible move to North Carolina, I have mixed emotions. My Sponsor says North Carolina may need a Delegate one day. Only God knows that answer. Service has given me and taught me a balance to life. No one is more grateful for your love, compassion, and acceptance than me.

Maryon K., Alberta/Northwest Territories

My term as Delegate is drawing to a close and this is my last World Service Conference. I have mixed emotions, wonderful memories, and a heart full of gratitude.

By the time I reached these rooms, I had been a widow for many years and alcohol was robbing me of my kids and them of their potential and viable futures. Al-Anon welcomed me, encouraged me, and loved me unconditionally when I didn’t even like myself. I was frightened. I told lies, believing that if I covered-up, picked-up, and fixed-up, I could somehow change the direction alcohol was taking us.

At times, our home felt like a battle-zone, and I acted more like a referee than a mother. My kids were argumentative, disrespectful, and unhappy. I lived in desperation and denial, spending all my energy trying to be a peacemaker. Their behaviors caused problems for our family, community, friends, and schools, and I repeatedly assumed full responsibility for their actions.

I didn’t yet know how insidious the family disease of alcoholism is, and I thought if I just did more, gave more, and was a better mom that everything would be okay. It wasn’t until excessive drinking and negative behaviors spiraled us into the judicial system that I realized there was absolutely nothing more I could say, beg, borrow, promise, or do for them. The alcohol they craved had taken them there, and it was finally time for me to “Let Go and Let God.”

I was defeated, devastated, and alone. Strangely enough, it was during those dark years that I found my way into Al-Anon. Someone must have said, “Keep coming back,” because I did, and I do. Al-Anon’s tools helped me rebuild my life. Al-Anon members helped me to find myself, respect myself, and forgive myself. In return, I got involved in service, gratefully giving back, to get better.

It’s taken 20-plus years, but I’ve grown from being incapable of even setting up chairs for a meeting to Area Delegate. My journey as Delegate has been like a roller-coaster ride: challenges, conflicts, learning, healing, tears, and laughter. Lessons learned taught me how to change “me” to “we.” Living by our spiritual principles expands my vision inward, outward, and upward. Al-Anon enriches my life: transforming yesterday’s dreams, today’s realities, and tomorrow’s possibilities.

Vali F., Arizona

Growing up in this disease has had an enormous impact on my life, leaving me at the same time both crushingly driven and perfectionistic and completely lacking in a belief of my value. This combination did, and often still does, present as aloofness, drives me to take on too much, encourages me to “do it myself,” and negatively impacts my relationships.

These three years as Delegate have been a riot of opportunities to experience these character defects but also to encounter the kind of love and acceptance that I have known best in two places: my home groups and at the World Service Conference. In both, Al-Anon’s primary purpose is extraordinarily clear. At my home group, the spiritual principles are applied to help each of us expand our vision beyond a life lived in the disease. At Conference, the spiritual principles are applied to help us imagine a world free of this disease.

I feel incredibly fortunate that I have had the opportunity to work on Thought Forces and to attend Conference, as I have continued to work with sponsees and to meditate in quiet connection with my Higher Power, whom I choose to call God. I frequently have had the opportunity to expand my understanding of the spiritual principles of the program and through

that to increase my acceptance of myself, my fellow members, and my fellow humans.

The image that came to me in preparing for this talk was that of windshield wipers. The spiritual principles of Al-Anon are like windshield wipers clearing my vision as I drive my car of life. Applying the principles let's me see clearly both what is here and now—the corn fields, lakes and streams, forests and even desert flora—and what may come—the mountains in the distance, the first glimpse of the ocean as I top a hill. And so, my vision expands: I see new possibilities for myself, for Al-Anon and for the larger world. At the same time, I am reminded that I am in the car, right here, right now, and that my job is to steer, to see the possibilities, and to have faith that God knows what is around corners and is guiding Al-Anon and me safely there.

I want to thank all the Delegates incoming and outgoing for the growth I have experienced through this process. The love and acceptance I have felt from other Delegates and Conference members has strengthened my faith in the God of my understanding and increased my belief in my fundamental goodness. I can never thank you enough.

Lois K., British Columbia/Yukon

My journey toward recovery has always been linked with service. I was fortunate to find a Sponsor who “took me along.” Early in my Al-Anon life, she was asked to make a presentation to a church group about Al-Anon. All she asked was that I keep her company. She always gently nudged me to stretch my wings by saying, “I think it's time for . . .” Before I knew it, I had taken on roles in my group, at our Al-Anon Information Service, in our district, and then at the Area level. I am sure that it was several years before I realized that this was “service” work. I just thought that what I was doing was how you work toward recovery.

In my first year as Delegate, I was assigned to a Task Force. We met by e-mail and conference call and got to know each other in a way I didn't expect. During this time, my husband's health began to deteriorate and having the Task Force duties helped me focus on my program during a time where there seemed to be an endless round of doctor's visits and tests. As the time for the World Service Conference drew near, it became apparent that I could not leave him in his final weeks. Our Alternate Delegate was able to arrange her work schedule so she could represent our Area. I know that my Higher Power had a hand in that.

During the next few bewildering months, she was able to carry the role of Delegate until I was able to resume responsibilities, a little at a time. It was now a new year with a new assignment—this time a Committee. There were more documents to review along with conference calls with new voices. Once again, this service work kept me focused on the program, and it helped me become centered once again.

These experiences reinforced the lessons I have learned along the way. I am never alone because I have my Higher Power and the support of my Al-Anon family. I have the hope offered by this program. During my darkest days, I knew, in a way that I did not have before I came to Al-Anon, that no matter how black the moment might be, I would come through to a better day. When I think about Al-Anon and my vision for the future,

I think about being there to pass along hope to the newcomer. Thank you for allowing me to serve this fellowship.

Marilyn B., Colorado

Life is a gift. Many years ago I walked through the doors of Al-Anon a week after my father, whom I adored, had taken his own life. I was three months pregnant with the baby that would grow into my beautiful daughter. I was in a verbally violent and difficult marriage. I woke up every morning wondering how I could possibly make it through the day.

In the meetings, I finally felt safe. For the first time in a very long time, I felt respected and cherished. I was told to get a Sponsor, do the Steps, and if I wanted full recovery, I needed to do service. I became a Group Representative.

Sometimes service was hard. I did not always “get my way” in group consciences. Sometimes I pouted. Sometimes I attempted to sabotage. It took me a while to learn that “. . . good leadership often discards its own cherished plans for those that are better, giving credit to the source” (Bill W.'s *Essay on Leadership*, 2014-2017 *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*, page 200).

I discovered that effective leadership means that I stand shoulder-to-shoulder with other members, that I actively listen to all ideas, and that I pray for God's guidance for all of us in the group conscience process.

In 1985, I married the love of my life. Service has given us an environment of love and respect that I never could have imagined. I have learned that being kind is more important than being clever. I have experienced the joy of knowing that how we treat each other is so much more important than what I accomplish or what decision is made. I have developed my understanding of the Concept Four, “Participation is the key to harmony.” In 1988, we were blessed with the birth of our amazing son. He grew up in a home with loved ones in recovery. What a blessing!

In February 2014, I was diagnosed with breast cancer and was subsequently treated with chemo and radiation. My husband, who had told me right from the start, “I cannot fix you, but I will walk beside you while you feel the pain,” has been true to this commitment. In February 2015, a mammogram revealed no recurrence of cancer.

Today I wake up and say, “God, life is a gift, thank you that I am alive, and thank you to all of you for giving me a life so worth living.” I am so glad to be here.

Cathy O'D., Georgia

When I walked into an Al-Anon meeting almost 22 years ago, I was a shattered and lonely person wandering through life. While my self-esteem was at a low point, I gave the outward impression that my life was just fine. I was full of self-righteousness, rigidity, and pride. I simply was trying to find peace and happiness in a very unhealthy marriage because I needed to “look good.”

Never mind that I had a pattern of getting involved with people who needed help and/or to be rescued. When I had married my husband five years earlier, I told him, “You are my next assignment.” By the time his addiction had become full-blown, it was only by God's grace and through the gift of despera-

tion that I realized I also needed help and began my Al-Anon journey.

I learned that in order to change, I would need to have an open mind. Because I was taught as a child that things should be a certain way, this principle was difficult for me to grasp. Since I am a rule follower, I faithfully attended meetings in my Area. I sat silent for a couple of years because I had lost my voice.

I did not know that God would use our program to begin to expand my vision and show me how to find my voice. I remember sitting at my first couple of Assemblies looking at the table of officers and thinking to myself, “I would never sit up at the front of the room and be one of those people.” Al-Anon worked miracles in my life, stretching me and allowing me to blossom in ways I never thought imaginable. Although by growing up in a Christian home, I learned the principles of honesty, hope, faith, integrity, humility, forgiveness, acceptance, service, and gratitude, Al-Anon gave me tools to apply those principles to my life. To this day, I still struggle with issues of self-esteem, but those moments occur less frequently and my voice is stronger.

I am grateful that Georgia Al-Anon members allowed me the honor and privilege to serve as their Delegate. Because of this profoundly humbling experience, the vision for my life and our worldwide fellowship continues to expand and change. I will always remember my days at Conference, and I thank you for being a part of my journey.

Rosemarie K., Maritime Provinces

Two months after coming into the program, I was elected Group Representative. After all, that only made sense because I was the only one with a car in my home group and our district meetings were about an hour away. I was still feeling very different in the program and not able to identify with the members because they were all wives. As I became part of the district, I began to feel more comfortable. Wow! Feeling part of—was that ever different from my childhood. I also was really welcomed at the district meetings and was always asked to give an opinion during discussions. I was then encouraged to offer my name for District Representative. My journey in service began.

I kept wondering what I could say today, but then I read that “to serve you must have a quiet mind.” I then realized what “spiritual principles” are and how they have allowed me to serve with a quiet mind.

You quieted my mind when you asked my opinion. You really mean that I am to have an opinion. You quieted my mind when you told me if my opinion was different, you would continue to allow me to speak, and you would not give me the silent treatment for the next two years. You quieted my mind when you encouraged me to continue in my service journey. You quieted my mind when you said, “Keep coming back.” It took me a year of keep coming backs to realize I needed to stay in Al-Anon for myself.

You quieted my mind by telling me to read Conference Approved Literature even though most of our literature at that time was still focused on wives, and I was an adult child. You quieted my mind when you said, “Listen to the message, not the messenger.” Everyone deserves respect whether I like them or not. You quieted my mind when you told me even the minority

opinion needs to be heard. You quieted my mind when you told me that as much as I would love to, I cannot serve next year at the World Service Conference; that leadership is rotated. You quieted my mind when you said, “Take what you like and leave the rest.”

So, for today, with your help, I have an expanded vision with hope and trust in the future.

Linda W., Massachusetts

Before Al-Anon, I lived mainly out of fear. I did have—and live by—spiritual principles, although I wouldn’t have called them that. They included honesty, kindness, compassion, fairness, personal responsibility, and helping others. But these principles were limited by fear. I was honest, but I learned to subtly lie to myself and others about who I was and how I really felt. I was kind and helped others, but with the ulterior motive that they would reciprocate by taking care of me in return. I gave too much and for the wrong reasons.

Al-Anon has taught me how to live by spiritual principles out of love, not fear. Honesty is critical to my relationships with myself and my Higher Power. Taking the Fourth and Fifth Steps stripped me of pride and ego and brought me to a place of fact and acceptance of my strengths and weaknesses. When I first got here, I somehow *knew* not to take on service responsibilities. I let others chair meetings, do the treasury, and order the literature, because taking on too much was taking too much out of me.

What I needed was to let go of fear and embrace love as the underlying source of all spiritual principles. I was emotionally broken when I came into the program. I needed *you* to love me, until I could learn to love myself. Today, I consider my Higher Power to be the source of love. The more I tap into that source, the more love I have to give back. My service journey began with simple acts of giving back, like setting up a meeting, while knowing there was *no expectations* from others. When I gave, I gave for me, from that connection with my Higher Power.

When I give out of love, I need no affirmation, no response, and no validation. I give because it is right for me, and that is a spiritual principle, too. I’ve learned to listen to myself, my inner voice, and my own integrity. When I do this, I have no regrets, no discomfort, and no confusion.

Love drives my vision, too, which has always been to become a happier, healthier person. As I grow in recovery and through service, I have expanded that vision to include contributing to other people’s happiness and health and to a better world for all of us. For me, service is love in action, and when I live out of spiritual principles, I find fulfillment and happiness every day.

Doris K., Minnesota North

This year’s theme really had me looking at my Al-Anon journey. When I walked through the doors of Al-Anon, I did not have any self-esteem. I felt that if you knew me, you would not want me there. I wanted what some of you had, and I was told to get into service if I really wanted all Al-Anon has to offer.

It has been such a wonderful journey. I never wanted to volunteer for anything because I didn’t feel good enough or quali-

fied, but I was encouraged by many to volunteer for service positions. They could see in me what I could not.

I never dreamed or desired to be Delegate. My plan was to be the Alternate Delegate and my dear friend would be the Delegate. But the morning before the election Assembly, my meditation was very clear for me to turn my heart, my head, and my tongue over to God.

It turned out my friend could not stand for Delegate, so I really felt that I was off the hook. When no one stood for the position, a Past Trustee told us we could not be represented at the World Service Conference if we did not have a Delegate. It ended up that three of us stood for the position. During the election, as the three of us were out of the room, I really knew the other two were more qualified, but to my surprise I was elected.

I never felt like I was good enough to do any of the service positions I volunteered for, but with the help and encouragement of all of you, it has helped me grow. When I got to my first Conference, I was sure I was not informed enough. I met my Mentor, and she and many others loved me into believing in myself. It was a very positive experience.

I am so honored to be the Delegate for Minnesota North. Now, as my term is drawing to an end, I cannot believe the confidence I have developed. I am truly living my spiritual principles and expanding my vision. I am excited to see where my God takes me now.

Connie W., Montana

My husband likes to say that he almost gave his life to get me into Al-Anon, and there is truth to that, however, that is not why I stayed. I quickly learned Al-Anon was for me and that I had responsibilities for my part in this family illness. I needed to learn what to do to get better. I developed a relationship with a Higher Power, whom I call God, who loved me as one of His kids, and life began to change. I found that I was no longer alone. As I became open to change, my God expanded my vision of life.

I was encouraged to become involved in service fairly early on. I began service within my group, then district, and on to Area meetings. My life expanded as I met more and more wonderful people in recovery and learned more about the tools of this program and how to use them in my life. My life and my family life improved in amazing ways.

At one time, I thought I could keep home and profession separate, however, you all know that is not possible. Therefore, I took these tools and principles, especially the Traditions into my professional life too. It was demonstrated to me over and over again how these principles work in all of our affairs!

There came a day, when my husband and I decided that we were able to retire and enter a new phase of life. When he asked me what I would like to do in retirement, I replied that I would like to be of service to Al-Anon.

So I asked God to help me be of service in Al-Anon. I truly had no expectations of what that would look like. My Higher Power decided to continue to expand my vision and the ride began. There were opportunities within the district, then at the Area level, and on to the World Service Conference. Being here has expanded my vision to really see the worldwide fellowship

of the Al-Anon and Alateen Family Groups.

My God and the Al-Anon Family Groups have given me a life and gifts beyond anything I could ever have imagined. I am looking forward to learning what God has in mind as He continues to demonstrate how living these spiritual principles enhances life for all of us who love Al-Anon.

Rich M., New Jersey

My journey began like many others with a caretaking mother who was an adult child. My first wife was an adult child; my second, a blackout drinker; and my third recently celebrated 26 years of continuous sobriety. Someone said to me after my second divorce, "Don't worry, you will find another woman, you give away houses."

In 1994, I found Al-Anon when a girl in my office asked me to go to a meeting with her. I went. I did not follow any instructions, did not go to meetings regularly, did not get a Sponsor, did no service, and continued to use my will to direct my life. I left Al-Anon after six months. Years later, a friend asked me to take him to a meeting. I went and somehow connected with the program. This man and I agreed to meet the next week. He never came back, but I never left. I followed directions. I got a Sponsor and a Service Sponsor, started attending more meetings, read the literature daily, took topics, chaired meetings, and started working the Steps. I now felt like part of the group. I was giving back.

One night after a meeting, I was walking across the street with a friend, and I said, "I think I am ready to do some service outside the group level." He responded, "It's funny you should say that because I am Chair of the Information Services, and we need a Vice Chair for the Al-Anon participation in the A.A. Convention. Will you take the position?" After consulting with my Sponsor, I said, "Yes." I was worried that I did not have enough experience, but he said, "Don't worry, you are only Vice Chair and will have a year to learn the position." Two weeks later, the Chair quit Al-Anon and by default, I was the Chair.

I learned to accept that I was Chair, and I learned that in Al-Anon I had the support of many members. My recovery soared. I learned that by giving it away, I got to keep it. I started living the spiritual principles of the Steps, including gratitude. We had a great Convention. I felt better with each position I served in. I expanded my vision by participating in six Al-Anon skits, and I was able to develop new hidden talents by risking failure.

Serving as Delegate has opened my mind to new ideas, new ways of doing things, and to a deep understanding of the term "fellowship." The friendships I have developed here will be a lifelong commitment.

My Sponsor always said to me, "If God is your co-pilot, switch seats." Thanks to Al-Anon, I have.

Elin E., North Carolina/Bermuda

Living our spiritual principles—what powerful words! Al-Anon has taught me to live in the now and to "Live and Let Live." When spiritually fit through living the Steps, Traditions, and Concepts, I relax into the flow of life by being myself, being fully present in the moment, and trusting my Higher Power.

One of the best things about service is meeting members from other locations. They bring fresh, new expressions of our spiritual principles and practices. Quite recently, I met a woman who has served Al-Anon in two other Areas. Something in a phone conversation with her triggered fear and inadequacy in me, and I quickly ended the call. The next day, I offered amends and found her loving and open. She shared that it helped her to remember that it can be very hard to be part of someone else's recovery. Although I had never heard it put that way, I could certainly understand and identify with that. Sharing perspectives on our pain expanded my understanding.

Two years ago, I stood for Alternate Delegate and was not elected. I took a deep breath, turned it over, and hugged and congratulated the member who was elected. I stood unopposed for Area Treasurer. Little did I know then that serious illness and extensive treatment would have caused me to resign within nine months had I been elected Alternate Delegate. As Treasurer, however, I could use the "we" principle and ask for help. For five months, an Al-Anon friend worked with me weekly; skillfully serving Al-Anon and drawing us into a closer friendship. I have deep gratitude for my Higher Power's presence throughout this experience of asking and receiving.

My first Sponsor told me never to think of Al-Anon as only the four walls of my home group. Some years ago, with 21 years in Al-Anon and 23 years working with the same company, I found myself unexpectedly rated near the bottom in my work. Practicing my recovery, I asked for a clear understanding of the reason and continued doing my best work. I refrained from complaining and gossip, and used our Steps to search out and address my part. Despite my low rating, living the Al-Anon principles opened the door for me to request and, to my surprise, receive an international transfer to Brussels, Belgium! While working in Brussels, I attended English- and Dutch-speaking Al-Anon meetings, served on the Al-Anon Information Service for English-speaking groups in Belgium and the Netherlands, and participated in planning a weekend conference celebrating Al-Anon's 50-year birthday. This experience opened my eyes and heart to the worldwide fellowship of Al-Anon and expanded my vision.

Donna J., North Dakota

Wow! What a journey this has been. When I heard the theme of my first World Service Conference, "Our Legacies: The Spiritual Journey of Changing 'Me' to 'We,'" it took me right back to when I first started doing Al-Anon service. I was encouraged to allow my name to stand as the Area Literature Coordinator, and to my great surprise, I was elected to that position. I, of course, did my very best, but I didn't realize the importance of asking others to help in fulfilling the duties of the position so we all felt like we belonged.

As time went on, I was involved in many service positions and even allowed my name to stand for Delegate. My Higher Power knew best, and I was not elected because I didn't fully understand how important the spiritual principles were. I stayed involved, but decided I really didn't want to be a Delegate because I saw how many of the Delegates had negative major life changes while they were Delegate. I also saw how they were able

to handle those life changes with dignity and poise and sometimes with a few tears, but that is also a sign that I have learned it is alright to have and feel those feelings. Another spiritual awakening was when I realized that all of us who are involved with an alcoholic have those same experiences, but others often don't even know they have happened.

"Living Our Spiritual Principles: Expanding Our Vision," the theme for this year, has also had a very personal connection for me. In October, my husband and I went to California to help my sister after her open heart surgery. Two days after my sister's surgery, my husband went by ambulance to another hospital. I tried to divide my time between them and determine where I was needed most. I often had to rely on my Higher Power when it was midnight, and I had no idea where I was or how to get home. It was amazing how when I just said, "Help," a landmark would appear, and I could get my bearings again.

During my term as Delegate, I have lost two brothers, a brother-in-law, and my husband all because of the disease of alcoholism. Some were no longer drinking at the time of their death, but the damage was already done. When I arrived back home in North Dakota, it was so comforting to receive so many cards and messages of hope from all over the country. Al-Anon is truly a worldwide fellowship, and I am so grateful to be a part of it.

Lisa B-C., Oklahoma

When I first got to Al-Anon, I had no clue of spiritual matters. I was defeated, hopeless, and saw no possibility of a bright future for me.

In Al-Anon, I was introduced to a way of life I never would have believed possible. Support was available to me at every turn. Finding a Higher Power gave me an inner strength I didn't know I had. My life changed drastically.

The Steps helped me to work on my character defects, get back my self-esteem, and actually like the person I was becoming. I came in contact with an enthusiastic crowd and discovered they were involved in service.

As I became active, I began to develop a vision of Al-Anon beyond the doors of my home group through continued activities involving working with others. I feel service has enhanced my program and has given me the opportunity to give back.

My first impression of service was that many loving and caring members, who in spite of sometimes seemingly impossible differences, embraced the concept of unity above all else. I have learned every one of my service positions by leaning on the experiences of others.

Over my years of service, I have observed that sometimes when we have service events, we see a lot of the same faces, which is comforting and reassuring. Also, there are always a handful of newcomers, and that is my vision of our future. I believe we are given the responsibility to share our experience without curbing their enthusiasm. From their fresh minds come wonderful and new ideas on how to help others find this way of life.

As I step away from my term as Delegate, I realize that I am forever changed. As my next phase of service unfolds, I pray that my actions reflect gratitude for having shared our common experiences beyond the doors of a home group.

Colleen G., Oregon

I came to Al-Anon without spirit, believing God had abandoned me. I thought I was being punished for the sins of my father, though I didn't know what they were. My 21-year marriage had become progressively degrading and had brought me to the gun. My exit route from this troubled life and what I believed I had control over, was a 357 magnum revolver and the decision to kill my husband, my children, and myself. I was at my bottom. I didn't know then, but the grace of God was holding me in His hand.

Through an array of miracles, such as the *Big Book* of Alcoholics Anonymous and program members in exactly the right places, I was led to my first Al-Anon meeting. After years of searching, I knew I was at the beginning of understanding, and I had found *home*! It seems cliché to say the 3 Cs today—cause, cure, control—but “I can't control it” were the first words I heard in meetings that began to change my life.

Today, I recognize quickly the first Three Steps as “I can't. He can. I will let Him.” When I give up control, I am accepting the moment as it is. There is nothing I can do to change the past, it is finished. I only have this moment.

“This” moment came when my mother was dying in a dreary room. I asked for a picture to cheer her wall. It appeared in seconds, as a charcoal-looking reflection from the window behind me. When my husband was in the last hours of his life, and I nearly dropped him. I was in anguish, feeling so alone when I heard a voice saying to me clearly, “Colleen, I gave you a chair.”

My Sponsor asks me frequently, “Is this a mountain or a mole hill, or are you pole vaulting over mouse droppings?” She tells me, “Your purpose in life is to be exactly where you are and be entirely in the moment.” When I am, I am on the bridge that will move me forward—living my spiritual principles: expanding my vision.

Participation in Al-Anon, my home group, my service positions, and in all my affairs has taught me I am not alone. I can contribute to any situation with a positive or negative approach. Moments of desperation will happen, but they too shall pass. I have learned, my truth is my reality as I see it, and can change as I allow more information to come into view. And today, after 42 years in Al-Anon, I am grateful for every member and opportunity that has changed and saved my life. Thank you all for being on bridges with me.

Solange R., Quebec East

The first year, when I arrived at the Conference, and I learned that I would have to deliver a three-minute message, I said to myself, “No way.” The second year, I said, “Maybe,” and today, here I am.

I lived the principle “Easy Does It” when I had a project at work. I needed a work place for September and I was in a panic in April. Taking it easy and trusting my Higher Power, I kept on going and preparing it, and do you know what? In June, my director told me that a local was available for me.

Last year, two days after I arrived at the Conference, I received a call from Quebec telling me that my mother was admitted to the hospital, and she had terminal liver and pancreas cancer. By living in the present moment and having my head and heart

where I have my feet, I was able to be attentive to my Conference so I could prepare a good report for my Area. She died a few days after my arrival in the company of all her family.

I shared this with two members during the Conference, which helped me a lot. What nice understanding we have between members! During the meals, I cried a few times, remembering all the food my mother had fixed for her 12 children. You let me live my grief without asking questions. What respect—another principle of Al-Anon.

In the second part of this message, I absolutely want to talk about service in Al-Anon. Service is like prayer and meditation—if you make it a habit, you cannot go without it. Service is giving to the future. In service, I can ask for help; I am never alone.

When I was still at work, we did not let a seven-year-old boy go with his drunk mother. We called his 14-year-old sister to pick him up. What a charge for her! A few days later, another mother forgot to pick up her daughter. We called the grandmother at seven o'clock at night. That is when I promised myself to help those children living with parents who had that terrible illness, alcoholism.

This is the reason pushing me to expand my vision. After my three years as Delegate, I have a project to go into a school in my Area and start an Alateen group, if needed. I already have three members ready to work with me as Alateen Group Sponsors. Have a nice day in serenity.

Bud S., Vermont

When I was just a few weeks into the program, I made a conscious (I think) decision to say “yes” to service. When I arrived at my first meeting, I had run out of any good ideas about how to live a meaningful life, and I adopted this simple principle so that there would be none of that wishy-washy wavering between “should I, or shouldn't I?” that marked my life to that point. It was that moment, when “yes” became my default, that my self-narrowed world started to widen and take on purpose and meaning.

Service helped me to feel like I was a part of an ongoing solution to the maddening disease of alcoholism; that I was helping others as I had been helped and that my participation had value.

Service has been my ever reliable foil for me. Who I am and who I will be has been better defined and extensively revealed as I have worked my program. The bonus, I'm sure, has been that my presence in service has given many others their own opportunities for growth. It would be foolish to think that there weren't a fair number of people talking about me with their Service Sponsors after a service meeting. I feel as if much of my good fortune might be the result of fervent prayers directed toward me by deeply spiritual Al-Anons under the direction of their wise Service Sponsors. For that, I will always be deeply grateful.

Many times, service has put me in the position to succeed spectacularly and to fail miserably. It's put me in amazing places and situations to talk about my Al-Anon experience, places like half-way houses, psych wards, transitional housing, church basements, and hotel convention halls. I've worked with young children from alcoholic households as a glorified baby sitter,

and helped the recently retired find new purpose and keep their horizons broad. I've sat in a hundred different coffee shops and drank gallons of coffee with dozens of beautiful people, all of whom were imminently precious and only wanted to do and be better by working the Twelve Steps of Al-Anon with a Sponsor who wanted that too.

Over the years, I've been to too many funerals and not enough weddings. I've been to too many hospitals and not enough fundraiser picnics. But for all of that, I can honestly say that the journey has been impossibly rich and deeply rewarding. Somewhere along the way, I came to understand that service was an attempt to express my gratitude through action, and that my heart continues to be filled with gratitude for all the gifts that have come from my spiritual journey in the Al-Anon fellowship.

Beverly W., Virginia

At the 2014 World Service Conference, we were asked, "What will Al-Anon be like on our 100th Anniversary?"

My initial response was that unless we focus on building healthy groups, there won't be much left of Al-Anon. Tradition One and Concept One emphasize the vital importance of the group. The goal is to have thriving groups, however, many are far from healthy. They make their own decisions without connection to a district or Area; and become isolated cults rather than healthy Al-Anon groups that fully practice the Fifth Tradition.

I feel that we have diluted Al-Anon over the years. In an effort to be politically correct and to increase our membership, we have registered groups and printed literature in the name of adult children, Native Americans, gays, parents, grandparents, military, etc.; and our membership numbers have not increased. By trying to be inclusive, we may have compromised the heart of Al-Anon.

As loving and caring people with great capacity to enable alcoholics, we have accepted alcoholics to become involved in service. The result has been the growth of groups that function like alcoholic families; and the non-alcoholic members either lack the depth of recovery to protect the group or they leave. Bill W.'s admonition that we keep the alcoholics out of our business has been ignored; and we are reaping the results.

We say, "Al-Anon Spoken Here," yet we use corporate and military terminology in lieu of the loving language of Al-Anon; and we pass that language on.

Al-Anon's actions must be principle-based in integrity. When we fail to protect the fellowship, we people please. Unless we are fearless about supporting our groups; unless we are fearless in building healthy groups; and unless we are willing to protect Al-Anon's principles, we may become a memory in 2051.

World Service Conference membership is a privilege that includes responsibility. For the good of Al-Anon as a whole, I encourage all to take a searching and fearless inventory of our practices, and to find the courage and the willingness to adjust in order to be reflective of our spiritual principles so that Al-Anon's 100th Anniversary celebration may be spectacular.

Sue C., Washington

Our World Service Conference theme, "Living our Spiritual Principles: Expanding our Vision," certainly has a different meaning for me now than when I entered Al-Anon Family Groups. Spiritual principles meant rigid rules set by a vengeful God. My original vision of hope and joy for my family had turned into a tunnel-vision of despair, with no one in sight except the problem drinker and me, a total failure.

An older couple invited me to an Al-Anon meeting. I did not think I had an alcoholic in my life. I just had a family member who would not stop drinking when I told him to!

I spent more time in parking lots than meetings. Eventually, I found a home group—and a Sponsor—that loved me in my "as is" condition. I was obsessed with keeping my son alive. I had good reason to fear because his excessive drinking landed him in the intensive care unit many times. My Sponsor encouraged me to start my day in silence, just listening. In a quiet moment, I heard the gentle voice of a loving God whisper that He loved my son more than I did, and if He ever chose to take him, I would be all right. In that moment, I started a journey of depending on the spiritual principles of our program to learn to trust a power greater than myself. My vision expanded, and my world grew larger.

Applying the Steps, Traditions, and Concepts taught me how to stay out of my son's business. As a result, our relationship mended and became stronger than before. Upon hearing I was elected Washington Area Delegate, my son said, "Mom, having an alcoholic son paid off because now you get to travel." In December 2014, our son passed away suddenly. After the initial grief, I was filled with gratitude for the years God gave him back to me so that Al-Anon could teach me how to set boundaries, make my amends, and love unconditionally.

Each morning, I ask God what His will is for me. Sometimes I argue and let Him know He is getting us into trouble. The spiritual principles define eternal truths, enlarge my world, and expand my vision of hope for the future of Al-Anon as a whole.

Like the whisper of years ago, I am all right. No one promised me this way of life would be easy, but I am wrapped in God's arms as He protects me from unspeakable loss.

My son's disease gave me a gift—you. No matter where I go, I have you because the spiritual principles of Al-Anon expanded my vision and did not allow alcoholism to destroy love in my family or me.

Christine S., West Virginia

Desperate to save my son from the disease of alcoholism, I walked into my first Al-Anon meeting. What I found there was a solution to my problems of living with the disease. Born into a family affected by alcoholism, marrying two drinkers, and seeing the disease in my son, I was the one who needed to be saved.

Our World Service Conference's theme is "Living Our Spiritual Principles: Expanding Our Vision." When I came to Al-Anon I had no belief in a personal God. I was beaten down by the disease of alcoholism and did not trust myself or anyone I knew. The God I knew from Sunday school had consistently let me down. I had few principles, spiritual or otherwise. I was

a rebel without a cause, both before and a long time into my Al-Anon program.

My spiritual journey in Al-Anon began in Pennsylvania. I moved to West Virginia 13 years ago to marry the wonderful man to whom I am still married. Thanks to strong sponsorship and a God I barely understand, our marriage has survived. It has been through the guiding spiritual principles I've found in Al-Anon that were so freely given to us. I have discovered a new design for living that works for me and countless others. In this process, I have become not a governor, but a trustworthy and now trusted servant.

Even after many years of service, I was caught off guard when my Thursday night group told me that I had volunteered to be Alternate Group Representative one night when I wasn't in attendance. Little did I know that years later it would lead to an Area Assembly where I would be elected Area Delegate. I've come a long way, baby!

My son perished from his disease in 2004. My younger son, just two years ago, attempted suicide in a blackout. He lacks a program of recovery. My God, my Sponsor, love from my Al-Anon family, and service work have supported me and carried me through these last ten years. Left to my own devices I, too, might have died.

God is constantly expanding my vision by giving me more than I believe I am capable of having or doing. I begin each day on my knees asking God for knowledge of His will for me this day and to give me the courage and power to carry that out. He knows my heart and my hope for Al-Anon and Alcoholics Anonymous to always be here for everyone who is in need of recovery because of the effects of this deadly disease.

Cathy T., Wisconsin and the Upper Peninsula of Michigan

When I first came to Al-Anon, I was scared, lonely, and hurt. I had little self-esteem and no confidence. Like so many of us, I was sure I was going crazy. By working the program, I experienced

a spiritual awakening. It was a slow, warm light that began inside me as I grew in recovery. I now know that it is my Higher Power who loves me unconditionally.

I saw many friendly faces when I went to my first meeting. I still go to the same meeting, my home group meeting. Carrying the message is sharing what works for me and how I use the program in all parts of my life. I have found that when I share my story, most of the times someone has come up to me and told me how much they could relate to what I said or how what I shared has helped them in some way.

I believe a change in attitude can go a long way in carrying a message. My behavior can speak volumes. I have worked hard to control my anger so that my children and husband no longer fear that I might lose my temper and strike out at them.

Service work is a large part of my recovery because "When I Got Busy, I Got Better" by getting out of my husband's business and focusing on myself. Service work has given me more self-confidence and allowed me to do new things. It helps that I am not judged by others in the program, and I have learned to take constructive criticism. I have also learned to ask for help when I need it.

"Living Our Spiritual Principles: Expanding Our Vision" for me means using the Steps, Traditions, and Concepts in all areas of my life. The longer I am in Al-Anon, the more I am able to use these, sometimes without knowing I am doing it. I use them when dealing with my family and the many issues and problems that arise. I try to remember that God put the people and problems in my life for a reason and try to be thankful that I am well enough to handle everything He puts in my life.

I am keeping my focus on me and my recovery by working the Steps, Traditions, and Concepts and sharing them with my Sponsor. I put my serenity first and detach from other's problems. I encourage my alcoholic loved ones by understanding that they are in as much or more pain from the disease as I am.

Serving as Delegate has been a wonderful growing experience. Thank you all for encouraging me to be a more loving, caring person.

INTERNATIONAL REPRESENTATIVES

Silke S., Germany

Hello dear friends, my name is Silke, and I am a grateful member of the Al-Anon fellowship in Germany. Thank you all, that I am allowed to participate at this World Service Conference.

The first time I was here in Virginia Beach was in 2010 as an International Al-Anon General Services Meeting (IAGSM) Delegate, and I can tell, I have changed a lot since that impressive worldwide meeting. Looking at the theme of this Conference, "Living Our Spiritual Principles: Expanding Our Vision," I can give a brief overview of how the spiritual principles affected my daily living and how this changed my perspective on life.

I married at age 20, despite already knowing that my loved one was drinking differently than others. It's not necessary to describe the following 13 years. He died of his disease of alcoholism at age 37, and I never attended Al-Anon meetings during

the whole period of those terrible years. After a while, I dated a man who had the experience with alcoholism in his family, and he suggested for me to attend Al-Anon meetings, because he couldn't stand my insane behavior any longer. Overprotecting, controlling, and making everything by myself without asking for help was my daily task.

I went to my first meeting and was amazed because some attendees were telling my story. It was not just me who had had a husband dying of alcoholism. I no longer was an exotic human being who was interested in a special kind of partnership. But the difference was, some of these women had found a solution to live their own lives. That sounded very exciting. To impress my new partner, I began to work the Steps shortly after I attended my first meeting. But I did it without a connection to

any Higher Power, and I had to realize that they put the Steps in this specific order for a reason. So, I had to learn that it was not important to seek a Higher Power. For me, it was more important to trust in the idea that there is something loving and caring that guides my life, to be quiet and listen, and to “Let Go and Let God.” I learned to mind my own business in all aspects of my life, and I am still a trainee.

Part of this process was to do Al-Anon service. If I want to welcome new members, I have to do Public Information. If a member asks me how to work the Steps, I am supposed to share my experience as a Sponsor. If I am not amused about the meeting topics, I have to find a solution in our Traditions and talk about it. That still is not an easy task for me, but it makes my life better. I have the feeling that living along our spiritual principles brings me nearer to that person, which my Higher Power wants me to be, “One Day at a Time.” Besides this, it opens the door to expand my vision for a life in the real “here and now.” I was dreaming my life—how it should be—from my childhood on, but due to our program, I have gained the ability to live one day at a time and enjoy what my Higher Power has in his pocket for me. In other words: I learned to live my dreams.

Since February 2015, I am the elected Speaker of the German Board of Trustees. That includes the position as Speaker of the Executive Committee and the Chairwoman of the German Al-Anon Association. This means that I have together with the Vice Chairwoman, and our Treasurer, the managerial responsibility for our two employees. I never expected that a woman of my age could learn so much within such a short period. This service showed me hidden resources that I never expected to have.

In addition, I'd like to share some history of the current situation of the Al-Anon Family Groups in Germany. In 1967, the first German-speaking group was registered at the WSO, and today we have about 650 groups. Our General Service Conference consists of about 50 members—Delegates, Trustees, and Speakers of the Committees, and some guests. We are working on our strategic plan to optimize the structure and reduce the service positions to a necessary level. We are still working with the same amount of service positions as we had in the early '90s, when the German fellowship consisted about 1,000 groups.

Money is a very hot topic, even in Germany, but if we have fewer groups, we have to expect less in the money basket. The other big project is the revision of our old *Service Manual*. A Work Group with five members has been working on it since last year. It's good to have the modern communication resources because that saves us a lot of money. We can work a lot via Skype and via mailing-lists instead of meeting face-to-face.

Last year, the General Service Conference gave the permission to start our new Web site, with a more modern design than the 20-year-old one. The team is still working at the refinement. But if you would like to have a look at it, it is possible under www.al-anon.de.

I hope that I learn at this Conference how we can work more effectively and sharpen our perspective for a good functioning Al-Anon service structure even if we have to minimize.

Nuala C., UK & Eire

My name is Nuala, and I am the General Secretary for the UK & Eire Structure. It's wonderful to be given the opportunity to attend the WSC 2015 and a privilege to be asked to share with you today.

I attended my first Al-Anon meeting in Ireland many years ago. My husband had found sobriety in A.A. and the treatment centre he attended told me that there was a programme of recovery available for me in Al-Anon. I was very resistant; believing that as the problem was his, I didn't need any help. As long as he stopped drinking, my life would be okay.

At my first meeting, I was frightened about what I would find when I entered the room and then realized that the members there were just the same as me. We were all there for the same reason. I saw smiling faces, there was lots of laughter, and I was confused.

In Al-Anon, I learned to live in the day and that I had choices. I was grateful for the opportunity of getting support and help to recover from the effects of alcoholism. I needed to get a Sponsor and start to make changes in my life. I found a Higher Power, a God of my understanding who would support me through every aspect of my life. I no longer felt alone. Al-Anon gave me a set of principles to use in my life, something I had not experienced before.

I took on the role of General Secretary for the UK & Eire Structure in June 2007. I found the position both challenging and exciting. The role forced me to be more patient and tolerant. I learn how to bring my Al-Anon principles into the job, listen to the questions, and often debate the best way forward with staff and other members. The job involves supporting the Executive Committee and the General Service Board and creating a link between them and the groups. I learned to hold a lot of information and bring that to all discussions without expecting perfection from myself or the staff. My husband calls me his “compliance officer”! I learned to have a broader view of Al-Anon in the UK & Eire as a whole.

I intend to retire this year after our annual Conference in September. I am very grateful for the experience I have gained, and I am sure the next person in the role will have the love, support, and good wishes of the members that I have had over the last eight years. I have tried to pass on to staff and members worried about the change that it can be a good thing and to look at this change in a positive light for Al-Anon as a whole.

Al-Anon in the UK & Eire became active with the first groups starting in the 1950s. In 1970, we incorporated, opened our first office, and held our first Conference. There are now 30 Areas, and approximately 800 groups.

Each Area sends a Delegate to Conference, and they serve a three-year term.

The General Service Board (GSB) is made up of Trustees of Al-Anon Family Groups UK & Eire who may have a service role as a chairman of a Standing Committee or be a Regional Trustee. There are six Regional Trustees whose remit (responsibility) is to bring regional diversity to the Board. The General Secretary is also a Trustee. The GSB meets three times a year.

One of the Trustees of the General Service Board serves as International Al-Anon General Service Meeting Delegate.

The Executive Committee is composed of past Trustees and the Chairman of the Finance Committee, also a Trustee. The Chairman of the Executive Committee serves as the Vice Chairman of the GSB. The Finance Committee now meets alongside the Executive Committee and is known as the Finance Sub-Group.

Following the WSO model, TEAM events were set up in the structure, the first being held in Cork, Ireland in April 2013. Three further TEAM events have now been held with several more planned.

In June 2013, we purchased a new property to house the General Service Office. We used the World Service Office (WSO) Motion on property to bring to the annual Conference to agree to the purchase. We follow the principle of providing ample resources and an excellent light and high quality environment for our staff and volunteers. We are close to all amenities and there is a good travel network for access to the office. This was very important for us to facilitate staff and volunteers getting to the office. Following the purchase, we set up an Executive Committee on Property Management similar to the WSO model.

The Standing Committees work hard. The Conference and Public Information Committees meet at the GSO. The Editorial Committee produced our first electronic magazine, *Al-Anon Today*, in the spring of 2014. This is a quarterly magazine which has been made available to members on our Web site.

Alateen membership and groups continue to fluctuate, but we are exploring new ways to engage young people in the fellowship.

Our General Service Office is the hub of all activity in our Structure. Committee meetings are mostly held at weekends and there is a lot of work generated by the organization of Conference and TEAM Events. We have recently updated our Web site and find that newcomers are more likely to access meeting details via the Web site than to make a phone call to the Helpline. We are developing the Web site to include details of jobs available at the General Service Office which can be done by volunteers. We are also working on a more structured use of volunteers in the office. We have set up the intranet to communicate more effectively and efficiently with Area Delegates, Trustees, Committees, and Task Forces and looking at the possibility of using social media. We use an external consultant to assist us in navigating change and expanding our vision of the fellowship for the future.

Lourdes C., Mexico

Hello, I am Lulu. I'm a relative of alcoholics; that's why I'm in Al-Anon. When I came to the program, I had no idea what Al-Anon would mean in my life. Growing up in an alcoholic home had made me sad, insecure, and in a lot of pain. After a while, I realized that the spread of alcoholism was not a decision, but rather a condition. Trust was not easy, but it was what I really needed—trust in my colleagues, in the program, and in my Higher Power. I came to Al-Anon just before I married. I stayed because I thought my attitude change would stop my husband's drinking.

When someone said service was part of recovery, I volunteered to serve even though it was hard to interact with others. My first service was volunteering to take snacks, and for some time, that was the only thing I could do. After ten years in the program, I was widowed, and I resented God, life, and Al-Anon. It was not what I expected, so I stopped attending the group for two years. Two of my friends always invited me to return. I thank them that I was given the message several times, and thanks to that, I'm here today.

When I returned to the group, I was offered to serve again. After a while, I was invited to be Group Representative. I could not believe they voted for me because I had voted for another of my fellows. Before participating in any election, in my prayers, I always ask that my Higher Power give service to those most in need. At that time, He told me that I was who needed it most. After that, I was elected as District Representative, then as Area Treasurer, then as an Alternate Delegate, then as Delegate, and currently as a Regional Trustee of Region Five.

Al-Anon has taught me to discover a new person. The big picture of my life has changed every day. I know I'm not alone anymore because I can now see my life with joy, with the freedom to live that gives me the Steps. Traditions have taught me that unity and service are fundamental parts of my growth and help me to close the triangle and have a balance in my life.

Now, I have the opportunity to return the good I have received through gratitude, and which led me to walk into the service structure. Today, I am aware of the commitment it represents and the responsibility I have as President of the Board. One more time, God gives me the confidence to serve and the gift of meeting so many wonderful people like you all.

Currently, Al-Anon in Mexico has more than 3,000 groups (in 37 Areas) of which 370 are Alateen. In our General Service Office (GSO), we have a total of 16 employees, including the manager. Our office is registered in the Tax Administration System, the tax authorized donees, this relieves us from paying income tax.

Last year, we started with the implementation of the Task and Thought Forces, which we adapted to our structure making significant changes when we encouraged the Delegates to generate new ideas and capture the needs of the zones. The results of this first year are positive. Annually, in our country, we hold the Simultaneous National Congress. Its purpose is to promote the unity of Al-Anon through a simultaneous meeting of its members in an attempt to share our program in a physical and spiritual manner, eliminating distances, making shorter the time, and overcoming personal obstacles.

In October, we will be celebrating the 25th Simultaneous National Congress. The additional gift of this beautiful event is the remnant that is sent to our GSO. To counter the influence of other trends that have arisen in our country, we are working with the project "Here we speak Al-Anon" which grew out of the "Seven Basic Points" and which in turn arises from the "Where are we going" project that began in our GSO.

The main activities in our country are the implementation of workshops in groups, making them dynamic, and this is helping us to preserve the essence of our program, strengthening our structure, and prevents confusion with other philosophies.

Last year, we started working with the on-line group directory. This is intended to update all groups' data in Mexico and have information as accurate as possible. This works by a password that is supplied to the secretaries of each zone, so they can make changes of schedules and days of the groups' meetings in their zone. A group's discharge and termination can only be made by the GSO through the Delegates, with the support of its zone.

In March, we held our 42nd Assembly National Service Conference in Mexico City attended by 37 Delegates and members of the Board of Trustees, Executive Committee, Select Committee presidents, and staff members. For us, the Assembly is the body legally recognized by the state as a Civil Association and each member is a partner. On the other hand, the Conference deals with traditional matters and is governed by the Conference Charter. That's why our event is divided into two parts. First we carry out the Assembly and then the Conference, both with the same members.

This year, we had positive financial results in spite of the decrease of income in general. This year, in July, we will hold our Regional Service Seminar in the city of Campeche, that belongs to Region Five and of which I am Regional Trustee. The slogan to be used is: "Service, turning the light on that others may continue." Up until now, 1,600 badges have been requested and we expect attendance of 4,000 people. Next year, we will hold the Eighth National Convention, of which I am the coordinator and we are working with planning.

I thank God for this gift of being at this 55th WSC and thank you for being part of this wonderful experience. I will take you always in my heart.

OPENING DINNER SPEAKER

Roger C., Executive Committee

My name is Roger C., and I am a member of the Executive Committee at the World Service Office. My home group meets in Sherwood Park, Alberta. I would like to thank the Conference Leadership Team for inviting me to speak at this Opening Dinner for the 55th World Service Conference.

Before I start my story, I need to mention that my wife, who is the alcoholic in my life, found sobriety thanks to her Higher Power and Alcoholics Anonymous. They succeeded where I failed! I don't intend to tell my wife's story, but our stories are intertwined and I need to tell how I was affected by some of the things in her life. Thanks to the programs of Al-Anon and Alcoholics Anonymous, we are still married and celebrated 45 years of marriage last July. I believe that is a miracle—I remember when we celebrated our 13th anniversary and we had a party. Everyone was congratulating us on our anniversary, and all I could think was that there would not be a 14th anniversary. That was the low point in our relationship, and things were pretty bad.

I grew up on a farm on the borders between England and South Wales. I never regarded my home as an alcoholic home, but when I hear members sharing about what it is like grow-

ing up in an alcoholic home, a lot of the behavior sounds just like what was happening in my home, but there was not a lot of alcohol involved. My father was very controlling and judgmental. Frequently, I would argue with him—we never had discussions; it was always an argument. Sometimes he would get very angry and go into a rage and take it out on everyone else. Then, I would have my mother blaming me because I had upset my father. In this environment, I learned to be a people pleaser and a perfectionist. At school, I worked hard and did well, but was never top of the class. I always felt that I should have done better.

My grandmother provided my religious influence. I am not sure what she actually said, but what I heard was, "God knows exactly what you are doing and if you do something wrong, he will punish you." Looking back, I can see that my main motivator was fear. I was afraid of my father; at school, I was afraid of not doing well enough; and I feared my God. I thought all this was normal—my life as a teenager was limited to school and helping on the farm. It was many years later when I realized that I had missed out on most of the things that teenagers do.

After high school, I moved away from home to attend the University of Manchester. I started to have a social life and met my wife-to-be. I thought we were so different—I was quiet and shy, and she was very confident and outgoing, but in fact we were really very similar. We both suffered from low self-esteem, we just had different ways of dealing with it. Alcohol played a part in our social life, and we had many good times. In fact, I can only remember one time when alcohol was a problem and that was when I had too much to drink.

We were married while I was a graduate student in London and our first year of marriage was tempestuous. My wife taught in an inner London school that included race riots at recess and when she came home she would have a drink or two to deal with the stress. We had many arguments over her drinking, but when that bottle was empty, I was the one who went out and bought another. I just thought it was one of the things I should do for my new bride.

After a year, we moved to North Yorkshire. I had a job and my wife taught at school where the students opened doors for teachers and life appeared to become normal. She became pregnant but things went wrong during the delivery and our baby daughter was stillborn. This was devastating. We were not prepared to deal with the grief and received very little help. Even though we had two healthy children quite quickly, my wife struggled with the loss of our first child for many years. The disease of alcoholism is cunning, baffling, powerful, and patient. Gradually, alcohol played an increasing role in our lives, and I was not even aware of what was happening. I thought all her problems were due to depression. Looking back, I cannot understand how I did not see what was staring me in the face.

In 1981, we moved to Alberta. I had a job, the kids went to school, and my wife just stayed at home and drank. Friends would call me at work and ask if I knew how much she was drinking. I didn't, but decided that I should make it my business to find out. So, we started the game of hide and seek with her bottles—we were both very good at that. However, I knew it was pointless to pour the booze away, so when I found a bot-

tle, I simply made a mental note so that I could figure out how much she was drinking. I became obsessed with her drinking. I had no idea what to do. I talked to our doctor and the minister at church and eventually we attended an information series at our local alcohol and drug abuse center. It was there that I first heard about Al-Anon. There was an Al-Anon speaker; I have to confess that I did not hear her message—I was sitting there thinking that my life would be wonderful if only “she” would stop drinking.

My wife started going to A.A. meetings. She struggled with the program and eventually, as a result of an impaired driving charge, she entered a treatment program. I attended the family program and it was there, thanks to the persistence of an Al-Anon member who was also a client, that I finally heard the Al-Anon message. I attended my first meeting in the treatment centre. The following Friday, I started regular attendance at my home group. You accepted me and understood what was happening in my life because you had been there. I noticed that you were coping with life better than I was, and I kept coming back because I wanted what you had. My progress in the program was slow because rather than do what you suggested, I tried to do everything myself. Eventually, I learned to trust you, to trust my God, and to trust me. You encouraged me to get involved and service has been part of my recovery almost from the start.

Our Conference theme, “Living Our Spiritual Principles: Expanding Our Vision,” speaks to me about how I need to work my program. I have to apply spiritual principles to all aspects of my life, and as I do, so I grow and my vision for me expands. I used to wonder what these principles were and then I came across a list of principles, one for each Step. Soon after, when I found similar lists for the Traditions and Concepts, I thought I had found the key to our program. These lists were helpful, but I discovered that my program is more than 12 or even 36 words. We talk about “working” the program, and I discovered that I have to figure out what the principles are and how they apply to my life.

I was a Panel 35 Delegate, and I remember the start of my first Conference. Thanks to my over-developed sense of responsibility, I felt overwhelmed because the future of Al-Anon was in my hands. I soon realized that there were 95 other voting members and that all I needed to do was listen, connect with my Higher Power, express my point of view, and vote my conscience. That Conference in 1995 was held in the Tarrytown New York Hilton—and someone pointed out the seat where Lois, our cofounder, used to sit during earlier Conferences. I felt

very connected to the roots of our fellowship especially when we visited Stepping Stones. My third Conference was the first to be held in Virginia Beach, and I visited our new World Service Office that had been built to serve the fellowship for years to come. This was a time of great change. The dream of relocating and having our own building came out of the difficulties of finding accommodation in New York City and there were several years of discussion throughout the fellowship before the dream became a plan. Finally, the 1994 WSC accepted Virginia Beach as the site for relocation and authorized ownership of real property. During my time as Delegate, the plan was implemented and from my perspective, everything went smoothly thanks to all the work of our staff and volunteers. In addition to relocation, a new structure was adopted for the WSO; we spent a lot of time puzzling over organization charts and trying to figure out what the solid and dotted lines meant. Accompanying all this were significant staff changes. Ric B. attended all three Conferences, but had three different roles. In 1995, he was Chairperson of the Board; in 1996, he was Executive Director in Training; and in 1997, he was Executive Director. Claire R. was Institutions Administrator in 1995 and 1996 and then became Associate Director Public Outreach. Also in 1996, Pat Q. appeared as a new staff member.

Twenty years ago, the dual member policy seemed to be a discussion at every WSC. In 1996, we had two motions; one asking for a three-year moratorium on discussion of dual membership and another requesting the Policy Committee to consider changing the policy. Both motions were eventually withdrawn, but they reflected the feelings of the Conference—some Conference members were tired of having the same discussion year after year and others wanted to change the policy. In 1997, the dual member policy was submitted as a Timely Topic (similar to our Chosen Agenda Items), but I was pleased when it was not selected. However, the topics that were not selected were discussed in break-out sessions and guess which one I got to chair!

There have been changes over the years. Information is available in a timelier manner and today we come to the Conference better informed than in my time as Delegate. We also have fewer motions now—in 1995, we had 28 motions and would have really benefited from using electronic voting. Today, we spend more time talking to one another and reasoning things out and less time making and debating motions. I look forward to the next four days as we all live our spiritual principles while we expand the vision for Al-Anon Family Groups worldwide.

SPIRITUAL SPEAKERS

Vali F., Panel 53, Arizona

My name is Vali F., Panel 53, Arizona, and I'm a grateful member of the worldwide fellowship of Al-Anon. I feel honored to be asked to speak at this, my last Conference. I believe I owe my attendance here, in significant part, to the wonderful Sponsors who have walked with me on my recovery journey, encouraged

me to connect with my Higher Power, and invited me to be of service. So, I will start with my second Sponsor's suggestion for sharing: “Ask God to help me say the right words, take away the wrong words and help translate, if I screw up.” Since my story is primarily about my coming to believe my Higher Power is in charge and wants what is best for me, I trust we're in good hands.

I was born into the multi-generational family disease of alcoholism, punctuated with busyness, resentment, abuse, lies, and “he-o-graphics”; and topped with a strong dose of control. My parents, like their parents before them, had no tools to behave differently and I’m grateful today, that because of Al-Anon, I feel only love and compassion for them both. Al-Anon enabled me to restore my relationship with my father before he died suddenly two years ago and to share an ongoing good connection with my mother.

That said, growing up in the disease, I developed a big hole inside me—a persistent sense of being not good enough, not worthwhile or as a Past Delegate recently shared, “an imposter” amongst those I considered more capable, kind, or intelligent. Starting as a teenager, I sought to fill this hole with serial, and I’ll admit frequently parallel, relationships with men. In my relationships, I took on the complementary roles of chameleon and controller: At once seeking to please my partner and to gain that illusive sense of security never available in the disease.

These habits led me to the doors of Al-Anon. Absolutely alone in my disease, actively lying to the three people who mattered most to me in the world—and inviting others I loved to do the same—I was unable to find answers through counseling. Although I had realized I was the problem, I felt utterly hopeless that I could ever change. Fortunately, my counselor unwittingly guided me to the doors of Al-Anon. She did not know about the program, but she strongly suggested I needed someone to turn to for support besides those immediately caught up in my latest and most hurtful drama. Fortunately, thanks to public outreach efforts, I found words which spoke to me on an Al-Anon Web site and I went to my first meeting.

I am graced to have walked into my first meeting where I felt an immediate sense of being “home,” relief really, as I discovered there were people who understood, who shared the same feelings, even the “crazy”—that experience of knowing what I am doing is harmful but being unable to stop. My first year in Al-Anon was both a wonderful experience and a continuation of my previous behaviors. I was too scared that first year to get a Sponsor. I was afraid if I shared all the horrible things I believed myself to be and to have done, you would ask me to leave and that was a possibility I didn’t feel I could withstand.

Of course, being a very competent and self-reliant person, I did attempt the Steps myself—how hard could they be? I stalled on the Fourth Step. It was service that gave me the courage to approach a Sponsor. I had moved from Calgary to Arizona and had found a healthy meeting. The group needed a Group Representative and I was confident I could “help.” Being a good Al-Anon, I also knew it was inappropriate to be in service and not to have a Sponsor.

And so, my journey in the Steps began. I am grateful to my first Sponsor who loved me, listened to my first Fourth Step, and then, to my shock, suggested I seemed a little hard on myself. Yet, it was actually my second Sponsor who opened up my experience with a Power greater than myself. It was she who offered me the opportunity to define my own Higher Power in the Second Step. I embraced the exercise and discovered a wonderful God of my understanding who would, at each fork in life, point out the easy path and then travel with me when I chose, as

I often did, the path of *greatest* resistance. I am grateful for that God, because I was able to gather strength from knowing there was a caring source of knowledge available to me, when needed.

Of course, I was still mostly self-reliant, reluctant to turn much over. My first conscious chance came, or was handed to me as I believe often happens as we work the Steps, one afternoon when a small “impossibility” arose. Our blended family of seven was on our way to a play. My now-husband’s-son was performing in it at a small downtown theater. As we started the journey, I asked my husband whether he had purchased the tickets. I had already learned, if my husband said he was going to do something, then my responsibility was to stay out of his business. I have to admit, I nearly choked on that commitment when he said “no.” The usual thoughts began to swirl in my head. Seriously, we were on our way. Curtains rise in less than one hour! No tickets? Then, just as quickly, I realized this was a Step Three opportunity—I could turn this over. While I didn’t truly believe we would get the tickets, at least, I wouldn’t be all stressed out and obsessing the whole trip. So I did.

To make a long story short, God did produce the tickets. And, in doing so, showed me His sense of humor because the tickets did not come from the box office—they were, not surprisingly, sold out—but rather (yes, this is a true story) from a priest who had one group of students cancel, leaving him with, you guessed it, seven tickets.

In the years since that first Step Three moment, I have experienced many times when God has delivered the seemingly impossible. For instance, one afternoon I had overbooked myself enormously—one of my ongoing character defects. When I texted a program friend saying, “I don’t think I can get it all done,” he calmly stated, “God can slow down time.” I answered him with a disbelieving smiley and then thought, why not? Why couldn’t God slow down time? So, I let go and you know what happened: despite all realistic calculations indicating I could not go everywhere and do everything I had planned, I did.

As my trust grew, I turned to God for bigger concerns, such as gaining clarity on whether I was doing the right thing in a parental battle to ensure the safety and wellbeing of my daughter’s best friend, whose home had become unsafe due to the disease. I was struggling enormously with the decision to serve her mother with court papers to remove her rights. Fortunately, I had enough recovery to ask others to pray with me and, for the first time, I could drop to my knees for guidance.

That girl, who grew up in the disease, became our daughter and despite our genuine question as to whether she would finish high school, is now completing her Masters in Counseling, with a focus on helping preteen-agers overcome the challenges of difficult childhoods. I am so proud of her and truly awed by God’s plan.

Although my Step Three experiences have been, and continue to be, amazing, Steps Six and Seven remain two of my favorite Steps, because it was through them that I have learned my true powerlessness. They taught me I am not only powerless over others, but completely powerless over myself as well. In that discovery, I found freedom and hope. Knowing the God of my understanding is the only force powerful enough to stop my crazy behavior

gave me the ability in Steps Eight and Nine to forgive not only others but myself. I was finally relieved of the burden of shame that had haunted me for years over my unfair treatment of men and the harm my behavior had caused my biological daughter.

While I have been incredibly transformed by the Steps, and continue to grow and evolve in them with each revisit, the Traditions and Concepts have been equally influential in my progression from insecure, self-centered child to caring, serene adult. These tools I have learned primarily through service, particularly when working with sponsees who “coincidentally” are on the precious Tradition or Concept I need to understand.

For instance, this year I was privileged to chair a World Service Conference Thought Force. As it turns out, I had just received the latest Executive Committee response when I met with one of my sponsees, who was working Concept Two. Together we read in *Reaching for Personal Freedom* (P-92), “Concept Two inspires me to learn to delegate. In the past, I believed I was the only one who had a grasp of the truth.” Suddenly, I realized what I had to do differently in this iteration. I organized a couple of conference calls with the incredible Delegates, Trustees, and staff on my Thought Force, vowing to turn the results over to God. And, what amazing results developed. The Thought Force delivered a wealth of wonderful ideas. Together, we created a presentation far exceeding my singular perspective and of which we can all be truly proud. The experience gave me another proof point in my ongoing effort to turn my will and *entire* life over to the care of God as I understand him.

Which leads me, inevitably, back to the core of my program—God. Recently in my second-home-group meeting, which is a literature meeting, someone read an amazing paragraph from *Discovering Choices* (B-30), page 223, describing a meditation about a person riding a bicycle on a very high wire with no safety net. “The bicycle had a basket, and there was someone serenely sitting in it, while the person riding the bike peddled across the wide expanse of thin wire. I was amazed at the serenity and the complete trust of the person in the basket. Then God revealed ... He was riding the bike, and that I must be willing to be the person in the basket.” When I heard the reading, I literally felt my breath catch. My turn to share occurred shortly afterwards but I was as yet unable to put my profound sense of awakening into words. Only later did I realize the reason I was so moved by this passage—it represented a fundamental shift in my perspective of the God of my understanding. No longer was my Higher Power available only as an occasional guidepost and supportive travel mate for my journey. Instead, I realized God had the power to be *the* constant force underlying every action in my life. The feeling of connection was indescribable.

So today, I’m no longer looking for the God of my understanding to answer specific prayers, but rather to provide steady guidance. Today more lights are going on, the hallway before me is opening wider. I see that even though there is darkness, there are windows ahead that can shine in my Higher Power’s light. I have a chance to pull up the blinds on each window and let the full power of God shine into the hall, but only when I become willing to take a few steps in the dark. With the tools of the Al-Anon program and the faith in the God of my understanding, you have all helped me to grow. I am often able today

to trust the darkness and open the next blind.

Thank you for walking with me in my journey.

Bud S., Panel 53, Vermont

I want to thank my peers for giving me this honor of sharing a small bit of my experience, strength, and hope at this, the last meal that we’ll all share together. I’ve been to two other dinners here where we all shared our last meal together, as we said goodbye to Panels 51 and 52. It’s a bittersweet moment for me, to be sure.

As the “spiritual speaker,” I’m not sure that I have much to offer such an august assembly. Twenty minutes is a hopelessly paltry amount of time for me to share how much my life has been enriched by the Al-Anon program. What I learned, who I’ve met, where I’ve been, what I’ve done in my time in these rooms would take a fair amount of time; and your tolerance for me would be well-tested before I could scratch the surface. But I am and will always be deeply grateful to have the time I do have with you.

I love the theme of this year’s Conference, “Living Our Spiritual Principles: Expanding Our Vision,” because of its focus on what lies ahead. When I get asked to speak at an Al-Anon function, I am often asked to share “my story,” which is primarily about my past and how I got here. It’s undeniable that there is something enchanting about personal histories: to hear that from the depths of despair that comes with living with the active disease of alcoholism, that redemption can be found by finding and embracing the Al-Anon program. My story is really no different. I came to Al-Anon in desperation and despair. I found hope at my first meeting. I found recovery in the fellowship, the literature, and in the Three Legacies. However, our Conference Theme is not about the past, but instead, it’s a call to look to the future.

Obviously, I don’t have a story about my future, but I do have intent. There are things I want to accomplish, goals to reach, defects to be removed, people to meet, and defects to be removed. I want to continue to learn and grow with the love and guidance of my Higher Power in the time that’s in front of me (which I hope is many years). However, all of these intentions about my future hinge on one thing: my willingness to take risks.

When I was relatively new to program, I heard someone share at a meeting that God was spelled R.I.S.K. I had no real idea what that meant. I knew people shared that you can pick anything to be your Higher Power, but I couldn’t see how a determination of potential value versus possible loss could be a Higher Power. Still, I heard it from someone at a meeting and so I gave it a good hard think. With time, I started to see what that speaker might have meant: that I would have to take risks if there would be any hope at all for my life getting any better.

I can tell you that I wasn’t keen on the idea of taking risks when I got here. I was more keen on the idea of stability (if I could get it), or at least controlled chaos. I thought active alcoholism was doing plenty in the “risky” behavior department and that my job was to apply (or possibly enforce) stability on anyone within my sphere of influence. But all that did was make my life even more unmanageable.

I had been to a few meetings before I heard that statement about risk, and I had already seen evidence of what taking risks could do for me. Going to that first Al-Anon meeting at the request of a very concerned professional—that was a risk. Going to the second meeting was another. Taking a service commitment after three meetings was another risk I took, (a one-year treasurer's commitment, with an annual gross income of \$300. Well, it seemed like a big risk at the time).

When I looked at how my life was getting better and how having the courage to take the risk made that possible, I started to see the pattern. It turns out that taking risks would always present opportunities for either growth or improvement. To make my life better, it had to change; that means risking the familiar for the unfamiliar. Fortunately, the program helped me to see that the security of a miserable familiarity was worth the risk of an unfamiliarity that could improve the quality of my life. Basically, before I came to Al-Anon, I was afraid of taking risks with my life because I thought that something terrible would happen, but something terrible was already happening: I wasn't living my life with a whole heart.

Fortunately for me, I found that even a shaky, faltering belief and faith in a Higher Power would give me the energy I would need to take the risk and then find ways to succeed—or, if not succeed, at least how to deal with my failures and disappointments with grace and dignity. That, by taking the risk, I would find humility in any result, knowing that the results were in my Higher Power's hands the whole time and not in mine. So it turned out that having a deep and abiding faith in God that would come and go was still enough to give me the courage to stand on the firing line of life and attempt the new and uncomfortable.

What an amazing gift! And it's only now, in retrospect, that I can see more clearly how it all worked for me. History is that way, isn't it? The further away I am from an event, the more I can understand what happened. From my perspective today, I can see that I took risks because I believed what you told me. I was told that being in service would be risky but worth it; that intimate relationships would be risky but worth it. That, asking for what I want was risky but my chances of getting what I want would go way up—and it would be worth it. So I made a decision early on in program to say "yes" to service. No wishy-washy maybes or second guessing, but a commitment to look at every risk presented by service as an opportunity for growth—and a way to show my love and gratitude for the program through the action of that service.

Now, after I say "yes" to a service commitment, I would be dishonest if I said I hadn't struggled with self-doubt and second guessing afterwards. I've always struggled with that, but I believe deeply in the earnestness of my heart and the frailty of my humanity that between those two things, I am either doing my best to be the person I want to be or I just don't know any better—that I might be operating under some form of self-delusion (which is always a possibility).

So, "my story" for the last 19 years in Al-Anon has been one of taking risks and growing. Today, many of the intentions I had when I started this journey have become the realities of my life. Like the trunk of a growing tree, the rings of growth

broaden and strengthen me. Based on these actualities, my faith in myself and my Higher Power deepen. Risks become easier, growth becomes inevitable, character is built, life is enriched.

As part of my outside profession, I get to do research and familiarize myself with different businesses and services. One of my clients is a cloud computing provider, and I was reading about a process in computer coding called "Dev Ops." What it means is that there are two parts to creating viable software. The first part, "Dev, or development" concentrates on innovating the software, while "Ops, or operations" tries to find ways to stabilize the software. So when I get an update on my phone or computer, it usually provides me with a list of new "features and fixes." I could see how this, in many ways, parallels what I want to do with my program as I look to the future. On the one hand, I want to stabilize my life—find a beautiful and supportive partner with whom I can share my life (check); find a wonderful home in the woods (check); work at a decent job that doesn't make me miserable (room for growth). On the other hand, in order to grow, in order to improve, in order to more completely realize my potential, then I have to innovate. This in turn will destabilize my life for a little while. I might be put in a place of discomfort or anxiety; I might have to endure criticism and judgment from those who don't understand what I'm doing. But in the end, I get to live my life with intention and with a whole heart.

Innovation is the child of vision. Risk and temporary instability are its grandchildren.

That is my intent. What I envision. This is the focal point of my prayers to my Higher Power: To grant me the courage to change the things I can; to give me the power to carry out His will. Basically, to not find a rut and decorate it and pretend that the false security and familiarity of that rut would ever be my Higher Power's wish for me.

Something I read early in Al-Anon has stuck with me through the years: "To Do Nothing Is Impossible." Through my passivity and complacency, I am still doing something, but this attitude just caters to my compulsion for victimhood. Through the gifts of the program, I am determined to not "tip-toe through life just to arrive safely at death."

As I shut the door on this part of my life and recovery, I can tell you that when I stood for Delegate, in my heart I was assured that I was doing the right thing. I was scared, I was anxious, but I was willing. Moving forward, my intent is to not let fear dictate the parameters of my life. I want to continue to mold and form my vision, innovate my life, and take the risk, knowing that, with God's help, it can be stabilized again and can get better. And, then, look to my vision and grow some more.

Thank you again for your undying love, your immense trust, and your unwavering service. I know that being in your company has made me more useful to my Higher Power and to the fellowship. These three years have been years of growth, enlightenment, and joy. All because I took a risk.

CLOSING SESSION

On the last afternoon of the Conference, members were asked to take a few minutes to think about and record, “What one session or activity that took place during the week fulfilled either the Conference theme or one of the Conference goals for you and why?”

The Chairperson of the Board then shared some of her thoughts and observations. “The 2015 World Service Conference theme of ‘Living Our Spiritual Principles: Expanding Our Vision’ encouraged us to dream expansively while being guided by our spiritual principles.

“On Monday, I encouraged you to contemplate and identify the spiritual principles found in all discussions, presentations, and even in controversy. I heard and observed these principles in the discussions. I am so humbled by the World Service Conference (WSC) members who have demonstrated courage and strength by coming to the microphone to speak their truth. I mentioned in my welcome letter that I believe that in the controversy our Higher Power is present. I *know* this Unseen Member was participating and providing guidance this week.

“During the Finance Committee breakout session, we had an opportunity at the end to briefly talk about an Area dream. A member was unsure of what to do to achieve her Area dream. Another began to share ideas, and then another. In a matter of minutes, there was creative direction through sharing experience, strength, and hope. When we talk to each other, we find that our vision expands because we are our abundant resources.

“There were many discussions and decisions that were balanced by what is best for Al-Anon Family Groups worldwide. That is a demonstration of compassion, generosity and understanding. I hope you have gained more tools and insights to help you carry these topics to the fellowship.

“As the Conference began, I encouraged you to reach inward to spiritually expand outward. For me, this is about sensing my truth, responding without fear or limits, changing the conversation, and saying ‘I’m worth my dreams.’ In Bill W.’s ‘Essay on Leadership,’ he wrote that ‘God has endowed human beings with considerable capability for foresight and evidently expects us to use it.’ It is with true humility that we recognize the source of this courage and strength. Let’s make our dreams happen. I know I will as I continue on my journey.”

The Conference Chairperson, closed the session by saying, “You’ve all worked very hard. I think you should give yourself a round of applause and congratulations. I know you worked diligently before you arrived at Conference in order to be ready; and we have worked hard this week here, but the true work begins when you leave here as you go back to your Area. You are the bridge of communication and it is important that you share your passion, the principles, and the processes that we practiced here this week.”

Following the Closing Dinner, scroll presentations to the Panel 53 Delegates, and the Spiritual Speakers, the Conference Chairperson rapped her gavel on the lectern to close the 55th World Service Conference.

Paula B.

Chairperson, Board of Trustees

Tina B.

Conference Chairperson, Trustee

VISIT TO STEPPING STONES

When the World Service Office was located in New York City, Conference members visited Stepping Stones once every three years (the birthplace of the Al-Anon Clearing House as we know it today and the home of Lois and Bill W., cofounders of Al-Anon and A.A. respectively). Since moving from New York to Virginia in 1996, Conference members have continued to visit Stepping Stones once per term. This was accomplished by holding the World Service Conference (WSC) in the New York City area.

Due to the rising costs of holding the Conference in the New York City area, the Board of Trustees approved holding the 2015 Conference in Virginia Beach, with an *optional* trip to visit Stepping Stones on Saturday, April 25. Because the trip/visit was not part of the WSC, Conference members could choose to opt out of visiting Stepping Stones.

Upon the arrival of the 58 Conference members, the Executive Director of Stepping Stones shared some of the history about the home.



FLOOR DISCUSSIONS

AFG Connects Announcements

In an earlier session at the 2015 World Service Conference (WSC), the Executive Director presented information in a session entitled “WSO Service Update.” (See page 35 for the session.) One of the updates was that there would be a shift in electronic communication platforms from e-Communities to AFG Connects. It was further noted that AFG Connects *could* allow any AI-Anon member to subscribe to announcements that are sent out by the World Service Office *if the World Service Conference agrees*.

As the discussion regarding AFG Connects continued in a session of Unanswered Questions, a Delegate asked if there was enough time for the Conference to discuss and vote on a motion to allow members to have access to the announcement section of AFG Connects.

No motion is on the floor, but we all have the procedure for floor motions in the Conference Procedures Booklet. We’ve always had the ability to make a floor motion. The Conference has generally said that we want answers to the five Knowledge-Based Decision-Making (KBDM) questions before acting. You don’t have to do KBDM. If you have enough information, you can make a motion, have a second, and give it to the Conference Chairperson who will see if it can fit on the agenda. Even if you vote on it this year, we can’t promise that we’ll have a process to permit members to subscribe immediately. We have to find a way to do it. If you want to tell the staff now that this is the next thing you want us to do once AFG Connects is up and running, you can pass a motion to that effect.

Later during Conference, members received copies of the Knowledge-Based Decision-Making (KBDM) questions and responses that were considered, as well as a proposed motion written and seconded by two Delegates.

Question 1: What do we know about our members or prospective members’ needs that is relevant to all members receiving announcements from the WSO?

- Members want to be informed.
- Some members don’t get information through the links of service.
- Many members love to get information electronically and be included.
- Members want a deeper connection to the WSO.

Question 2: What do we know about our current resources and our vision for the organization that is relevant to this discussion?

- We would like all AI-Anon members to be connected to the WSO.
- We have the ability to bring in more members to know more about the organization and become willing to get involved.

Question 3: What do we know about the current realities and evolving dynamics of the world and our fellowship that is relevant to this discussion? What are the Pros and Cons?

PROS:

- Members have limited time, so would rather receive the information than have to look to find it.
- Members can process the information in their time and space.
- More members will have access to the information.
- More members may become interested in using electronic communication.

CONS:

- Members in the service structure may feel left out of the traditional links of communication.
- Some members resist the use of technology.

Question 4: What are the ethical implications of our choices? In other words—Will our decision be consistent with our spiritual principles?

- Unity, since any member may participate in receiving the same information.
- Equality, since all members who choose to will receive the information.
- Attraction, since only those members interested will receive it.
- Participation, since those who choose can participate and be included.

Question 5: What do we wish we knew, but don't?

- How many members will subscribe?
- Will this help members to get involved in service?
- Any technological problems with rollout for members or staff?
- Any additional financial costs or savings?

Proposed Motion:

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.

The floor was opened for discussion; there was no discussion.

A motion was made, seconded, and carried. (See WSC Motion #8, page 102.)

Universal Understanding of Recovery Definition

The Conference continued the discussion of a universal understanding of recovery definition. (See page 76 for the original session.)

This definition will be used by Public Outreach staff and our members who work with professionals. There has been input from professionals and the point was that the definition would be in wording that the professionals would be comfortable with and would comprehend. Professionals are the intended audience. We have two definitions. The first definition (A) was presented at the 2014 World Service Conference.

Definition A: Family recovery is a process of healing and growth from the effects of living in a family affected by someone's problem drinking. This process helps individuals to make healthier life choices, and to develop relationships that are more positive and supportive.

The second definition (B) was submitted by Delegates at the 2014 World Service Conference.

Definition B: 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.

Conference members were asked to keep in mind both the intended audience and the process which was utilized to arrive at the definition.

Conference members were asked for a consensus on how to proceed. There were three choices:

1. Definition A
2. Definition B
3. Continue revising

Conference members were asked to consider the following when casting their vote on how to proceed:

- Is the statement consistent with our spiritual principles?
- Are we in agreement with the statement/can we live with it?
- Can you see how you might be able to use this statement?

There was a clear consensus to proceed with Definition B.

The Conference was then asked if it wanted to proceed with a motion.

There was a clear consensus to proceed with a motion on Definition B.

Discussion on the floor included member's comments and questions, which were answered by Work Group members, Trustees, and World Service Office staff.

- Where does this definition "live"? What would be the process if the Conference wanted to change or "tweak" the wording in a couple of years?

We see this as being similar to the Motion passed by the World Service Conference (WSC) in 1965 and amended in 1971 on the definition of attraction and promotion. It's a statement of the Conference. The Conference could always amend or the Board of Trustees could bring a proposal to amend if it received sufficient feedback. Unlike the Legacies, that take three-quarters of the Al-Anon groups worldwide, this would only take a consensus of the Conference to alter it.

- I am asking for clarity. I think I heard it stated that this definition was for us to use in communication with professionals. The motion itself doesn't state that. Do we want to leave it open? Is the intent still to the professional community?
I don't know what the fellowship will do with it. At some point, we have to let go. What will help, is that there will be a summary of the floor discussion and of the floor motion in the 2015 Conference Summary. Part of the background will be in the floor motion discussion. That will give you a history, so you will know what is intended.
 - I need reassurance that professional people have had direct input into the wording. It was alluded to, but it is vitally important to know that the professionals we are dealing with did help craft the wording so it is strong enough to aid in the work they are doing which ultimately helps us.
There were seven surveys total, two of which were with professionals—October 2011 and April 2013.
 - I would feel more comfort personally if the definition is included in *The Best of Public Outreach* (P-90).
The Public Outreach Department has not discussed where it might appear. It could possibly be in The Best of Public Outreach (available on the Members' Web site), the Fact Sheet for Professionals (S-37), a press release, or it could be used when the WSO Marketing Information Analyst goes to National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Addictions meetings. When staff talk with Public Outreach Coordinators they may talk about ways the Coordinators can use it. This discussion came from the Board of Trustees; the staff hasn't been involved in the discussion about how to use it once we had it. At this point, it will be in the 2015 WSC Summary. It will not be in the Policy Digest because language would have to be presented and a discussion and decision about where it would be put. It would be in service materials and it would not likely in Conference Approved Literature.
 - Is it appropriate to add to the motion "To adopt the following definition of universal understanding of family recovery for use in public outreach efforts"?
We would have to go through the process of amending the motion.
 - Warranty Three states, "That all important decisions be reached by discussion, vote and, whenever possible by substantial unanimity." The descriptive text goes on to say that "This principle further guarantees that all matters of importance will be extensively debated, until a substantial majority can support every critical decision we are called upon to make in the Conference." (2014-2017 Service Manual, page 220). This I want to see this happen and I'm wondering if there is any feeling among people more versed in this that having a definition is useless? As long as it's useful, I fully support it.
- Responses:
- ✓ I have seen other definitions of recovery from other organizations with different components, such as pie charts and other criteria. This definition is successful because it is open. There are no percentages of recovery etc. In that sense, it can be useful in its openness. This is not defining specifically what recovery is, but it is an ongoing process.
 - ✓ I like it. It's plain and simple. It's not a universal solution to every question, but it is useful.
 - ✓ Professionals had an opportunity to pick it apart. There was also input from the membership.
 - ✓ We did surveys about direct wording asking, "What do you like? If you don't like it, what words would you use to change it? There was no opposition to it.
 - Definition B was altered by Conference members. A Task Force presented Definition A that professionals worked over.
All they did was reorder the words. They did not change any of the thinking.
 - My Area's main objection was the word "universal." Why wasn't this coming from professionals?
"Universal" means a general understanding that is widely accepted.
 - I work in a hospital unit where they bring people in. Doctors don't want long descriptions. A shorter description is more effective. Many times a patient comes in with family members. The doctor focuses on the patient. There is not a thought about the family. Having a definition would put attention on the rest of the family who needs help.

- This was discussed in my Area and we favored Definition B. I use a comparison to my family then and where we are now. There is a process of growth for family members and that has not been substantially addressed. I am glad we took out “living with” because families are scattered today.

A motion was made, seconded, and carried: To adopt the following definition of Universal Understanding of Family Recovery:

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.

(See Motion #9, page 102).

2015 WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE (WSC) MOTIONS

MOTION #1—CARRIED (BY CONSENSUS)

That the following persons be seated at the 2015 World Service Conference.

With voice, but no vote:

David Zach

Director of Business Services
Non-Al-Anon Member

Silke S.

International Representative—Germany
Al-Anon Member

Lourdes Maria C.

International Representative—Mexico
Al-Anon Member

Nuala C.

International Representative—UK & Eire
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 Universal Understanding of Recovery discussion, the Everyone Everywhere/Metrix Marketing Survey results, and the 2015 Membership Survey results, 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 2015 World Service Conference as designated, **with no voice and no vote:**

Monday, April 20, 2015

Colette Norman

Language Services Coordinator (French)
Non-Al-Anon Member

Valerie Stump

Group Records Coordinator (French)
Non-Al-Anon Member

Sergio Z.

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

Wednesday, April 22, 2015

Sharon B.

Group Services Assistant II
Al-Anon Member

Julie M.

Communications Manager
Al-Anon Member

MOTION #2—CARRIED (94 yes, 0 no, 0 abstentions, 0 void)

To approve the 2014 Audited Financial Report.

MOTION #3—CARRIED (94 yes, 0 no, 0 abstentions, 0 void)

To approve the 2015 Finance Committee Report.

MOTION #4—CARRIED (92 yes, 0 no, 2 abstentions, 0 void)

To approve the 2014 Annual Report.

MOTION #5—CARRIED (93 yes, 1 no, 0 abstentions, 0 void)

Request the Conference give permission for the conversion of *Lois's Story* (AV-1) and *Lois & the Pioneers* (AV-24) to DVD copy protected.

MOTION #6—CARRIED (90 yes, 5 no, 0 abstentions, 0 void)

That the 2015 WSC give conceptual approval to develop a piece of CAL based on member sharings published in past issues of *The Forum*.

MOTION #7—CARRIED

(94 yes, 1 no, 0 abstentions, 0 void)

To amend the descriptive text on pages 196-198 in the *2014-2017 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*, *Al-Anon's Twelve Concepts of Service*, "Concept Eight" as follows:

(Strikethrough indicates deletion; bold and underlined indicates new text; moved text is only underlined)

Concept Eight

The Board of Trustees delegates full authority for routine management of Al-Anon Headquarters to its executive committees.

The Trustees of the Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters act in two major capacities: (a) in matters of policy and finance, they are the principal planners and are responsible for final decisions; (b) in routine operations, the Trustees delegate full authority to executive committees charged with the management of Headquarters.

To arrive at this Concept, experience has led us through the following stages of development:

From 1951 to 1954, when Al-Anon's Headquarters was still trying to find its way, the workers at the then-named Clearing House were advised by a committee of representatives of neighboring Al-Anon groups who met occasionally. After the incorporation of Headquarters late in 1954, its Board of Trustees administered the World Service Office. Seven to eleven in number, the Trustees were meeting monthly and appointed a large committee of volunteers to advise them. This Advisory Committee included all the Trustees and convened every three months. Any recommendations or resolutions proposed by the Advisory Committee had to be ratified by the Board of Trustees.

In 1957, the Advisory Committee was further formalized by a Charter and given a new name—the Advisory Board. It was the authorized custodian of overall Al-Anon policy and finance. In the Charter the hope was expressed that a permanent conference of Delegates from the various states and provinces would eventually take the place of the Advisory Board. The day-to-day administration of the office, however, was still in the hands of the Trustees.

After three years' trial, in 1964, the World Service Conference came into being as the permanent guardian of Al-Anon's Traditions and services, replacing the Advisory Board.

By this time, however, the business of Al-Anon's Headquarters had grown so large that it became unwieldy for the Board of Trustees to handle the routine administration of the office. Our Trustees realized they could no longer be concerned, as a body, with the endless details that arose daily, weekly, and monthly in the routine conduct of the World Service Office. They also realized the need to devote themselves to the more serious questions of policy, leadership, finance, group and public relations.

Therefore, the Board decided to assign its administrative function to a more constantly available seven-member Executive Committee, possessing the Board's full legal powers. This Executive Committee is composed of three Al-Anon members, preferably not Trustees, elected by the Board; the Executive Director; an Al-Anon member from the administrative staff

of the World Service Office; and the Chairpersons of both the Finance and Policy Committees. The Chairperson of this Executive Committee is elected by the Board of Trustees.

This Committee considers all Project Proposals and Project Approvals from committees and staff that fall within budget and existing policy. If a project exceeds budget, it is directed to the Finance Committee. If it entails a change in policy, it is directed to the Policy Committee.

The Board thus became custodian and guarantor of good management of Al-Anon's World Service Office.

In 1994, the WSC agreed to the purchase of property, on a 15-year trial basis, to house the World Service Office. The motion required that the Board of Trustees establish an executive committee for the management of the real property to ensure that AFG not be diverted from its primary purpose. In 1995, the WSC passed a motion to create the Executive Committee for Real Property Management (ECRPM), also on a 15-year trial. After the completion of the trial periods, the By-laws were amended in 2012, to include the ECRPM as a Committee of the Board of Trustees.

The Executive Committee for Real Property Management is composed of three at-Large Al-Anon members who are not trustees, elected by the Board; the Business Manager (Director of Business Services); and the Chairperson of the Finance Committee. The Chairperson of the ECRPM is elected by the Board of Trustees from the three at-Large members. The Executive Director and the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees are not ex-officio members of this Executive Committee and may not attend meetings unless invited to do so.

The Board of Trustees delegates to the Executive Committee for Real Property Management the oversight and the management of real property owned by Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc.

It is within the authority of the Board of Trustees to establish other executive committees if deemed necessary.

MOTION #8—CARRIED

(89 yes, 3 no, 2 abstentions, 1 void)

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.

MOTION #9—CARRIED

(83 yes, 10 no, 1 abstentions, 1 void)

To adopt the following definition of Universal Understanding of Family Recovery:

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.

2014 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

Karen R. / Paula B., Chairpersons

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.

The Board approved Interim Actions of the Executive Committee:

To approve the revised guidelines for the Audit Committee, Conference Committee on Trustees, Conference Leadership Team, Executive Committee, Finance Committee, Forum Editorial Advisory Committee, International Coordination Committee, Literature Committee, Nominating Committee, Policy Committee, Public Outreach Committee, Strategic Plan Oversight Workgroup, and the World Service Office Archives Overview.

- To approve staff travel to Ottawa and Toronto, Ontario in March/April, 2014, at a cost not to exceed \$2,500.
- To accept the handout "2013 Contributions: U.S.A. and Canada (with 2012 for comparison)" for distribution at the 2014 World Service Conference.
- To send a complimentary tent card to Al-Anon groups in support of their efforts to keep the Al-Anon focus in meetings, encourage them to study the Legacies in the meeting, and to include the Al-Anon Declaration, at a cost not to exceed \$6,000 U.S., and to sell additional copies of the tent card for \$1.50.
- To produce the "Guide for Holding a Discussion to Resolve Conflict" (S-73) at an initial quantity up to 20,000 to be sold at \$4.50 U.S. and the three-piece kit (K-70) for \$9.00 U.S.
- To provide Al-Anon service arms with a selection of 20 brief quotations in all three languages from Conference Approved Literature, from which they could select for use in 2015 calendars without completing the currently required reprint permission request form.
- To authorize the Group Services Department to develop, design, provide content review, and launch an Alateen Facebook page modeled after the Al-Anon page.
- To offer the book *Alateen—Hope for Children of Alcoholics* (B-3) electronically in various formats in conjunction with third-party vendors at the price of \$7.49 (US) and later to increase price on iTunes to \$ 7.99 in accordance with their pricing policies.
- To approve staff attendance at the 2014 National Association for Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Counselors meeting in Seattle, Washington from September 29, 2014 to October 1, 2014.

The Board, in its legal and financial capacity, took the following actions:

- At the Annual Meeting:
 - ✓ To approve the 2013 Annual Report
 - ✓ To approve the 2013 Auditor's Report
 - ✓ To approve the 2014 World Service Conference Motions.
 - ✓ To elect one Trustee at Large (TAL) nominee, appoint two Trustee at Large (TAL) nominees, elect four 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 2014-2015.
- ✓ To adopt the banking resolution for the Al-Anon Family Groups Headquarters, Inc.
- To approve the revised 2014 Budget.
- To approve that the equalized expense for the 2015 World Service Conference be \$1,493.00 U.S. The full cost for a Delegate to attend the 2015 World Service Conference is \$2,447.00 U.S.
- To accept a Trustee's resignation from the Board of Trustees
- To amend the revised budget to include \$15,000 (US) for the 2014 IAGSM.
- To accept the bid for the 2016 International Al-Anon General Service Meeting (IAGSM) to be held in Rome, Italy.
- To permit the use of electronic storage devices during General Sessions, discussion groups, and workshops at IAGSMs on a trial basis until 2018.
- To suspend the 1990 IAGSM motion regarding the intent to raise the structure's percentage of equalized expense each meeting by five percent until 2018 and to develop a plan including a variety of options to increase participation and representation of all structures.
- 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, 2014.

The Board, in its oversight capacity, took the following actions:

- To approve distribution of the consolidated version of the Board Profile to the Conference Committee on Trustees for the third year of a three-year trial and to the Regional Committee on Trustees for a second year of a three-year trial
- To nominate Marilyn M. as the Canadian Delegate to the 2014 IAGSM.
- To accept the Audit Committee's recommendation that all official correspondence is signed by the Executive Director with a copy to the Audit Chairperson.
- To change the requirements to host a "Meet the Board" event to the following:
 - ✓ Access to a major or regional commercial airport instead of simply international airport.
 - ✓ Areas will provide transportation between the hotel and the airport, if the hotel does not offer free shuttle.
 - ✓ Areas cannot reapply if they have been selected to host an event during the three-year trial.
- To maintain no criteria for selection once an Area has met the requirements to host a "Meet the Board" event.
- To move Meet the Board event from July to October Board week in 2016.
- To approve the 2015 World Service Conference theme as follows:

"Living Our Spiritual Principles: Expanding Our Vision."
- To create a work group for a three-year trial to tally the

feedback from the Thought and Task Force Evaluation Forms.

- To permanently adopt the practice of copying Area Chairpersons on the Résumé Solicitation Letter.
- To change the Public Outreach Web site domain name to www.al-anon.org, effective at the end of October 2014, or once adequate references to Alateen have been inserted into key pages of the Web site.
- To find that posting meeting information for every registered group on the Public Outreach Web site is consistent with our spiritual principles.
- To renew the trial of the Alateen Work Group for another three years, with annual review.

Strategic Planning, Board of Trustees

The Board, in its strategic capacity, continues its work with a Strategic Plan. The plan is a means for the Board of Trustees to build and expand on the initial big dream begun by Lois and Ann. The big-thinking of this plan guides the Board of Trustees in decisions for serving and preserving Al-Anon Family Groups for those who come after us. This plan serves several purposes including how Al-Anon operates in our changing world while always protecting our spiritual principles. It is also a means of providing a clear and unified direction for the World Service Office staff, the Board, and its Committees.

The Board knows its responsibility of planning for Al-Anon's future. We objectively examine our history to see how changes have been effective in meeting needs of the changing membership and the person who still suffers. We try to apply these lessons going forward; keeping in mind the world is a different place than it was only a few years ago. Maybe more importantly, our passion, our love, and our gratitude for Al-Anon and the spiritual message of hope we offer helps us focus on this Twelfth Step. The Board has charged its Strategic Plan Oversight Work Group with guiding and creating a foundation for the Board and to help increase the Board's knowledge and comfort in thinking strategically. Providing these learning opportunities to all new Trustees is part of the plan. This far-reaching thinking includes looking five years or even farther into the future to plan for the vital and vibrant Al-Anon fellowship of tomorrow.

The Strategic Plan Oversight Work Group had discussions on how the Areas, districts, and groups may wish to look to AFG, Inc.'s Strategic Plan to form their own Goals and Objectives. Even General Service Offices and emerging structures in other countries have the opportunity to examine our Vision and Mission Statements for guidance, if they feel it would be useful.

Work through 2014 year saw us take a look at trends and changes the future may hold in our evolving environment. Consulting widely and using the ideas gathered from the 2014 World Service Conference's Big Question, from Newfoundland's "Meet the Board Event," and the current inventory by the Board and key Staff, we were in a better position to "make good estimates" for the future. As scheduled in the 15 month timeline for Strategic Planning, the Board took an inventory of Al-Anon's strengths and weaknesses, and then listed opportunities and threats in the outside world that may affect Al-Anon's future. This work allowed us to spot themes and trends that help guide us in our work. The current strategic

plan was seen as broad enough to allow for planning for further goals that will respond to the trends identified, and at the same time be focused enough to lead us in reaching for the Vision and Mission Statements.

The Board continued to refine the terms of reference in our strategic planning to ensure a clearer communication with the WSO when developing and working on the Strategic Plan. Working to plan for the future, rather than only responding to the daily problems of our groups and members, continues to be a growing need in today's changing environment.

The Strategic Plan of the Board of Trustees of AFG, 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.

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.

In 2014, the administrative review of the Staff's work on the Strategic Plan was assigned by the Board of Trustees to the Executive Committee. Handing over this administrative work allows more time for the Board of Trustees to look forward with strategic thinking. Significant adjustments as well as additions to the Staff's Goals and Objectives will continue to be brought to the Board of Trustees for consideration and approval.

Plans for the Board's Big Question for the 2015 World Service were made. The effort to improve communication will continue the Conference conversation about the vitality of Al-Anon in the future. The results from the Big Question will be an effective resource for the Board, because as leaders, we need to continue to "consult widely" in planning for Al-Anon's future.

The Board of Trustees: is working on the third Strategic Priority by persistently and consciously evaluating our own actions, and improving or correcting what is not useful. We form Thought and Task Forces on an ongoing basis as we plan these improvements. One method, in particular, is to obtain feedback by developing and improving evaluation forms on everything from the Board's self-evaluation to the experience of members participating in Thought and Task Forces. Listening to the wider group conscience at TEAM events, Assembly visits, the World Service Conference, and other events gives opportunities for the Board to reflect on ways of furthering the Vision Statement within our own role. Planning for

the future is not an exact science, but we take appropriate action, knowing our future is ultimately in the hands of our Higher Power.

Update: Universal Understanding of Recovery: Over the course of the past several years, the Task Force on Universal Understanding of Recovery has developed a definition of family recovery that it has tested at various times with members and professionals. This definition will be revisited at the 2015 World Service Conference.

The World Service Office Staff continues to work on Goals and Objectives as guided by the first two Strategic Plan Priorities. Each year the departments formulate new goals or additional objectives that will aid ultimately in furthering the Board Vision and Mission Statements. These actions are reviewed by the Board to ensure they forward our Vision and that AFG, Inc. will have the capacity to complete them. Capacity is determined by the Executive Director when reviewing staff resources. Funding for projects is determined by the Executive Committee, once the Finance Committee has determined it is financially feasible.

The WSO Director of Member Services and the Director of Communications continue to report on their progress to the Board through the Executive Committee:

Member Services:

Goal 1: To support Al-Anon groups in welcoming and retaining new members. One Objective in 2014 saw a new member survey taken which focused on the benefits of welcoming and retaining new members. Previous surveys determined that groups are successful at welcoming members. This objective expands the idea by identifying benefits of welcoming newcomers at the personal and group level. District Representatives were engaged in this survey with hopes of using the links of service to further spark discussions about group formats, group problems, and outreach projects. Helping groups focus on retaining new members is work to be carried out over the next two years.

Goal 2: To update WSO service tools to ensure they reflect a vibrant, inclusive, and flexible viewpoint, and link service with our spiritual principles. It was determined that we do have a great resource of service tools, and going forward will continue improving them. An additional Objective is to raise awareness in the groups about the usefulness of these tools.

Communications:

Goal 1: To increase members' willingness to participate in Twelfth Step work. Rationale: WSO has consistently encouraged members to participate in various projects that will carry our message, but there appears to be only a relatively small population that actively participate in Twelfth-Step work. Perhaps what is lacking is the basic willingness, due to various fears, lack of confidence, and a variety of cultural factors, including confusion about anonymity. Addressing these deeper issues on a long-term basis could increase the number of members who are willing to participate in Twelfth-Step work over time, and encourage those who are now participating to do so at a higher level.

The Board asked the Communication Services Section to continue developing plans to address the fear of compromising anonymity in public outreach work.

The Communication Services Section developed the following new objective: Help members to understand the spiritual benefits

of Twelfth-Step work, based on information in the Readiness for Twelfth-Step Survey.

The Communication Services Section has plans on implementing this objective by launching a blog with a podcast on the Members' Web site, initiating an "outreach opportunities page" on the said Web site, and keeping members informed on the monthly updates through *Group e-News* and various e-Communities.

Refining the Strategic Plan, and defining how the Strategic Plan is developed and monitored, is always in progress as the Board works to ensure the ongoing growth and strength of Al-Anon Family Groups worldwide.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Mary Ann R. / Karen R., 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. Its actions are submitted quarterly to the Board of Trustees for final approval.

On-going work of the Executive Committee:

- Approves the minutes and actions of the Finance Committee.
- Accepts the monthly unaudited Financial Statement.
- Approves special projects for the Board and staff that involve day-to-day operations.
- Receives monthly service updates from the Executive Director, and the Directors of Business Services, Communication Services, and Member Services.
- Reviews additions, updates, and corrections to policies and procedures for the Employee Policies and Procedures Manual of AFG, Inc.
- Reviews and updates policies and procedures regarding the WSO Archives.
- Approves Committee Guidelines.
- Approves resumes for At-Large Committee members and certain Thought and Task Force members.
- Reviews all presentations and handouts for the World Service Conference, in order to present a consistent, accurate message.
- Reviews the annual letter from the WSO's Copyright lawyer, regarding current trends in Copyright laws and the Internet.
- Approves and receives updates on the progress of Project Approvals and Proposals to Study submitted by the staff.
- Approves and receives updates on the progress of the Strategic Plan Goals and Objectives, as delegated by the Board of Trustees.

Actions approved by the Executive Committee and presented to the Board of Trustees:

- To create an on-line historical timeline of Al-Anon events to be posted on the WSO Members' Web site, that can be added to on a yearly basis.
- To approve the World Service Office Archives Overview Guideline with corrections.

POLICY COMMITTEE

Paula B. / Judy K., Chairpersons

Harriet T., Co-Chairperson

Barbara O. / Robert S., Secretaries

The Policy Committee is the largest group conscience representing Al-Anon as a whole, excepting only 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 these 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 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.

In 2014, the World Service Conference discussed proposed text and approved amending the "Dual Membership in Al-Anon/Alateen and A.A.," subsection of the *2014-2017 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*, pages 82-83. The amended text, entitled "Service Participation by Members of Al-Anon Family Groups Who Are also Members of Alcoholics Anonymous," was included in the electronic version of the *Service Manual*, which is available on the Members' Web site.

ADMINISTRATION

Electronic Literature:

The electronic version of *The Forum* has been available with one vendor since January 9, 2014. We continue to have problems getting the magazine to other vendors due to their not offering a magazine format or not accepting new magazines at this time. Members willing to write apps for *The Forum* and possible other uses will be sought in 2015. The sales figures for 2014 were 254 annual subscriptions and 136 monthly purchases.

An Al-Anon member involved in the TV/film community approached the Executive Director regarding the possibility of recording an audiobook. At the time, the member's group had been studying *Opening Our Hearts, Transforming Our Losses* (B29), and as a group they decided to record the audio version of the book using a recording studio when it is accessible. The Director of Communication Services provided them with the vendor's

recording criteria so that they are aware of them while recording the audio. This project may lead to future books being recorded, and has the potential of including other professional talent who may be willing to donate their time.

In making *Alateen—Hope for Children of Alcoholics* (B3) available electronically, it came to the staff's attention that the French version of the book was never reprinted with the revised translation. Since there are only seven French Alateen groups around the world, there was discussion regarding whether to print the book in an on-demand basis at the smallest quantity possible. There are currently four other national French-speaking structures, none of which currently print this book. As it does not appear practical or feasible to continue printing the book for these small numbers, the suggestion was that the book only be available as an electronic version.

The Executive Committee agreed that it would be acceptable to offer the French version of *Alateen—Hope for Children* (FB-3) only in an electronic format.

The electronic versions of *How Al-Anon Works for Families & Friends of Alcoholics* (eB-22) and *Alateen—Hope for Children of Alcoholics* (eB-3) are now available for purchase in Canada through an electronic service provider there.

Trips:

The South Australia Area donated an oil painting, which was created by a local member, and sent it with a letter of commemoration and gratitude for the Executive Director's trip to their Area last August.

The Executive Director attended the 1st Latin Al-Anon/Alateen Convention U.S. and Spanish-speaking Countries in Newark, New Jersey on July 3-6, 2014. The Group Services Assistant II—Spanish also attended and served as translator for the Executive Director at the event. This allowed for full participation at the scheduled events, plus discussions with the Guatemalan structure who had questions about printing as well as hosting the next Latin Convention in 2017.

The Executive Director attended the Vermont Convention on July 25-27, 2014, which had about one hundred members in attendance including a Delegate from New Hampshire and a Past Delegate from Rhode Island. The Executive Director was also able to speak with the New Hampshire members regarding the problems they have been having regarding their incorporation process.

The Tennessee Area Convention took place on August 15-17, 2014, which had about 300 members in attendance including Past Delegates from Kentucky and New Mexico. The Executive Director was able to speak with a member from one of the de-listed groups and emphasized that they were making a mistake by not sending a representative to their Area Assembly.

The Florida South Convention took place on August 22-24, 2014, which had 691 members in attendance including several Area Past Delegates, a Past Trustee, and a Past Delegate from Colorado. Their Host Committee consisted of about 50 people, and tasks were well-delegated. The Convention hosted a read-athon that included members reading in either English or Spanish. The event was able to gather about \$1,700 in contributions at \$2 a page. Some members who did not read also donated.

Archives:

The response to the Archives Coordinator Call Survey failed to show interest. Seventeen of the 67 Coordinators responded, 13 of which were in favor of participating in the call. There does not appear to be sufficient interest at this time, so the WSO Archives Coordinator will not move forward with an Archives Coordinator conference call at this time. The WSO Archives Coordinator will continue to coach the Archive Coordinators, whenever necessary.

Group eNews:

The staff met regarding the *Group e-News*, specifically to discuss its purpose and how to increase its availability. During a second meeting on *Group e-News* content, the staff discussed the possibility of creating a form of feedback mechanism where the members can interact with each other. The Executive Director mentioned the possibility of creating a blog on the Members' Web site. There will be further discussion on this matter, and if staff decides to move forward, a Project Approval will be submitted for review to the Executive Committee.

During the *Group e-News* meetings, staff members identified the topics and format to be included in the newsletter. The goal of these meetings was to also help staff members understand and support the process. Final meetings took place to discuss various marketing approaches for the newsletter.

Human Resources (HR):

The HR Consultant worked with the Directors to coach them in helping the senior staff members to better understand their job responsibilities and to develop goals to accomplish them. The Consultant and Directors will be coaching these employees in hopes of utilizing appreciative inquiry approaches that can guide them to become more successful in their positions.

The Human Resources Consultant and the Executive Director met with the Directors to review their job descriptions and those of their senior staff in order to ensure that their work performance meets expectations. Then the Consultant and the Directors met with each of their managers to discuss understanding of their job description as well as discuss how they plan to meet the requirements and standards of their positions.

During these meetings the staff were asked what they need in order to be successful. They were also encouraged to provide feedback on ways to help the organization to move forward.

During one discussion, a staff member commented that due to the increase in Trustee travel, staff travel has decreased so they do not go out into the fellowship as often. Currently, staff travel for Area and Assembly visits is not included in the budget, but may need to be added in the future. This could help those Areas that do not have the budget to cover the full amount of the travel expenses if they want a staff member to visit.

The Executive Director and the Director of Communication Services had a discussion regarding the job description review for the Associate Director of Communications—Professionals position. The goal is to have the revised job description emphasize Canadian Outreach in the same way as the U.S. Outreach. It is important for the WSO to have a presence in the Canadian professional communities and to be more consistent in our Canadian Outreach.

Optima Health Insurance has contacted the WSO regarding open enrollment for same-sex marriage spouses. This will not impact the budget as the current policy has the employee pay for their spouse's insurance.

The Executive Director and Director of Business Services attended a Not-for-Profit seminar focused on Virginia Laws. During this seminar, the Executive Director realized that the WSO needs to hold seminars to support and stimulate supervisors in terms of what their roles and responsibilities are regarding a number of office policies and procedures, as well as how to handle some legal issues concerning Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) restrictions.

Interactive Voice Response (IVR):

The meeting regarding the IVR analysis to determine staffing phone coverage requirements has been postponed. The data collected prior to the December Executive Committee meeting contained trends taken during the holiday season, and supervisors do not want to take action until additional data is collected. Due to the inclement weather, the phones have been quiet, overall reducing the amount of time the staff spends on the phone. The Executive Director will meet with the staff in 2015 to assess workloads and to ensure that individuals seeking meeting information have adequate operators available if requested.

e-Communities:

A list of concerns from the Delegates and other users regarding the new e-Communities has been compiled and submitted to our vendor. The vendor submitted a work ticket for the owner of the software requesting corrections. Some of the issues have been addressed in the software update; however, we are trying to clarify with the vendor whether or not these changes can be accessed without having to upgrade iMIS again. The possibility of using another community-like system is being investigated, as it appears that many of these problems cannot be resolved without additional cost and customization. Any future program would also address the fact that e-Communities is not interactive with the Apple iPhone and iPad.

The Finance Committee approved a Delegate's request to create an e-Community for Area Treasurers, and the e-Community was set up before the 2014 Conference.

The Executive Director, Director of Business Services, and the Controller met with the Technology Consultant to discuss new ways of processing e-mails into the World Service Office, as well as ways to track turnaround time for those e-mails received and answered. Plans were approved to move forward with the implementation of Office 365 which has the potential to increase productivity as well as provide cloud storage. This will also allow staff to have access to current software regardless of the age of their hardware.

Copyright/Web issues:

An individual in India has hijacked an U.S. Al-Anon Information Service (AIS) Web site. The Area let the registration of the previous Web site expire, and the individual immediately took over the site and added offensive content in order to try and coerce the AIS to buy the site back from him. The Marketing Informa-

tion Analyst, Web Architect, and the Director of Communication Services prepared a letter for the individual and the host of the site asking them to cease and desist from using the Al-Anon name. After the individual refused to respond, we contacted the vendor who took the site down. We were unable to recover the address. This is an issue that Areas and AISs need to consider in terms of renewing their addresses, as well as changing addresses, which was also a problem for an Area that has been unable to get a reseller to relinquish their old address without charging a high fee. The WSO will continue to work with that Area to resolve this, as we own the trademark use of the Al-Anon and Alateen names and only allow service arms to utilize them.

There continue to be copyright problems on-line. The WSO was informed about an on-line meeting that was posting Al-Anon's daily readers to its page on a daily basis. A compliance e-mail was sent notifying the meeting that it was violating the copyright. A response was received noting that the meeting would take the content down under protest and have since posted their protest to their webpage. We did not engage in any further communication to point out that our response was printed out of context.

One Facebook meeting had continued to quote from the Conference Approved Literature (CAL) on their page despite numerous requests from the WSO to have it removed. Since the request was ignored, the staff filed a claim with Facebook to have it removed. The administrators of the meeting filed a counter notice without having full knowledge of copyright laws. Had they decided to pursue the counter notice, legal actions would have been taken by the WSO. The administrator of the page was notified of this and wrote back that it was not an approach she intended to pursue, but that the counter notice was filed with the advisement of Facebook. The administrator was able to retract the counter notice, and an agreement stating what they can and cannot do when posting CAL on their page in the future was created.

A complaint from a member of another Facebook meeting was also received, in which she states that the administrators of the page have been verbally abusing her and prohibiting her from sharing on the page. Further investigation of this issue has not occurred, but as of now there is no intention to get involved as there is currently no structure for moderating disputes of on-line and phone meetings. There are plans in 2015 to host periodic meetings with the contacts for these meetings to address their needs and coach them in ways to resolve their problems.

The attorney who provides feedback on the issues involving Internet and copyright/trademark issues has contacted the Executive Director for additional clarity about the WSO's questions regarding the "free" use of "group" software provided by Google, Yahoo!, and Facebook, etc. During discussions with the Policy Committee, it was pointed out that the members using these services have to realize there are additional issues that need to be addressed, one of which is anonymity. The members who use these platforms for local purposes have no guarantee of anonymity, and the vendors offering these services often data mine the users and then resell their private information to advertisers. The Policy Committee is continuing to explore this issue and will provide further guidance in the future.

Computers/Web update:

The Executive Director and the Director of Business Services met with the network consultant to discuss several issues, including the production of ebooks and mobile apps for all platforms and devices. There was also a discussion regarding the reconfiguration of the Business Services Department, as to whether or not there is a need for a Director to oversee technological operations, or if an outside source should be used instead.

The staff met with technology vendors to discuss the need to update the Public Outreach Web site so that it is device responsive. After updating the current Joomla software on both sites, the staff will meet to determine whether to continue with the Joomla platform. During the update, it was clarified that the current template is not responsive, so the question is whether to proceed with a new Joomla template or a different platform. Discussions with vendors who are familiar with various user-friendly platforms that are less likely subject to outside hacking will be held in early 2015.

During one of the interviews with the vendors, it was discussed that the audio content of the podcasts, as well as the content of the PDFs on the Web site, cannot be found on search engines. We are looking for ways to increase members' accessibility to search engines, as well as nonmembers and professionals who may want to refer their clients to a meeting. The Public Outreach Department is looking for ways to add quotations from the podcasts underneath the audio to allow for searchable content. Additionally, quotations from the Public Outreach Web site will be included in the press releases, and posted on the Facebook and Twitter pages to attract people to the Web site.

The final upgrade to the Public Outreach site in 2015 will include a responsive template that will be compatible with any device used to access the site. As part of this upgrade, options for mobile Al-Anon chat meetings will also be explored. This could be another opportunity for young people who are unable to attend Alateen meetings. With an Al-Anon mobile chat, members will not be able to determine the age of the users and so younger members will not be turned away. Capabilities for side conversations will be disabled as a safety measure.

A WSO Task Force to analyze the statistics on the use of various parts of the Public Outreach Web site was also discussed. The information gathered from this Task Force will be used to update or remove information that is not being viewed.

The Web Architect identified a problem with the current web address for the Public Outreach Web site. The address www.al-anon.alateen.org effectively established Alateen as the primary domain and www.al-anon.org as a subdomain of the Alateen site. This has diminished the impact of visibility on the Internet. In order to rectify this, the staff recommended and the Board of Trustees approved changing the main domain name to www.al-anon.org, with the intention of placing Alateen content in prominent places throughout the site to allow for a more integrated marketing plan than has been done in the past. The Alateen wording changes were made before the web address was altered. The WSO wanted to emphasize that Alateen is still a top priority for the fellowship, even with this adjustment. This was completed in November.

The Executive Director will be meeting with the Communications Department to discuss online marketing and how online

messages can be utilized in a way to expand outreach through means other than Google AdWords. Any opportunities that may be missing in accordance to the Board's discussion about technology will also be addressed.

The Technology Consultant discovered that the World Service Office qualifies for participation in a software program for not-for-profits which allowed us to obtain 50 Microsoft Office 2013 licenses at a discounted rate.

Literature Distribution Center (LDC) / Literature:

A conference call was held with an LDC to clarify the shipping policies currently in place at the WSO. The current procedure involves having shipments to LDCs as a higher priority. It was explained that while the policy has not changed, the office cannot guarantee that orders will not be shipped to individuals first as it is determined by the volume of orders pending. The member thanked the staff for their time and felt that he was heard.

The Executive Director and the Director of Communication Services met to discuss the slow sales of the *Reaching for Personal Freedom* (P92) workbook, despite the overwhelmingly positive feedback it has received. They discussed the possibility that the "P" in the number may be causing the members to have difficulty finding it on the order form. It was also mentioned that the Literature Distribution Centers (LDC) may not be carrying the workbook, as they are only receiving a ten percent case discount instead of the twenty five percent case discount that books would normally receive. This matter was also discussed with the Finance Committee, as the LDCs would normally get a six-month consignment on new book releases, which was not offered with the release of P92, as it isn't a book. It was decided not to change the number or its placement on the order form, but to allow a larger case discount consistent with books.

Incorporation Areas/Al-Anon Information Service:

The Executive Director has been in communication with several Areas and a Spanish Convention regarding incorporation. A member on the Convention Committee asked the Executive Director for clarity and support with the process to ensure that the Convention is using the Al-Anon principles. The need to create a model set of Bylaws was identified and will be available in early 2015.

KBDM/Area coaching:

The Executive Director spoke with an Area Delegate regarding the confusion in the fellowship involving the correct way to follow the KBDM process. There were misunderstandings about when debate takes place during the process. It was explained that debate does not take place during the KBDM process, which is a fact-finding and discussion process; instead debate occurs once the idea moves into the motion phase under Robert's Rules of Order. When something is voted not to be considered for a motion, it is usually agreed to end any further discussion of the topic.

The Executive Director had a conference call with an Area Delegate regarding the Area's previous consensus to implement electronic voting in November 2013. The consensus was accidentally left out of the minutes causing someone in the AWSC to challenge the moving forward on the proposal for the electronic voting. The Executive Director suggested that a notice be sent out to the Group

Representatives stating that the consensus was left out in error, and that the amended minutes will be presented at the November meeting for approval.

An Al-Anon Information Service (AIS) is currently experiencing financial difficulties, as the District Representative (DR) within the service area has been telling groups in the district not to support the AIS. Recently, the Area held their Assembly in a geographic area located near the AIS. The DR of the district hosting the Assembly asked another AIS from across the state to sell CAL at the event instead of the local AIS, causing it to lose money on sales. The Executive Director suggested to the Delegate that she lead the Area in a principle-based discussion to get back to the idea that the process to use a local AIS/LDC is an Area policy and not subject to local intervention. It was further suggested that the Area officers should be responsible for making sure that its policies are followed. The AIS was considering subleasing its space in order to cut costs, and then sharing space with A.A. The Executive Director noted that while it can share space, it is not permissible for A.A. to run the AIS service and to sell the Literature.

Canada By-laws:

The revised Canadian By-Laws were reviewed by the Canadian Board of Trustees during a special meeting in Newfoundland. One of the new requirements of the Canadian By-Laws will be for the Board to hold a membership meeting, which will include the Trustees as the sole members. The membership meeting will have to take place after Board meetings to approve any the actions approved by the Trustees. This process was reviewed with an attorney before adopted by the Canadian Board.

The paperwork for continuing the Canadian Corporation under the *Canada Not-for-Profit Corporations Act* was sent to the attorney and approved by Canada Revenue in the fall.

Other Twelve Steps programs:

The Executive Director and the Associate Director of Member Services—International participated in a conference call with the Executive Director of Nar-Anon to discuss their violations of Al-Anon copyrights outside of the U. S. The Iranian Nar-Anon structure has translated and printed pieces of Al-Anon literature without permission from the World Service Office. The text of the literature was also changed to adapt to the Nar-Anon program in order to be sold by the structure. The Executive Director of Nar-Anon stated that a disclaimer will be added on their Web site to ensure that this does not happen again in the future. A Skype meeting between the Executive Director of Nar-Anon and the Iranian structure was subsequently held to discuss the procedures to follow regarding reprinting literature.

Staffing:

The Executive Director is currently considering creating a Director of Information Technology position for the WSO after the Director of Business Services retires. This position will allow for continued office support for web and network coverage for times when the Web Architect and the Technological Services Coordinator are out of the office.

Electronic Meetings:

As a result of a member's request to register an online Second Life meeting, the Executive Director and Director of Member Services will be reviewing the current policy regarding electronic meetings. The discussion will later be taken to the Policy Committee for review.

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.

In 2014, the Administrative Team reviewed and revised the approval process for publication projects (in hard copy and online) that require translation into French or Spanish. It regularly reviewed the content published monthly in the *Group e-News*, ensuring that the articles presented in that publication represent a balanced, office-wide perspective. It revised some language in the *Employee Policy and Procedures Manual* pertaining to employee use of WSO computer equipment and e-mail system, for the purpose of clarifying the current policy without changing its intent.

This team supervised aspects of the office-wide project to produce a conflict resolution tool kit, which resulted in the creation of *Using Al-Anon Principles to Resolve Conflict* (K-70), a kit of service tools. It also provided oversight to a Task Force that assessed the Public Outreach Web site for its effectiveness in reaching potential newcomers to the Al-Anon program. This Task Force's report included suggestions that will be considered by the Executive Director, who is leading an effort to revise and revitalize that Web site, while also making it more secure against potential hackers and more responsive to smartphone apps.

COMMUNICATION SERVICES

PUBLIC OUTREACH

The Board's strategic goal:

The Board of Trustees has assigned a strategic goal to the WSO's Communications Services Section: "To increase members' willingness to participate in Twelfth Step work." The urgency and

importance of this goal is obvious: Al-Anon's ability to help families of alcoholics—our primary purpose—depends upon the volunteer efforts of members who practice the Twelve Steps, provide

encouragement and understanding to alcoholic relatives, and welcome and give comfort to families of alcoholics (Tradition Five).

A survey conducted by the Communications Services section identified members' concern about breaking their anonymity as one of several reasons why many have been reluctant to participate in Twelfth-Step work. Accordingly, throughout 2014, the Communications section produced a stream of short articles intended to eliminate possible misconceptions about anonymity, highlight the spiritual benefits of Twelfth-Step work, and help members to feel more confident in their understanding of the spiritual principle of anonymity. These articles were published each month in *The Forum*, *Area Highlights*, and *Group e-News*. This campaign also included discussions with the Area Public Outreach Coordinators, the Public Outreach Committee, and a series of announcements to draw attention to the availability of the newly revised edition of the pamphlet *Why Anonymity in Al-Anon?* (P-33). A PowerPoint presentation, "Let's Talk About Anonymity," was substantially updated to reflect the new "Anonymity" and "Public Outreach" descriptive text in the "Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies" section of the *2014-2017 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*. The purpose of the presentation is to provide the fellowship with a tool that demonstrates how to engage in public outreach activities while upholding Tradition Eleven.

Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism:

Our public outreach magazine, Al-Anon's largest fellowship-wide member-participation public outreach project, showed modest growth in 2014. Al-Anon members distributed more than 346,000 copies of the magazine in their local communities, an increase of nearly 4%, compared to calendar year 2013. An increase in participation in this project is evident in the 4.3 percent increase in orders—more than 2,800 orders in total, for the year.

The July 2014 sales campaign for first printing of the magazine's 2015 edition was the most successful campaign in the history of the magazine. This success offset the lower-than-hoped-for sales of the February 2014 campaign and resulted in the modest increase in the total number of copies of the magazine sold in calendar year 2014. Even though 2014 sales exceeded 2013's, the total number of copies sold for the year remains in the general range of the past four calendar years. To date, *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism's* most successful year is 2011, when members of the fellowship distributed more than 362,000 copies of the magazine.

At the end of December 2014, sales for the second printing of the magazine's 2015 edition were outpacing the order rate that we have seen in the previous eight sales campaigns. This trend suggests that the February 2015 campaign for the magazine might be one of our best ever.

Media:

Al-Anon substantially increased its visibility on new media, such as Facebook, Twitter, Google ads, and YouTube. These new communications media, however, still reach a relatively small audience in comparison to television and radio Public Service Announcements (PSAs), which continue to give Al-Anon's message its broadest exposure.

Al-Anon's 2014 TV PSA campaign, Portraits III, generated more broadcast airplays than any previous campaign—more than

90,000 airplays (still estimated: final results not yet available) on about 450 television stations. These airplays reached a combined audience of about 570 million. As a point of comparison, our Sketches IV campaign in 2011 generated nearly 90,000 airplays, which was our previous high, but reached a combined audience of only 350 million. In 2011, more than half of Sketches IV's airplays were on small cable television stations that reach a relatively limited audience. In 2014, Portraits III got strong airplay on large cable networks, such as Fox News Channel, the USA Network, and WGN America, as well as on regular broadcast channels, with only a relatively small proportion of airplays on smaller cable television stations. Portrait III's total audience exposure, however, fell considerably short of Portraits II's audience reach of one billion. In 2013, Portraits II had exceptional success in winning broadcast time on the largest TV stations in the largest media markets.

In any given month in 2014, there were between 1,300 and 1,400 organizations that had PSAs in distribution. Typically, Al-Anon was ranked at about #25 for the month, which is equivalent to the 99th percentile for most airplays. Our total share of the PSA market increased from .5 to .7 in 2014, because the increase in Al-Anon PSA airplays outpaced the increase of PSA airplays for the entire TV market.

In radio, PSA results for nine months of the year showed about 36,000 airplays on about 335 radio stations, reaching a total audience of about 138 million. Those results are on track to equal last year's 12-month results.

In new media, the Al-Anon WSO Facebook page reached a substantially larger audience in 2014, compared to 2013. In calendar year 2014, the total numbers of "likes" for the page increased 164%, from 5,900 to 15,600. In the course of the year, a total of 639 posts reached a cumulative audience of 1.7 million people.

Graphics were added to the page in March—mostly photographs provided by members. This adjustment resulted in increased reader engagement, which led to a greater reach and more impressions.

In April, the French-language Al-Anon WSO Facebook page made its debut. "Les Groupes Familiaux Al-Anon BSM" has generated 241 total "likes." In the last quarter of 2014, it reached 5,101 unique users, of whom more than 4,000 saw the page because someone shared it with them.

In 2014, the click-through rate for our Google AdWords campaign increased by more than half a percentage point, from 3.23% to 3.83% compared with 2013, as a result of meticulous fine-tuning of key words. The number of clicks also increased 6.1%, from about 126,000 in 2013 to nearly 134,000 in 2014. A "click-through" takes the computer user from our ad on the Google search results page directly to Al-Anon's Public Outreach Web site. These ads are the equivalent of an on-line PSA. Al-Anon does not pay for these ads, which Google provides at no charge to all non-profit organizations.

In 2014, we published 19 multi-media news releases online. These releases generated 1.1 million impressions and more than 27,000 "reads." An estimated 17,000 news sites on the Web re-posted these announcements. We are unable to estimate how many people saw these announcements on these other Web sites.

Non-member surveys (“Everyone Everywhere,” and “Metrix Marketing”):

Two separate and comprehensive reports compared the results of the 2009 and 2013 iterations of the “Everyone Everywhere” survey and the 2004 and 2013 iterations of the “Metrix Marketing” survey. Among other findings, the general public’s “unaided awareness” of Al-Anon (awareness without any hints or prompting) increased from 24% in 2004 to 30% in 2013, while aided awareness (i.e., “Have you ever heard of Al-Anon Family Groups?”) increased slightly from 37% in 2004 to 38% in 2013. The general public’s total awareness of Al-Anon increased from 60% in 2004 to 68% in 2013. Total awareness combines unaided and aided awareness of the Al-Anon name.

2015 Membership Survey preparation:

Al-Anon’s triennial membership survey has been updated from its last version in 2012, and translated into Spanish and French. An independent research company has been selected through an RFP process and has programmed the on-line survey for publication in January. A comprehensive marketing campaign was created and implemented in order to increase member participation in the survey, which is open to all members in the U.S., Canada, Puerto Rico, and Bermuda. The on-line survey will be “live” from January 9 through February 22.

Plans for the Public Outreach Web site:

A Task Force was formed to assess the strengths and weaknesses of Al-Anon’s Public Outreach Web site and to make recommendations to make it easier for newcomers to find the information they need about Al-Anon. The Task Force’s work was completed within one month, and its report was forwarded to the Administrative Team for discussion and consideration. These recommendations will be considered in the updating of the Public Outreach site in 2015.

Cooperation with NIAAA and NAADAC:

The WSO cooperated more closely with the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) and the National Association for Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Counselors (NAADAC), an Association for Addiction Professionals, in 2014. We continued to attend the NIAAA Council meetings, which take place three times per year. The Al-Anon interview with the new Director of the NIAAA achieved a high level of visibility on Al-Anon’s podcast and YouTube pages, as well as through two dedicated news releases, and also from posts by the NIAAA on the home page of its Web site.

Staff attended the national NAADAC Conference, which resulted in two requests for Area participation in two NAADAC affiliate conferences in 2015. The Public Outreach Coordinators in those Areas have been contacted. The WSO is working with NAADAC’s Executive Director to identify additional opportunities for Area cooperation with NAADAC affiliates. The WSO interviewed the NAADAC Executive Director as part of the “First Steps to Recovery” podcast series.

Both NIAAA and NAADAC helped to increase access of their podcasts by notifying their staff, members, and subscribers on their respective social media pages and their Web sites.

Recovery Month:

The WSO continues to provide information about the importance of family recovery in Al-Anon/Alateen to the more than 150 organizations that participate in the U.S. government’s National Recovery Month project. These organizations approved a family-focused theme for 2015 Recovery Month campaign.

The “Road to Recovery” Webinar series included a one-hour Webcast on “Growing Up with Addiction and Mental Health Disorders—Prevention by Targeting Troubled Families.” The WSO cooperated with this Webcast by arranging for the participation of professionals whose field of expertise is families of alcoholics.

National Recovery Day:

The Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse organized the third annual National Recovery Day event, which is an adaptation of the U.S. Government’s National Recovery Month. Public Outreach Coordinators were notified about the cities hosting events in their Areas, so that local members could provide information about Al-Anon at these events. Al-Anon was able to participate in three out of the five events that took place in these Areas.

Sober St. Patrick’s Day:

The WSO cooperated with the national sponsor of Sober St. Patrick’s Day in the U.S. Although the attendees are mostly in A.A., Area Al-Anon members had success in making information about Al-Anon available in two of the four locations.

Cooperation with the U.S. Navy:

The WSO cooperated with the U.S. Navy’s Substance Abuse Rehabilitation Symposium Drug and Alcohol Program for Drug and Alcohol Program Advisors. As a result, information about Al-Anon, including copies of *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism* magazine, was made available to all Alcohol and Drug Control Officers for all Navy Commands and U.S. Fleet Forces.

e-News for Professionals:

This electronic newsletter has returned to a monthly publication schedule, after having been dormant for most of the previous year. Management and administrative support for the newsletter has been re-organized so that the publication’s production is not subject to the variability of a single person’s workload and schedule. The November issue featured the *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism* outreach magazine and an invitation for professionals to submit articles for the 2016 edition. The December issue highlighted a WSO interview with Dr. George Koob, newly appointed Director of the U.S. Government’s National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA).

Treatment facilities project:

Two Areas piloted the Treatment Facilities Outreach Project Workshop materials. Following the workshop, one of these Areas, not previously involved in outreach to treatment facilities, initiated a project.

Spanish and French translations of the four PowerPoint presentations, Resources and Presenter’s Guides were completed and being posted on their respective Members’ Web sites.

Conflict resolution tools:

A strategic marketing plan was created and implemented to inform members about the new conflict resolution service tools now available, S-73 (\$4.50) and K-70 (\$9). Members who have utilized these tools have found them helpful.

FELLOWSHIP COMMUNICATIONS

The Forum:

At the end of the year, personal subscriptions to *The Forum* totaled about 19,500. While that total may not be as high as we would prefer, the strength in that number is that it remained steady throughout the year, ending a decline in circulation that was sustained over the previous four years.

NEW DAILY READER (working title):

The newest project approved by the World Service Conference was announced in the June edition of *Group e-News* and the July and August issues of *The Forum*. A memo was posted in e-Communities requesting Delegates to have a discussion in their Areas about finding ways to encourage member sharings that express the diverse experiences of our members. A writing guideline, approved by the Literature Committee, was posted on the Literature Coordinator e-Community and on the Members' site, where members can also submit sharings on-line. The November issue of *The Forum* featured an "Inside Al-Anon Family Groups" article encouraging members to submit writings for this book, and also included the writing guideline as an insert. By the end of the year, the WSO received more than 90 sharings for this book.

INTIMACY IN ALCOHOLIC RELATIONSHIPS (working title):

The WSO has received over 1,137 sharings. Notices in WSO publications and requests to Literature Coordinators encouraged further writing throughout the year, including a February 2014 "Inside Al-Anon Family Groups" article in *The Forum* on writing about intimacy and hosting intimacy workshops. An outline for the piece has been drafted, and is currently under review, prior to contracting with a writer to begin work on the piece.

PARENTS AND GRANDPARENTS OF YOUNG PROBLEM DRINKERS (working title):

The WSO has received over 150 sharings for this pamphlet. Notices were included in *The Forum*, *Area Highlights*, *Group e-News*, and the Literature Coordinator e-Community to encourage continued writing. The writing guide was inserted in the April 2014 mailing of *The Forum*. WSO staff developed a preliminary outline for the pamphlet, based on earlier Literature Committee and Conference discussions. It will be submitted to the Literature Committee for input prior to inclusion in requests for proposals to Al-Anon members who are professional writers/editors.

Pamphlet revisions:

The Literature Committee's minor revisions of the Concept Five descriptive text in *The Concepts—Al-Anon's Best Kept Secret?* (P-57), and the major revision of *Why Anonymity in Al-Anon?* (P-33) are now in print.

Electronic CAL:

Announcements and reminders continued for the available e-books and audiobooks, including the newest two e-books, *How Al-Anon Works* (eB-22) and *Alateen—Hope for Children of Alcoholics* (eB-3) and the latest audiobook, *One Day at a Time in Al-Anon* (eA-6). Also, staff posted an Electronic Literature Fact Sheet on the Literature Coordinator e-Community to provide a helpful resource in answering questions.

Al-Anon "Promises:"

The April 2014 issue of *The Forum* included two "Inside Al-Anon Family Groups" articles clarifying that Al-Anon has no "promises," since it remains one of the most frequently asked questions received in Communication Services.

CAL quotations:

For the third year in a row, quotations were gathered and made available for Areas and other service arms to use in their 2015 CAL Calendar 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.

At-Large Committee member search:

At the end of April, three At-Large members of the Literature Committee stepped down, having served the maximum of six years. Four new At-Large members were selected from 25 candidates, after an unprecedented response from an appeal sent to Delegates in all eligible Regions the previous year.

Public Outreach Committee

Deborah C., Chairperson

Pat Q., Staff Liaison, Associate Director of Communications—Public Outreach/Media

Sandie D. / Donna E., Trustee Liaison to the Board

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 2014, 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 conducted a review of "The Best of Public Outreach," a collection of how-to-do-it suggestions on the Members' Web site.

Forum Editorial Advisory Committee

Evan J. / Sue C., Chairpersons

Robert S. / Julie M., Director of Communication Services/Staff Liaison

Joan S. / John M., Trustee Liaison to the Board

Consideration for a *Forum* book:

The Committee continued the work that began in March 2013 to consider recommending the development of a *Forum* book that contains “the best of the best” sharings from the magazine in recent years. The idea is not to go too far back in the past, where sharings might otherwise contain archaic language or otherwise be out of touch with the diverse, dynamic fellowship of contemporary Al-Anon, today.

This work was delayed in the course of the year because one Committee Chair had to step down and two Committee members rotated off the Committee after having served for six years. Two new members were invited to join the Committee and were approved by the Executive Committee and a new Chair was appointed. The Committee has re-focused its attention on a proposal to create a book that will bring important and memorable sharings from the pages of *The Forum* to a fellowship-wide audience that may have missed these sharings when they were first published in the magazine.

Framing and Knowledge-Based Decision-Making documents were submitted to the Executive Committee and will be presented for consideration to the 2015 World Service Conference.

Literature Committee

Michael K. / Linda B., Chairpersons

Tom C., Staff Liaison, Associate Director of Communications—Literature

Annette T. / Sandi C., Trustee Liaison to the Board

The Committee currently consists of eight Delegate members, five At-Large members (including the Chairperson), the WSO Staff Liaison, and the WSO Trustee Liaison to the Board. It con-

tinues to meet via quarterly conference calls, with intermediate correspondence held through e-mails and the e-community discussion boards.

In April, the Committee recommended to the World Service Conference the development of a new daily reader, which it had been discussing since March of 2012. The Conference gave conceptual approval, and during the year, the Committee approved wording for a writing guideline. It also discussed other ways to encourage members to submit writings for the book.

The Committee reviewed several suggestions from the fellowship for new literature or revisions to existing literature. From these, it recommended making one minor word change to *Reaching for Personal Freedom* (P-92), and to change one sentence on page four of *Understanding Ourselves and Alcoholism* (P-48).

The Committee began discussion of a member's suggestion to change wording in the Suggested Closing, using the five questions of the Knowledge-Based Decision-Making Process for an Informed Group Conscience. If the Committee were to determine that the Closing needs changes, it would consult with the Group Services Department before submitting a recommendation to the Policy Committee.

The Committee also reviewed eight other suggestions from the fellowship, but made no recommendations on these items.

In addition, the Committee recommended deleting those portions of the timeline in the back of *Lois Remembers* (B-7) written after 1978, replacing them with a reference to an on-line timeline of Al-Anon's history, which could be easily updated as needed. The Committee has also begun discussing criteria for discussing suggestions from the fellowship, as well as considering ideas to encourage the use of Al-Anon's vast array of existing literature.

MEMBER SERVICES

GROUP SERVICES

The Al-Anon Focus/Declaration Table Card (S-24):

The Al-Anon Focus/Declaration Table Card (S-24) was created to support groups in applying our spiritual principles at Al-Anon and Alateen meetings. Incorporated in the design are ideas submitted by members regarding keeping other affiliations outside of meetings, welcoming newcomers, using Al-Anon's Legacies, and saying the *Al-Anon Declaration*.

The new Al-Anon table card (S-24) was sent to English-speaking Al-Anon and Alateen groups with the group copy of November issue of *The Forum*. Spanish and French-speaking groups received the table card with the December mailing of *en Acción* and *Le lien*, respectively.

New Al-Anon and Alateen groups will receive the table card with their first registration packet.

Meditating During Meetings:

The Group Services Department received communications from two Areas regarding the recurring question about Meditation Meetings posted in the Conference e-community folder. One Delegate requested that the document be revised to clarify that groups could have a contemplation time to think about a topic after a topic is given.

Group Services staff revised the document and submitted it for review at the October 2014 Policy Committee Meeting. A minor revision was made to the document and the Committee agreed by consensus that the document contents complied with Al-Anon policy.

The revised document, “Is it within the Traditions for a group to set a specific period of time for meditating during meetings?,” clarified that designating a period of time for the purpose of group meditation is not appropriate at an Al-Anon meeting, and that spending time during the meeting to mediate is not within the Traditions, as doing so could be interpreted as a religious activity, affiliation with an outside entity, or an endorsement of a particular practice or style of meditation.

Electronic Meetings:

There are 137 registered Al-Anon electronic meetings—48 on-line and 89 phone. Of the 48 on-line meetings, 11 are registered as Voice via Internet (Skype). For translation purposes, the term used is VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol). There are nine Spanish VoIP meetings, one Icelandic meetings and one English meeting that was just registered by a Peace Corps volunteer stationed in Albania.

Two new phone meeting lines have been added since July, for a total of seven different phone numbers with a variety of meeting times and topics. Members attending telephone meetings continue to bring matters of conflict to WSO staff. For example, a number of the meetings were experiencing problems with individuals calling in and conducting a different Twelve-Step meeting during the Al-Anon meetings. The largest phone line’s solution was to not allow entrance to callers for whom the system’s caller ID determined that the originating number was blocked. What they didn’t anticipate is that this would effectively ban access to those using Skype or other Internet programs to dial in to the phone meetings. Members using Skype contacted the WSO for resolution. The staff has coached members to contact the meeting’s trusted servants who handle the technical aspects, to make them aware of the problem, and to see if a solution can be found.

Telephone meeting members continue to ask why they can’t be part of the service structure, and they are cited the WSO policy on electronic meetings. The members wanted to be able to form a district in an attempt to help resolve their problems. Additional concerns expressed included that a phone number could be blocked and that blocking could affect all of the meetings on a specific phone line, rather than just one meeting.

The WSO is scheduled to hold periodic conference calls to support phone meetings beginning in February 2015. Each registered meeting will be invited to send one trusted servant to participate on the call.

Alateen e-book:

An e-book version of *Alateen—Hope for Children of Alcoholics* (eB-3) is available from a variety of electronic vendors in the U. S. and Canada. The e-book is currently available in English, Spanish, and French.

Alateen Facebook Page:

The Alateen Facebook page is now live. Announcements were posted for Area Delegates and Area Alateen Coordinators, along with a flyer that can be distributed in the Areas. Group Services plans to do two or three posts a week to start out, until some momentum is established. Announcements will be made in upcoming issues of *Group eNews* and *Alateen Talk*.

Alateen Chat Meetings:

The Washington and Iowa Areas have set up additional Alateen chat rooms and registered new meetings. This will bring the number of current weekly meetings to eight. The other six meetings are consistently getting two to four Alateens at each meeting.

Alateen Podcasts:

The Group Services Department has been unsuccessful in obtaining Alateen volunteers to participate in recording podcasts, and after a concerted effort over a period of six months has decided not to continue this effort for our Public Outreach and Members’ Web sites.

GROUP RECORDS

On-line Alateen Group Records:

The Group Records and Alateen Group Services staff hosted On-line Group Records training sessions using the “GoToMeeting” program for Area Alateen Process Persons (AAPPs) in conjunction with conference calls in April and in October/November 2014. Using “GoToMeeting” allowed the staff the ability to train multiple AAPPs at one time taking less staff time than one-on-one phone calls, provided “hands on” support, and helped AAPPs to clearly understand the different sections of the application.

The On-line Annual AMIAS Recertification and Group Records application was reviewed in detail. The training sessions occurred in conjunction with the release of the 2014 On-line Alateen AMIAS Recertification and On-line Group Records 4.3 which allow AAPPs to edit Alateen Group and AMIAS records.

Meeting information on Interactive Voice Response (IVR) toll-free meeting line:

Ninety three percent (13,945) of the Al-Anon meetings that qualify for their meeting information to be available on the WSO toll-free meeting line automated interactive phone voice system (IVR) are currently geocoded. Meetings must be geocoded in order to be added to the IVR, so meeting information can be provided to callers within the requested US zip code or city radius for Canada. Meeting data is sent on a regular basis to an outside vendor to assign geocode information and standardize the meeting addresses of newly registered groups. Changes in meeting locations for existing groups are also made. The Group Records staff is supplementing the process for the meeting addresses the vendor cannot successfully geocode by researching and manually adding into the WSO database geocode information of those 1,039 meetings.

The total number of registered Al-Anon & Alateen groups worldwide for 2014 is 25,457:

- US/PR/BDA Al-Anon 13,146
- US/PR/BDA Alateen 923
- Canada Al-Anon 1303
- Canada Alateen 84
- International Al-Anon 9314
- International Alateen 687
- 5,183 AMIAS in 2014

The total number of electronic meetings for 2014 is 144:

- 96 phone meetings on eight different lines includes seven Spanish-speaking meetings
- 48 on-line meetings, including 11 VOIP (Voice Over Internet Protocol)

A new criteria “county” has been added to the phone meeting search program used by operators responding to calls on the WSO tollfree meeting line. This feature allows phone operators to enhance the search of meetings in rural areas, and reduce the time spent on a call trying to locate a meeting. A member in Newfoundland/Labrador contacted the WSO regarding the inability to get their meeting information over the meeting line. The vendor was contacted and was able to rectify the problem. The vendor noted that the full name of the province must be provided in order for the IVR to work. Our toll-free operators now provide callers with this information.

2014-2017 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual (P-24/27) Mailing:

The Postal Service has returned 23 *Service Manuals* to the WSO to date. Return service was not requested for the bulk mailing of the *2014-2017 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual (P-24/27)* to the groups, Area Delegates, Chairs, and Coordinators. Half of the returned *Service Manuals* were sent to PO boxes and were returned because the owner of the box didn't pick up the mail in a timely manner, or the box rental had not been renewed at the time of delivery. Inquiries to the Group Records Department show that a significant number of the groups that reported not receiving a *Service Manual* had changed their CMA (Current Mailing Address) after the mailing.

MEMBERSHIP OUTREACH

World Service Conference and Area Delegates:

The Panel 54 Delegates were given access to e-Communities, the on-line system the WSO uses to communicate with the Delegates.

Ninety-seven voting members attended the 54th World Service Conference in Virginia Beach, Virginia, April 25-29, 2014. The Alternate Delegates for Ohio and BC/Yukon represented their Areas; the Colorado Area Chair represented that Area. Mexico sent a General Service Office (GSO) Representative to attend the Conference. The GSO in Mexico also sent a translator for its Representative. This was the third year the Conference has voted electronically rather than by paper ballots.

The *2014 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 *2014 World Service Conference Summary* was posted on the Members' Web site.

A fully executed contract was reached to record the 2015 World Service Conference. Since it had been determined that one complete set of CDs was sufficient for archival purposes, staff was able to reduce the cost by \$150.

e-Communities:

Following the upgrade of e-Communities in November 2013, a total of 29 Delegates participated in three separate training sessions for e-Communities using GoToMeeting in 2014. The sessions were held at different times on different dates in order to accommodate various schedules—morning, evening, and on a Saturday.

District Representatives needed help finding the “Download” button that one must click in order to have the option of opening a document. Staff began including that information in e-mail announcements. The issue of incompatibility was a temporary problem. In trouble-shooting with DRs, staff walked them through the process to correct that issue.

Discussion Boards:

Delegates continue to share on a variety of discussion topics, including sharing on the position of Area Alateen Process Persons, Background Checks, and Complaints. The most popular topic was Area Job Descriptions.

2013 International Convention Survey Results:

Of the 2,509 English-speaking members who received the survey, 739 completed the survey. Additionally, eight of the 29 French-speaking members and six of the 57 Spanish-speaking members attending the convention returned their surveys.

Sixty percent (of 750 responses) said they heard about the International Convention from the registration form at their meeting; 37 percent said *The Forum*; 30 percent said on-line; 16 percent said *Group e-News*; nine percent said a TEAM event.

Forty-nine percent of all responses said they did not book within our Room Block.

Ninety-six percent of all responses said they were satisfied with the overall registration experience including 69 percent who said they were very satisfied.

Fifty percent of all responses said they were aware that booking their housing through the International Convention Web site or mail-in form reduced registration costs for the International Convention participants and 40 percent said they were not aware.

Eighty-five percent of all responses said they found the International Convention Web site to be helpful.

Ninety-four percent of all responses said they were satisfied with their experience at the Convention including 70 percent who were very satisfied.

Ninety-one percent said they would encourage members to attend the 2018 International Convention in Baltimore, Maryland.

Al-Anon Participation in the 2015 International Convention of Alcoholics Anonymous (A. A.):

Information about the Al-Anon participation in the 2015 International Convention of A. A. was available through *Group e-News* and the Al-Anon International Convention Web site, www.al-anoninternationalconvention.org. The electronic means of distributing Convention registration information replaced the

mailing of the registration forms. This was due to the number of complaints received by the WSO from members and groups concerned with outside entities being provided with Al-Anon group meeting information.

The September issue of *Group eNews* included a registration link for the 2015 A.A. International Convention. Registration opened on Wednesday, September 3. The Al-Anon International Convention Web site was updated to include information about on-line and mail registration, housing, and volunteering to be of service for Al-Anon's participation in the Convention. A link to the Al-Anon International Convention Web site is also available on the Al-Anon Public Outreach and Members' Web sites.

TEAM Events:

In 2014, TEAM Events were held in Alabama/Northwest Florida, California North, California South, Florida South, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, New Mexico/El Paso, and Pennsylvania. Six of the events were one-day events. Members' comments on the TEAM Evaluation Forms were very positive. Most of the TEAM Events included shared leadership presentations.

New Members' Web site:

The new Members' Web site was launched in early February. Notices were sent via e-Communities to the links of service. Only two e-mails were received regarding not being able to access the new site. The members were told to use the link provided in the announcement, rather than links saved to their favorites. Several trusted servants sent compliments and notes of appreciation.

It was determined that a few items that were correct on the test site were not moved to the live site. Several other problems were identified and the major ones were corrected immediately.

The navigation tabs on the new Members Site are: Home, Individual, Groups, Service Structure, WSO, Public Outreach, and Alateen. Content is posted specific to each navigation tab as well as general information that appears in multiple tabs. The Home tab features one or more featured items. The featured items will change several times per year.

The Web site is currently in the process of being translated into French and Spanish. Those Web sites will become active in mid-2015.

Translation Department:

The following projects were translated into Spanish and French in 2014:

- Members' Web site text
- Al-Anon Focus/Declaration Table Card (S-24)
- Volunteer Survey for 2015
- Al-Anon/Alateen Area Conventions* (G-20)
- Area Archives* (G-30)
- Group Representative* (G-11)
- Meeting on Wheels* (G-22)
- Starting an Al-Anon Group* (G-12)
- Taking a Group Inventory* (G-8a and G-8b)
- 2015 Membership Survey Questionnaire
- Many Voices, One Journey* (B-31)

- Treatment Facilities Outreach Project Workshop Presenters Guide*
- Treatment Facilities Outreach Project Workshop Resources Guide*
- Using Al-Anon Principles to Resolve Conflicts* (K-70) Kit
- Talk to Each Other—Resolving Conflicts within Al-Anon* (S-73)

Booklet

Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism 2015

Al-Anon/Alateen International: Africa

Ghana: Members have started a new meeting in the city of Ho. Another member contacted the World Service Office for registration materials to start a new meeting in Accra. There is one group located in Kumasi Ashanti that is currently registered with the WSO.

Nigeria: A contact reported that members are interested in starting an Al-Anon group in the city of Abuja. The World Service Office sent registration materials to the contact. Nigeria has two groups registered with the WSO; one is located in River State, and the other is in Uya Akwa Ibon.

South Africa: The International Al-Anon General Services Meeting (IAGSM) Delegate shared that, because of the information received during the 2012 IAGSM about Alateen Members Involved in Alateen Service (AMIAS), Alateen groups started growing again.

Zimbabwe: A member from the Harare meeting reported that they have restarted an afternoon group that had previously stopped because of poor attendance.

Europe

Albania: The first English-speaking Al-Anon group registered with the World Service Office is located in the city of Tirana.

Austria: The General Service Office has a bilingual English-speaking member who is the contact to the World Service Office on behalf of the structure. This is now a service role with a dedicated e-mail for the structure to ensure that communication is received from the WSO in a timely manner.

Belgium/French: The General Service Office is planning to host the 2015 European Zonal Meeting in Brugge.

Belgium /Flemish: Their Literature Committee cooperated with the Literature Committee for the Netherlands regarding ongoing literature projects to update Flemish material. The General Service Office agreed to co-host the 2015 European Zonal Meeting with Belgium/French.

Czech Republic: There are currently two English-speaking groups registered in Prague.

Denmark: The General Service Office shared that although they were not able to send a representative to the 2014 IAGSM, service activity in the structure this year remained steady. There are currently 49 Al-Anon and three Alateen groups.

Finland: The General Service Office started what they identified as "foundations" to long-term planning. This process has included

dialog between the General Service Office and the Area Delegates within their service structure.

France: Paris hosted the eighth annual Al-Anon convention in April. Although this was a French-speaking meeting, there were English-speaking meetings available. The theme was “Unity and the First Tradition.” The service structure sent a Delegate to the 2014 International Al-Anon General Services Meeting.

Germany: The General Service Office launched a new homepage that includes stock photos to make the page more appealing. An update of the page helps newcomers and members to find meeting information on the Web site and has helped to reduce the workload of all that have the responsibility of maintaining the page.

Greece: The English-speaking contact, on behalf of the Al-Anon Information Service located in Athens, reported that they produced a public outreach magazine in that structure similar to *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism*. They used the World Service structure model and encouraged the members in the groups to purchase the magazines to give to educators, professionals, and similar service providers.

Hungary: A new English-speaking contact was elected to be the liaison to the World Service Office. The Literature Committee translated public outreach materials and continues to work on translations of the following:

Members Interested in Speaking (G-1)
Alcoholism, the Family Disease (P-4)
So You Love an Alcoholic (P-14)
What Do You Do about the Alcoholic's Drinking? (P-19)
Understanding Ourselves & Alcoholism (P-48)
Troubled by Someone's Drinking? (S-17)
Has Your Life Been Affected by Someone Else's Drinking? (S-20)
Did You Grow Up with a Problem Drinker? (20 questions) (S-25)
Fact Sheet for Professionals (S-37)

Italy: The Literature Committee informed the World Service Office that they are updating their recovery pamphlets with the new design cover used by the WSO. The first pamphlet updated was *Understanding Ourselves & Alcoholism* (P-48). The General Service Office presented a bid that was accepted to host the 2016 International Al-Anon General Services Meeting in Rome.

Lithuania: A member on behalf of a group located in Vilnius contacted the World Service Office for clarification regarding the use of the A.A. “big book” in Al-Anon meetings. In summarizing the World Service Office response, the member was advised that A.A. literature is not used at Al-Anon meetings because it is written for and from the viewpoint of alcoholics and is not Al-Anon/Alateen Conference Approved Literature. Reliance on opinions expressed in A.A. and other outside materials can distort the Al-Anon approach.

Netherlands: The General Service Office contact reported that the Literature Committee has started a revision of the translation of the daily reader *Hope for Today* (B-27) before reprinting it. The next project scheduled is *Paths to Recovery—Al-Anon's Steps, Traditions, and Concepts* (B-24). The national Dutch assembly voted to have this translated by a professional. Once this is complete, the

Literature Committee will have the responsibility of making any revisions of the translation to make sure the translation reflects the Al-Anon language and heart of the program.

Norway: A representative from the General Service Office reported that they evaluated their current literature inventory, as members are now requesting more Conference Approved Literature in the Norwegian language. Plans have started with the translation of the *Reaching for Personal Freedom—Living the Legacies* (P-92).

Poland: The contact stated that there were two Alateen members who were seated as Delegates at their annual service meeting. There was also discussion at the meeting about their current By-Laws as well as evaluation of the current roles and responsibilities of those involved in service within the structure. All discussions are ongoing.

Russia: The contact on behalf of the service structure submitted all documentation regarding service materials that were printed to ensure that all World Service Office files are up-to-date.

Spain: The service structure celebrated the 51st Anniversary of Al-Anon in Spain. Professionals and the media were invited to attend. Sharings from Al-Anon members gave the perspective of the effects of alcoholism from a wife, a son, and an A.A. member.

Switzerland/French: The General Service Office cooperated with an English-speaking group and provided financial assistance to the group to produce a public outreach informational flyer. The purpose of the flyer was to share with those in the professional community (specifically physicians) that Al-Anon is a resource for clients.

Switzerland/German: The service structure celebrated 50 years of Al-Anon at their annual convention, with Alcoholics Anonymous participation. At the convention, a timeline of the Al-Anon history from 1964-2014 was presented. A long-time member shared her story about the structure, and the convention culminated with the release of 100 balloons that contained an Al-Anon message of hope.

Ukraine: The contact on behalf of the Al-Anon Information Service located in Sinelnikovo reported that because the Inter-group includes representatives from cities in the South East of Ukraine, they have had difficulties due to the conflict in the East of Ukraine. They indicated that this has had an effect on communication between the groups and the World Service Office.

Asia

India: The contact on behalf of the General Service Office shared that the service structure remained busy over the past year. Their Service Conference took place in May and was attended by ten Board of Trustee members and 20 Delegates from all over the country. The Conference was hosted in Kolkata.

Indonesia: Members contacted the World Service Office as they began the process of exploring the translation of literature. The World Service Office was informed that the majority of people in Indonesia cannot speak or read English. Six English-speaking meetings have registered with the WSO.

Iran: The liaison in Iran reported that three books were translated into Farsi. The books are:

One Day at a Time in Al-Anon (B-6)

Courage to Change (B-16)

Paths to Recovery—Al-Anon's Steps, Traditions, and Concepts (B-24)

The contact was advised that none of these books have received approval from the World Service Office and, as a result, the current structure is in violation of the copyright. The liaison said he would pass on this information to the membership, and agreed to send a copy of each book to the World Service Office for review.

Israel: A new meeting registered with the World Service Office. This is the third meeting in Jerusalem and the fifth meeting for the country.

Japan: The contact reported that in order to make meetings available for members who can't participate in weekly meetings (or do not have meetings in close proximity to where they live), there are special meetings organized by the General Service Office that are held monthly.

Korea: A contact on behalf of the General Service Office stated that the service structure has decided to translate Hope for Today (B-27).

Australia/New Zealand

Australia: The Service Conference in May was held in Melbourne with the theme: "Maintaining Al-Anon's Spiritual Principles into the 21st Century." This theme encouraged members to continue to use and understand the simple spiritual principles of the three Legacies for personal recovery. This fosters strength and harmony in the groups and strengthens service in our fellowship in this way through 2014. Further efforts were made to have their public service announcements shown on television stations nationally.

New Zealand: The General Service Office appointed a new General Secretary for the office.

North and Central America

Mexico: The service structure sent a representative to the World Service Conference and two Delegates to the 2014 International Al-Anon General Services Meeting that also took place in Virginia Beach, Virginia.

Turks and Caicos Island: The first English-speaking meeting located in the city of Providenciales registered with the World Service Office.

South America

Argentina: The General Service Office explored ways to assist members in their service structure who are visually handicapped.

Brazil: The General Service Office faced some financial challenges and needed to use their Reserve Fund. There has since been a successful appeal to the groups, and a partial recovery has occurred.

Peru: The General Service Office reported that a Strategic Plan was discussed by the Board of Trustees during the Conference. The Conference voted to accept the plan.

Uruguay: The General Service Office hosted their 18th National Service Conference in November.

TRIAL ALATEEN WORK GROUP

Judy K. / Sandi C., Chairperson

Mary Lou M., Associate Director of Member Services

In early 2014, the Alateen Work Group created its first electronic survey for Alateen members. Information about the survey was provided to Alateens in *Alateen Talk*, in *Group e-News*, and through Area Alateen Coordinators.

Over 100 Alateens responded to the survey on teens and technology. A list of qualified teens for future projects was also created from the survey. All respondents who indicated willingness to participate in future projects listed "Another survey" as a preferred medium. This success illustrates the importance of finding easy, on-the-spot, electronic means of engaging Alateen members.

The survey results confirmed that teens consider Facebook the predominant social media. WSO staff began the process of setting up an "Alateen WSO" Facebook page for public outreach. A Task Force of four Alateens provided input on the Facebook page layout. The Alateen Facebook page went live in mid-November.

INTERNATIONAL COORDINATION COMMITTEE

Connie H., Chairperson

Jennie M. / Debbie G., Co-Chairpersons

Marsha W., Associate Director Member Services—International

Thirteen service structures participated in the Seventeenth International Al-Anon General Service Meeting (IAGSM) held in Virginia Beach, Virginia. The theme of the meeting was "Living Our Spiritual Principles." The meeting took place October 16-18, 2014. There were nine general sessions and six workshops.

In one presentation, one of the Delegates from Germany spoke of using the spiritual principles in Concepts Four and Ten to attract volunteers to service. "Some service positions come with more responsibilities than others, but none are more or less important than others. All have in common that they need clearly defined job descriptions to avoid conflict." A Delegate shared that, "Remembering to say thank you in a heartfelt manner for a job well done, and thanking the Chair of the meeting for doing the job, promote attraction."

In a workshop about why their structures believe participation in the IAGSM is important, a Delegate shared, "The previous Delegate brought so much knowledge—something that was so important that the structure realized that it would not be what it is today without participation in the past IAGSMs. Personal, close links to the WSO are very important and helpful."

The site for the next IAGSM is scheduled for 2016 in Rome, Italy.

CONFERENCE LEADERSHIP TEAM

Bev A. / Tina B., Chairperson

Karen W.-P. / Sandie D., Co-Chairperson

Suzanne M., Associate Director of Member Services—Conference

In initial planning for the 2015 WSC, the Conference Leadership Team unanimously agreed on (and the Board approved) the 2015 Conference theme: *Living Our Spiritual Principles: Expanding Our Vision*. The full cost to attend the 2015 World Service Conference was set at \$2,447 and the Equalized Expense at \$1,493.

BUSINESS SERVICES

In December, we began using the cloud version of Outlook (Microsoft 365) for the e-mail system. E-mails will continue to be monitored to ensure appropriate e-mails are being received in the office.

We have upgraded all staff computers with Microsoft Office 2010. We could not upgrade to 2013 due to some conflicts with other programs we are using.

In March of 2013, we released *Having Had A Spiritual Awakening* (eB-25) in English-only on various electronic book platforms. In 2014, we have sold 1,103 copies of the book worldwide.

In July, the English, French, and Spanish electronic versions of *How Al-Anon Works* (eB-22) were added to additional electronic book platforms. This year, we have sold 3,405 copies of the English version, 17 copies in Spanish and 7 copies in French. The audio version in English-only (eA-22) sold 132 copies.

An audio version of *One Day at a Time in Al-Anon* (eA-6) in English-only sold 50 copies after being released in May, 2014.

The electronic version of *Alateen—Hope for Children* (eB-3) was released on various electronic platforms in September in English and Spanish, and in November in French. Sales were 82 in English, 0 in Spanish; and 1 in French.

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Penny R. / Jennie M., Chairpersons

David Zach, Director of Business Services

The Finance Committee meets monthly and reports to the Executive Committee immediately following the Finance meeting. During the meeting prior to Conference, the Finance Committee reports any actions 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.

Staff finalized the contract for the 2015 WSC, which will be held at the Wyndham Virginia Beach Oceanfront in Virginia Beach, Virginia, April 19-23, 2015. The following sessions will take place on Sunday, April 19: The New Member Orientation Session, Committees/Task Forces/Thought Forces, Sharing Area Highlights, and the Opening Dinner. The Conference will begin Monday, April 20, and the Closing Dinner will be held Thursday, April 23. Conference members going to Stepping Stones will leave for New York on April 24 and visit Stepping Stones on April 25.

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 amounts to send an Area Delegate to the World Service Conference or a Structure Delegate to the International General Services Meeting to the Board of Trustees.
- Review of each department's budget with the Director of that service in preparing the Preliminary 2015 Budget for presentation to the Board of Trustees in January.
- Recommendation to the Board of Trustees that the Preliminary Budget be sent to World Service Conference members after the auditors have completed the Annual Audit report.
- Review, revise (when appropriate), and submit recommendations for the Investment Strategy Goals to the Board of Trustees for approval.
- Review Investment Philosophy.
- Review Finance Committee Goals and Objectives.
- Review the Investments in the Reserve Fund
- Meet with the Investment Manager twice a year.

Other non-routine actions included:

- Recommended that future versions for *Alateen—Hope for Children of Alcoholics* in French (FB3) be offered only electronically
- Recommended retaining the current pricing for *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism 2016*.
- Adjusted the price of the electronic version of *Alateen—Hope for Children* (eB-3) to comply with the vendor's guidelines.
- Finalized the Finance Committee presentation for the 2014 World Service Conference and developed the Finance Committee presentation for the 2015 World Service Conference.

AL-ANON FAMILY GROUP HEADQUARTERS (CANADA) INC.

(the "Corporation")
BY-LAW NO. 1

Pursuant to the *Canada Not-for-profit Corporations Act* (S.C. 2009, c.23) and the continuance of the Corporation from the *Canada Corporations Act* (R.S.C. 1970, c. C-32) to the *Canada Not-for-profit Corporations Act*, this By-law No. 1, being a by-law relating generally to the conduct of the affairs of the Corporation, replaces all by-laws of the Corporation under the *Canada Corporations Act*.

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SECTION 1 – GENERAL

1.01 Definitions

In this by-law and all other by-laws of the Corporation, unless the context otherwise requires:

- (a) "Act" means the Canada Not-for-profit Corporations Act S.C. 2009, c.23 including the Regulations made pursuant to the Act, and any statute or regulations that may be substituted, as amended from time to time;
- (b) "articles" means the original or restated articles of incorporation or articles of amendment, amalgamation, continuance, reorganization, arrangement or revival of the Corporation;
- (c) "board" means the board of directors of the Corporation and "director" means a member of the board;
- (d) "by-law" means this by-law and any other by-laws of the Corporation as amended and which are, from time to time, in force and effect;
- (d) "meeting of members" includes an annual meeting of members or a special meeting of members;
- (e) "ordinary resolution" means a resolution passed by a majority of the votes cast on that resolution;

- (f) "Regulations" means the regulations made under the Act, as amended, restated or in effect from time to time; and
- (g) "special resolution" means a resolution passed by a majority of not less than two-thirds (2/3) of the votes cast on that resolution.

1.02 Interpretation

In the interpretation of this by-law, words in the singular include the plural and vice-versa, words in one gender include all genders, and "person" includes an individual, body corporate, partnership, trust and unincorporated organization. Other than as specified in section 1.01 above, words and expressions defined in the Act have the same meanings when used in these by-laws.

1.03 Corporate Seal

The Corporation may have a corporate seal in the form approved from time to time by the board. If a corporate seal is approved by the board, the secretary of the Corporation shall be the custodian of the corporate seal.

1.04 Execution of Documents

Deeds, transfers, assignments, contracts, obligations and other instruments in writing requiring execution by the Corporation must be signed by any two (2) of its officers or directors, subject to the following: the board may from time to time direct the manner in which and the person or persons by whom a particular document or type of document shall be executed. Any person authorized to sign any document may affix the corporate seal (if any) to the document. Any signing officer may certify a copy of any instrument, resolution, by-law or other document of the Corporation to be a true copy thereof.

1.05 Financial Year End

The financial year end of the Corporation shall be determined by the board.

1.06 Banking Arrangements

The banking business of the Corporation shall be transacted at such bank, trust company or other firm or corporation carrying on a banking business in Canada or elsewhere as the board may designate, appoint or authorize from time to time by resolution. The banking business or any part of it shall be transacted by an officer or officers of the Corporation and/or other persons as the board may by resolution from time to time designate, direct or authorize.

1.07 Annual Financial Statements

The Corporation shall send to the members a copy of the annual financial statements and other documents referred to in subsection 172(1) (Annual Financial Statements) of the Act or a copy of a publication of the Corporation reproducing the information contained in the documents. Instead of sending the documents, the Corporation may send a summary to each member along with a notice informing the member of the pro-

cedure for obtaining a copy of the documents themselves free of charge. The Corporation is not required to send the documents or a summary to a member who, in writing, declines to receive such documents.

1.08 Borrowing Powers

The directors of the Corporation may, without authorization of the members,

- (a) borrow money on the credit of the Corporation;
- (b) issue, reissue, sell, pledge or hypothecate debt obligations of the Corporation;
- (c) give a guarantee on behalf of the Corporation to secure performance of an obligation of any person; and
- (d) mortgage, hypothecate, pledge or otherwise create a security interest in all or any property of the Corporation, owned or subsequently acquired, to secure any debt obligation of the Corporation.

SECTION 2 – MEMBERSHIP

2.01 Membership Conditions

Subject to the articles, there shall be one class of members in the Corporation. Membership in the Corporation shall be limited to the directors of the Corporation and each director shall be a member of the Corporation for the period of time they serve as a director. Each member shall be entitled to receive notice of, attend and vote at all meetings of the members of the Corporation.

Pursuant to subsection 197(1) (Fundamental Changes) of the Act, a special resolution of the members is required to make any amendments to this section of the by-laws if those amendments affect membership rights and/or conditions described in paragraphs 197(1)(e), (h), (l) or (m).

2.02 Notice of Members' Meeting

Notice of the time and place of a meeting of members shall be given to each member entitled to vote at the meeting by the following means:

- (a) by mail, courier or personal delivery to each member entitled to vote at the meeting, during a period of 21 to 60 days before the day on which the meeting is to be held; or
- (b) by telephonic, electronic or other communication facility to each member entitled to vote at the meeting, during a period of 21 to 35 days before the day on which the meeting is to be held.

Pursuant to subsection 197(1) (Fundamental Changes) of the Act, a special resolution of the members is required to make any amendment to the by-laws of the Corporation to change the manner of giving notice to members entitled to vote at a meeting of members.

SECTION 3 – MEMBERSHIP DUES AND TERMINATION

3.01 Membership Dues

There shall be no fees or dues payable by members for membership in the Corporation.

3.02 Termination of Membership

A membership in the Corporation is terminated when:

- (a) the member dies, or, in the case of a member that is a corporation, the corporation is dissolved;
- (b) the member resigns;
- (c) the member is removed from membership in accordance with section 3.03 below;
- (d) the member's term of membership, if any, expires;
- (e) the Corporation is liquidated and dissolved under the Act; or
- (f) the member's membership is otherwise terminated in accordance with the articles or by-laws.

Subject to the articles, upon any termination of membership, the rights of the member automatically cease to exist.

3.03 Removal from Membership

A member may be removed for just cause by an affirmative vote of two-thirds of the board. Just cause is defined as an absence from two meetings of the board during any 12 month period; a conflict of interest or a conflict of commitment violation; or failure to adhere to any written policies and procedures of the board. Such removal shall occur at a meeting of the board. Upon a finding of just cause, the chair of the board, or such other officer as may be designated by the board, shall send a notice of the proposed removal by mail, certified or registered, if possible, to the last recorded address of such member at least fifteen (15) days before final action is taken on such removal. The member shall have the opportunity to present any relevant information, in writing, in person, or through a representative, to the board before final action is taken.

If no written submission is received by the chair of the board, the chair of the board, or such other officer as may be designated by the board, may proceed to notify the member that the member is removed from membership in the Corporation. If a written submission is received in accordance with this section, the board shall consider such submissions in arriving at a final decision and shall notify the member concerning such final decision within a further 20 days from the date of receipt of the submission. The board's decision shall be final and binding on the member, without any further right of appeal.

SECTION 4 – MEETINGS OF MEMBERS

4.01 Place of Members' Meeting

Subject to compliance with section 159 (Place of Members' Meetings) of the Act, meetings of the members may be held at any place within Canada or elsewhere as the board may determine.

4.02 Persons Entitled to be Present

The only persons entitled to be present at a meeting of members shall be those entitled to vote at the meeting, the directors and the public accountant of the Corporation and such other persons who are entitled or required under any provision of the Act, articles or by-laws of the Corporation to be present at the meeting. Any other person may be admitted only on the invitation of the chair of the meeting or by resolution of the members.

4.03 Chair of the Meeting

In the event that the chair of the board and the vice-chair of the board are absent, the members who are present and entitled to vote at the meeting shall choose one of their number to chair the meeting.

4.04 Quorum

A quorum at any meeting of the members (unless a greater number of members is required to be present by the Act) shall be a majority of the members entitled to vote at the meeting. Each member shall have one vote. In the absence of a quorum, a majority of the members present may adjourn the meeting from time to time until a quorum is obtained. If a quorum is present at the opening of a meeting of members, the members present may proceed with the business of the meeting even if a quorum is not present throughout the meeting.

4.05 Votes to Govern

At any meeting of members every question shall, unless otherwise provided by the articles or by-laws or by the Act, be determined by a majority of the votes cast on the question.

SECTION 5 – DIRECTORS

5.01 Directors' Powers

The directors may exercise all such powers and do all such acts or things as may be exercised or done by the Corporation that are not by the Act, articles or by-laws expressly directed or required to be done in some other manner. Subject to the Act, articles and by-laws the board shall manage or supervise the management of the activities and affairs of the Corporation.

5.02 Number of Directors

The board shall consist of the number of directors specified in the articles. If the articles provide for a minimum and maximum number of directors, the board shall be comprised of the fixed number of directors as determined from time to time by the members by ordinary resolution or, if the ordinary resolution

empowers the directors to determine the number, by resolution of the board. In the case of a soliciting corporation the minimum number of directors may not be fewer than three (3), at least two of whom are not officers or employees of the Corporation or its affiliates.

5.03 Election and Term

Subject to the articles, the members will elect the directors at each annual meeting at which an election of directors is required. If an election of directors is not held at the proper time, the incumbent directors shall continue in office until their successors are elected.

The directors of the Corporation shall be elected and shall retire in rotation. At the first election of directors following the effective date of this by-law, one-third (1/3) of the directors shall be elected for a three (3)-year term, one-third (1/3) of the directors shall be elected for a two (2)-year term and one-third (1/3) of the directors shall be elected for a one (1)-year term. Thereafter, except where an election is held to fill the unexpired portion of a term, newly elected directors shall be elected for three (3)-year terms. Directors of the Corporation shall be eligible for election to the board for a maximum of two (2) consecutive terms.

5.04 Vacancy in Office of Director

The office of a director shall be automatically vacated if:

- (a) the director dies;
- (b) the director delivers a written notice of resignation to the Corporation;
- (c) the director ceases to be qualified for election as a director; or
- (d) the director is removed as a member in accordance with section 3.03.

5.05 Filling Vacancy in Office of Director

Subject to the Act, a quorum of the board may fill a vacancy in the board, except for a vacancy resulting from:

- (a) an increase in the number or minimum number of directors; or
- (b) a failure of the members to elect the number or minimum number of directors provided for in the articles.

SECTION 6 – MEETINGS OF DIRECTORS

6.01 Calling of Meetings

Meetings of the board may be called by the chair of the board, the vice-chair of the board or any two (2) directors at any time.

6.02 Notice of Meeting

Notice of the time and place for the holding of a meeting of

the board shall be given in the manner provided in Section 9.01 (Method of Giving Notices) of this by-law to every director of the Corporation not less than forty-eight (48) hours before the time when the meeting is to be held, if delivered or sent other than by mail. Notice by mail shall be sent at least fourteen (14) days prior to the meeting. Notice of a meeting shall not be necessary if all of the directors are present, and none objects to the holding of the meeting, or if those absent have waived notice of or have otherwise signified their consent to the holding of such meeting. Notice of an adjourned meeting is not required if the time and place of the adjourned meeting is announced at the original meeting. Unless the by-law otherwise provides, no notice of meeting need specify the purpose or the business to be transacted at the meeting except that a notice of meeting of directors shall specify any matter referred to in subsection 138(2) (Limits on Authority) of the Act that is to be dealt with at the meeting.

6.03 Regular Meetings

The board may appoint a day or days in any month or months for regular meetings of the board at a place and hour to be named. A copy of any resolution of the board fixing the place and time of such regular meetings of the board shall be sent to each director forthwith after being passed, but no other notice shall be required for any such regular meeting except if subsection 136(3) (Notice of Meeting) of the Act requires the purpose thereof or the business to be transacted to be specified in the notice.

6.04 Quorum

A majority of directors in office, from time to time, but no less than two (2) directors, shall constitute a quorum for meetings of the board.

6.05 Votes to Govern

At all meetings of the board, every question shall be decided by a majority of the votes cast on the question.

SECTION 7 – OFFICERS

7.01 Appointment

The board may designate the offices of the Corporation, appoint officers on an annual or more frequent basis, specify their duties and, subject to the Act, delegate to such officers the power to manage the affairs of the Corporation. A director may be appointed to any office of the Corporation. Two or more offices may be held by the same person. Every officer appointed shall also be a director of the Corporation, unless these by-laws provide otherwise.

7.02 Term of Office

Each officer of the Corporation shall be appointed to hold office for a term of one (1) year. If an election of officers is not held at the proper time, the incumbent officers shall continue in office until their successors are elected.

7.03 Description of Offices

Unless otherwise specified by the board (which may, subject to the Act modify, restrict or supplement such duties and powers), the offices of the Corporation, if designated and if officers are appointed, shall have the following duties and powers associated with their positions:

- (a) Chair of the Board – The chair of the board, if one is to be appointed, shall be a director. The chair of the board, if any, shall, when present, preside at all meetings of the board and of the members. The chair shall have such other duties and powers as the board may specify. The chair of the board shall be eligible to be appointed to office for a maximum of three (3) terms.
- (b) Vice-Chair of the Board – The vice-chair of the board, if one is to be appointed, shall be a director. If the chair of the board is absent or is unable or refuses to act, the vice-chair of the board, if any, shall, when present, preside at all meetings of the board and of the members. The vice-chair shall have such other duties and powers as the board may specify.
- (c) Executive Director – If appointed, the Executive Director shall be the chief executive officer of the Corporation and shall be responsible for implementing the strategic plans and policies of the Corporation. The Executive Director shall, subject to the authority of the board, have general supervision of the affairs of the Corporation.
- (d) Secretary – If appointed, the secretary shall attend and be the secretary of all meetings of the board, members and committees of the board. The secretary shall enter or cause to be entered in the Corporation's minute book, minutes of all proceedings at such meetings; the secretary shall give, or cause to be given, as and when instructed, notices to members, directors, the public accountant and members of committees; the secretary, or such other officer or employee as designated by the secretary, shall be the custodian of all books, papers, records, documents and other instruments belonging to the Corporation.

The powers and duties of all other officers of the Corporation shall be such as the terms of their engagement call for or the board or Executive Director requires of them. The board may from time to time and subject to the Act, vary, add to or limit the powers and duties of any officer. In the event that any of the officers above are not appointed, to the extent that such officers have any responsibilities pursuant to any other provisions of this by-law, the board may assign those responsibilities to another officer or employee of the Corporation.

7.04 Vacancy in Office

In the absence of a written agreement to the contrary, the board may remove, whether for cause or without cause, any officer of the Corporation. Unless so removed, an officer shall hold office until the earlier of:

- (a) the officer's successor being appointed;
- (b) the officer's resignation;

- (c) such officer ceasing to be a director (if a necessary qualification of appointment); or
- (d) such officer's death.

If the office of any officer of the Corporation shall be or become vacant, the directors may, by resolution, appoint a person to fill such vacancy.

SECTION 8 – COMMITTEES

8.01 Committees

The board may from time to time establish any committee or other advisory body, as it deems necessary or appropriate for such purposes and, subject to the Act, with such powers as the board shall see fit, or terminate any committee or other advisory body, as it deems necessary or appropriate. The size, composition, structure and election process for members of any such committee shall be established by the board. Any such committee shall operate within the rules and directions as the board may from time to time make. Any committee member may be removed by resolution of the board.

SECTION 9 – NOTICES

9.01 Method of Giving Notices

Any notice (which term includes any communication or document), other than notice of a meeting of members, to be given (which term includes sent, delivered or served) pursuant to the Act, the articles, the by-laws or otherwise to a member, director, officer or member of a committee of the board or to the public accountant shall be sufficiently given:

- (a) if delivered personally to the person to whom it is to be given or if delivered to such person's address as shown in the records of the Corporation or, in the case of notice to a director, if delivered to the director's latest address as shown in the records of the Corporation or in the last notice that was sent by the Corporation in accordance with section 128 (Notice of directors) or 134 (Notice of change of directors) and received by the Director appointed by the federal Minister of Industry under the Act to administer the Act;
- (b) if mailed by prepaid ordinary or air mail to such person at such person's recorded address, or in the case of notice to a director to the latest address as shown in the records of the Corporation or in the last notice that was sent by the Corporation in accordance with section 128 (Notice of directors) or 134 (Notice of change of directors) and received by the Director appointed by the federal Minister of Industry under the Act to administer the Act;
- (c) if sent to such person by telephonic, electronic or other communication facility at such person's recorded address for that purpose; or
- (d) if provided in the form of an electronic document in accordance with Part 17 of the Act.

A notice so delivered shall be deemed to have been given when it is delivered personally or to the recorded address as aforesaid; a notice so mailed shall be deemed to have been given when deposited in a post office or public letter box; and a notice so sent by any means of transmitted or recorded communication shall be deemed to have been given when dispatched or delivered to the appropriate communication company or agency or its representative for dispatch. The secretary may change or cause to be changed the recorded address of any member, director, officer, public accountant or member of a committee of the board in accordance with any information believed by the secretary to be reliable. The declaration by the secretary that notice has been given pursuant to this by-law shall be sufficient and conclusive evidence of the giving of such notice. The signature of any director or officer of the Corporation to any notice or other document to be given by the Corporation may be written, stamped, type-written or printed or partly written, stamped, type-written or printed.

9.02 Omissions and Errors

The accidental omission to give any notice to any member, director, officer, member of a committee of the board or public accountant, or the non-receipt of any notice by any such person where the Corporation has provided notice in accordance with the by-law or any error in any notice not affecting its substance shall not invalidate any action taken at any meeting to which the notice pertained or otherwise founded on such notice.

SECTION 10 – ELECTRONIC MEETINGS

10.01 Participation by Electronic Means

If the Corporation chooses to make available a telephonic, electronic or other communication facility that permits all participants to communicate adequately with each other during a member or director meeting, any person entitled to attend such meeting may participate in the meeting by means of such telephonic, electronic or other communication facility in the manner provided by the Act.

A person participating in a meeting by such means is deemed to be present at the meeting. Notwithstanding any other provision of this by-law, any person participating in a meeting pursuant to this section who is entitled to vote at that meeting may vote, in accordance with the Act, by means of any telephonic, electronic or other communication facility that the Corporation has made available for that purpose.

10.02 Meeting Held Entirely by Electronic Means

If the directors or members of the Corporation call a meeting pursuant to the Act, those directors or members, as the case may be, may determine that the meeting shall be held, in accordance with the Act and the Regulations, entirely by means of a telephonic, electronic or other communication facility that permits all participants to communicate adequately with each other during the meeting.

SECTION 11 – INDEMNITIES TO DIRECTORS AND OTHERS

11.01 Indemnification

Subject to the Act, the Corporation shall indemnify a director or officer, a former director or officer, or a person who acts or acted at the Corporation's request as a director or an officer or in a similar capacity of another entity, against all costs, charges and expenses, including an amount paid to settle an action or satisfy a judgment, reasonably incurred by the individual in respect of any civil, criminal, administrative, investigative or other proceeding in which the individual is involved because of that association with the Corporation or other entity, if such individual (a) acted honestly and in good faith with a view to the best interests of the Corporation or, as the case may be, to the best interests of the other entity for which the individual acted as director or officer or in a similar capacity at the Corporation's request; and (b) in the case of a criminal or administrative action or proceeding that is enforced by a monetary penalty, had reasonable grounds for believing that such conduct was lawful. The Corporation shall also indemnify such person in such other circumstances as the Act or law permits or requires. Nothing in this by-law shall limit the right of any person entitled to indemnity to claim indemnity apart from the provisions of this by-law.

Section 12 – DISPUTE RESOLUTION (only if Ontario, if not remove)

12.01 Dispute Resolution Mechanism

If a dispute or controversy among members, directors, officers or committee members of the Corporation arising out of or related to the articles or by-laws, or out of any aspect of the activities or affairs of the Corporation is not resolved in private meetings between the parties, then such dispute or controversy shall be settled by a process of dispute resolution as follows to the exclusion of such persons instituting a lawsuit or legal action:

- (a) the dispute shall be settled by arbitration before a single arbitrator, in accordance with the *Arbitration Act, 1991* (Ontario) or as otherwise agreed upon by the parties to the dispute. All proceedings relating to arbitration shall be kept confidential, and there shall be no disclosure of any kind. The decision of the arbitrator shall be final and binding and shall not be subject to appeal on a question of fact, law or mixed fact and law; and
- (b) all costs of the arbitrator shall be borne by such parties as may be determined by the arbitrator.

SECTION 13 – BY-LAWS AND AMENDMENTS

13.01 By-laws and Amendments

Subject to the articles, the board of directors may, by resolution, make, amend or repeal any by-laws that regulate the activities or affairs of the Corporation. Any such by-law, amendment or repeal shall be effective from the date of the resolution of directors until the next meeting of members where it may be confirmed, rejected or amended by the members by ordinary resolution. If the by-law, amendment or repeal is confirmed or confirmed as amended by the members it remains effective in the form in which it was confirmed, subject to any rebuttals by the World Service Conference or any successor. The by-law, amendment or repeal ceases to have effect if it is not submitted to the members at the next meeting of members, if it is rejected by the members at the meeting, or if it has been disallowed by the World Service Conference or any successor.

This section does not apply to a by-law that requires a special resolution of the members according to subsection 197(1) (fundamental change) of the Act because such by-law amendments or repeals are only effective when confirmed by members.

13.02 Invalidity of any provisions of this by-law

The invalidity or unenforceability of any provision of this by-law shall not affect the validity or enforceability of the remaining provisions of this by-law.

SECTION 14 – EFFECTIVE DATE

14.01 Effective Date

This By-law shall come into force on the date that the Corporation continues under the *Canada Not-for-profit Corporations Act*.

CERTIFIED to be By-Law No. 1 of the Corporation, passed by the Board of the Corporation by resolution on the 18th day of July, 2014, and confirmed by the members of the Corporation by special resolution on the 18th day of July, 2014, and to be effective on the date that the Corporation continues under the *Canada Not-for-profit Corporations Act*.

DATED as of the 18th day of July, 2014.

RICHARD L. B. – Director

MARILYN M. – Director

This By-Law No. 1 came into force on August 28, 2014, the date of continuance as reflected on the Certificate of Continuance issued by Industry Canada under the *Canada Not-for-profit Corporations Act*.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Trustees at Large

Tina B.	Connie H.	John McL.
Sandra C.	Judy K.	Harriet T.
Terry F.	Jennie McC.	Karen W-P.

Regional Trustees

Paula B., US Southeast	Donna E., US Northwest
Sandie D., Canada Central	Joyce B., US Southwest
Joan S., US Northeast	Annette T., US South Central
Marilyn M., Canada West	Debbie G., US North Central

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Karen R., Chairperson	Judy K., Policy Chairperson
Ric B., Executive Director	Bev A., Member at Large
Paula B., Board Chairperson (Ex-officio)	Roger C., Member at Large
Jennie McC., Treasurer	Barbara O., Staff member

NON-TRUSTEE COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON

Carrie K., Executive Committee for Real Property Management Chairperson**

WORLD SERVICE OFFICE STAFF

Ric B., Executive Director	Pamela Walters, Marketing Information Analyst*
David Zach, Director of Business Services*	Patrick Q., Associate Director of Communications—Media
Barbara O., Director of Member Services	Suzanne M., Associate Director of Member Services—Conference
Robert S., Director of Communication Services	Tom C., Associate Director of Communications—Literature
Claire R., Associate Director of Communications—Professionals	
Marsha W., Associate Director of Member Services—International	

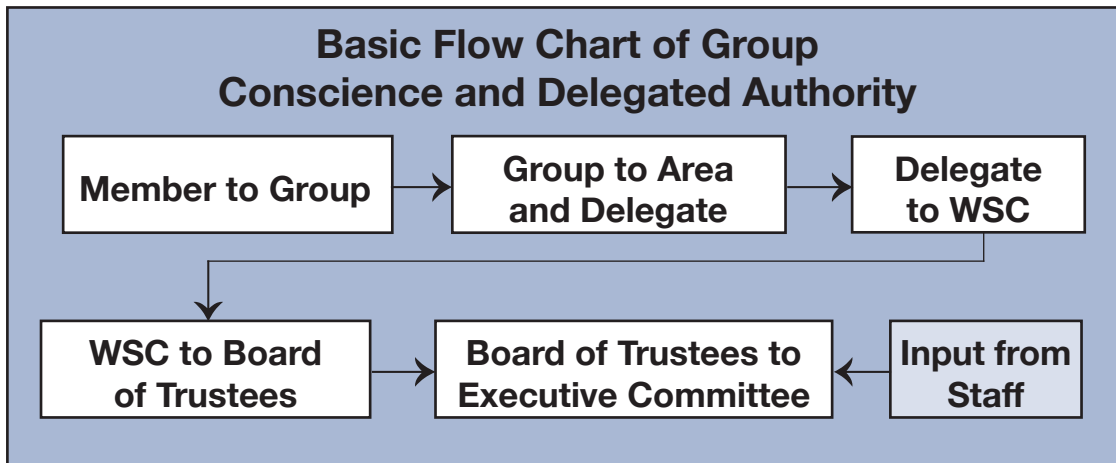
INTERNATIONAL REPRESENTATIVES

Silke S., Germany**	Lourdes C., Mexico**	Nuala C., UK & Eire**
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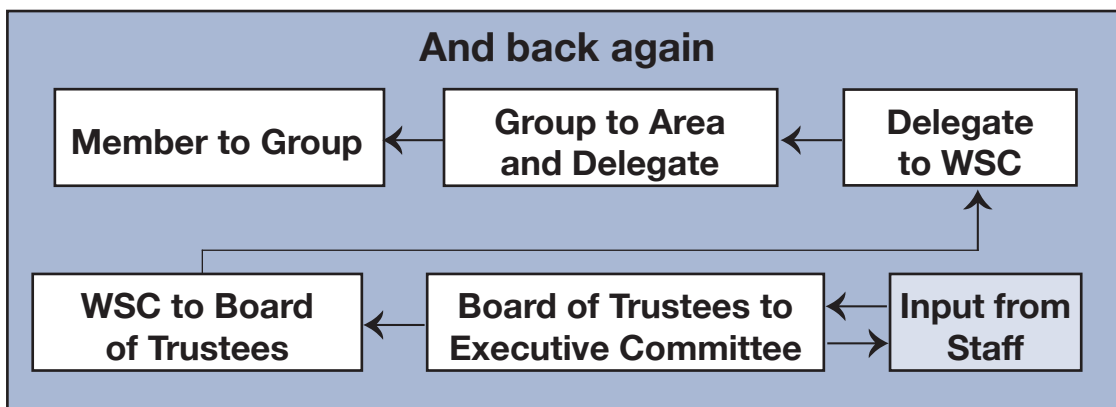
*Non-member, non-voting **Non-voting

AREA DELEGATES

Darcy N., Alabama/ Northwest Florida	Jan R., Nebraska
Liesel B., Alaska	Janice B., Nevada
Maryon K., Alberta/ Northwest Territories	Maxine D., Newfoundland/ Labrador
Vali F., Arizona	Pat W., New Hampshire
Jinkie R., Arkansas	Rich M., New Jersey
Lois K., British Columbia/Yukon	Jud L., New Mexico/El Paso
Yvonne de G., California North	Diane C., New York North
Elizabeth K., California South	Michele R., New York South
Marilyn B., Colorado	Elin E., North Carolina/ Bermuda
Ann B., Connecticut	Donna J., North Dakota
Pat M., Delaware Alternate	Ginny C., Ohio
Wendy R., Florida North	Lisa B-C., Oklahoma
Patricia K., Florida South	Diane B., Ontario North
Cathy O'D., Georgia	Debbie P., Ontario South
Dana Rae H., Hawaii	Colleen G., Oregon
Nancy Jo W., Idaho	Barbara G., Pennsylvania
Sandy W., Illinois North	Betty A., Puerto Rico
Lyri M., Illinois South	Solange R., Quebec East
Brenda L., Indiana	Loraine D., Quebec West
Virginia B., Iowa	Phyllis H., Rhode Island
Betty R., Kansas	Jennifer B., Saskatchewan
Lori H., Kentucky	Joyce H., South Carolina
Angela A., Louisiana	Kathleen A., South Dakota
Sandy F., Maine	Tarcila F., Tennessee
Debbie H., Manitoba/ Northwest Ontario	Joyce Y., Texas East
Rosemarie K., Maritime Provinces	Chris C., Texas West
Connie C., Maryland/ District of Columbia	Patrick M., Utah
Linda W., Massachusetts	Bud S., Vermont
Mike D., Michigan	Beverly W., Virginia
Doris K., Minnesota North	Sue C., Washington
Mary H., Minnesota South	Christine S., West Virginia
Daphne F., Mississippi Area Chair	Cathy T., Wisconsin and the Upper Peninsula of Michigan
Karen L., Missouri	Sherry H., Wyoming
Connie W., Montana	



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.